Lokison

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Lokison

by sifshadowheart

Summary

James and Lily Potter had a secret, one which led to Thanatos saving young Harry from a dreary life with the Dursleys and changed the face of the Second British Wizarding War before it ever began.
Prologue

Lokison

A Harry Potter/MCU/Percy Jackson crossover

By Sif Shadowheart

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Prologue: A Deathly Intervention

Thanatos, the Greek God of Death and Patron God of the Ignatus Peverell Wizarding lineage, allowed a small grimace to cross his normally implacable face. This was his night of all nights, All Hallows Eve, when his powers reached their greatest point of the year upon mortal Earth. And that thrice-damned Riddle was ruining it!

One night.

That's not a lot to ask for and most of the pantheons, hells, even the Elder Gods agreed!

One night out of the year when the various gods and avatars of Death herself can enjoy some peace.

The rest of the time they are among the busiest but correspondingly the most powerful of gods and divine beings, Thanatos's blatant patronage of the Ignatus Peverell line and not being quickly subject to smiting by one of the Elders proved that rather well in the Greek's opinion. One simply did not fuck around with Death's chosen few for as She has proven time and again She can and will come for anyone, even a god. More a primordial force than an actual divine being, Death and Her sisters Chaos, Magic, and Her twin Life, are forces that few dare to ever take on.

Unfortunately one of the Fates from one of the many pantheons, and Thanatos had suspicions but no proof over which Fate from which pantheon, had taken it in her head to play with the last of the Peverells, utilizing prophecy and a tool in the form of a meddling old manipulator to wind up the last of the Cadmus Peverell line who also happened to be Slytherin's-bloody-heir and unleash him on the last of the Ignatus Peverell line. Thanatos's favored line. The last remaining offspring of one of the few mortals Thanatos ever named as friend.

It would not do.

Fortunately, Thanatos knew something that lone irritating bint of a Fate did not know.

For all that Harry James Potter, Heir of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Potter, youngest and now last of the Peverells, had just watched/listened as both James and Lily Potter were both ruthlessly murdered, he was, by no means, an orphan.

Harry Potter had a secret. Or more appropriately James and Lily Potter had a secret that would set young Harry on a very different path than the one Fate and Dumbledore had designed for him. After all, being raised ignorant and in the hands of muggles wouldn't do when one is the son of a god. Especially if that god is one firmly outside of the control of the Fate that decided to toy with the life of a demigod and eventual Heir of multiple thrones...
It took swift action. Not difficult when one can sift through space and time but not particularly easy either when one isn't used to utilizing his powers in such a way. A god of Death never has to worry particularly much about things like stealth and being discovered. Death is. There's no real point in being subtle about it or worrying about hiding a magical signature or concealing his power from the Mage sight some Wizards have.

Death is.

Thanatos on the other hand, needed at this moment to completely squash any notions of meddling or interference from the Wizarding world. Including Fate's pet Dumbledore. Thanatos had Looked, had Seen what would come of allowing events to play out and they simply would not do. Not as far as either he or Harry's true born father were concerned that is. Thanatos and Harry's father both had soft spots for James Potter, each for very different reasons and had assisted him in his quest for an Heir. In many ways, Harry was as thrice-blessed as Riddle was thrice-damned. Between his godly father, his adoptive father James - all nice and tidy for the goblins and Wizardkind in-case anyone ever discovered who actually fathered Harry - and the blessing of Thanatos, Harry was indeed blessed. And powerful with it.

Nothing good would come of the child being raised according to Dumbledore's mechanations.

But Thanatos had an alternative.

One that Harry's father had approved and that would've garnered the approval of Lily and James if they ever had any inkling events would devolve to this state of things.

First things first. The Trace. Thanatos noticed that piece of magical idiocy already in place on Harry. One wave of his incorporeal hand and the device tuned to the toddler was disabled. He would remove it completely but that might cause his soon-to-be-ward trouble down the road. A quick flex of his Will and a Writ of Guardianship was made according to the slightly altered Wills of the Potters Thanatos placed on file.

**Guardians of Record:**

Thanatos Domini Grimm - his current muggle alias - and one Chiron Trainter.

Another moment and the Writ and Wills were magically sealed, beyond even the power of the Wizengamot to unseal without it being requested by Harry once he reached the age of majority.

Sighing he rolled his shoulders. Thanatos hadn't meddled like that in human affairs since the river incident with the Peverell brothers. It felt remarkably good. Closing his eyes he reviewed his list. There were a great many things to do and arrange, not the least of which was meet Harry's father in person and alert him to what steps he's taken on his son's - and Heir's - behalf. Still the next thing shouldn't be hard, rather it might even be fun...except for having to wait on the barmy old coot to hurry up and leave Harry on the steps of Privet Drive after...acquiring a few things from the Potter and Peverell vaults. Not to mention he hasn't been to Camp Half-Blood in...eons, really.

Should be fun.

...
Across the ocean at Camp Half-Blood, nestled discretely outside of New York City, New York on the shores of Long Island, Chiron: centaur, trainer of heroes and son of Kronus the King of the Titans, watched in half-disbelief and half-dismay as a new cabin extended and grew from the very bedrock that fashioned the base of Half-Blood Hill facing the Camp's grounds. Ink black stone made up the classical Greek architecture with tall pillars and fluted columns set flush against smooth obsidian walls. On the wall facing Camp, a ruby archway embraced a carved and inlaid obsidian door. As the sigil of the god or goddess in question who caused this change in the Camp, making the few half-bloods who stayed year round shiver under the pall of expectation that swam through the air, etched itself into door in gleaming black opal Chiron let out a breath in sheer relief.

This cabin wasn't for a child of Hades after all.

Rather, inlaid into the glassy volcanic rock, flashing and catching the light due to the gemstone used, was another sigil; one that while it relieved the trainer's fear of the Pact being ruptured did nothing to raise his spirits either. The child of such a god could very well be a terrifying power all on their own, even without the lineage of the Big Three: Zeus, Poseidon, or Hades. After all, the scythe and sword of Thanatos were feared long before Zeus was born and cut down Kronus. There were even some among the Greeks who believe that Thanatos could very well be the oldest and most powerful of Death's avatars and chosen gods to represent Her.

One thing was for certain. Whoever this new demigod/goddess turned out to be, they were a startling omen of change to come even with the Big Three prophecy yet to be fulfilled.

"Chiron." Thanatos stepped from the shadows, only his face with its ink-black eyes bared to the centaur's sight, into the morning gloom and stood beside the watchful trainer.

"Lord Thanatos." Chiron gave a respectful nod to the Avatar. "I wasn't expecting you to come yourself...although I do appreciate the chance to get the answers I know Diyonsius is going to be asked by the others of the Council."

Thanatos gave a low chuckle as he shifted the bundle in his arms. He'd known that Cadmus's heir had horribly maimed both himself and his soul during the course of his life but never thought it would mark young Harry in such a way. Fortunately he'd caught the sliver of Riddle's tainted soul before it could finish latching onto his charge with only the faintest of residual powers passing onto the child. Just enough to wake a few of the more latent powers he might've possessed on his own but not enough to weaken or taint him in any way. Laughing to himself, Thanatos knew already what the little godling's first Quest would be...

Amusement ripe in his voice, the god deigned to relieve some of the trainer's worries.

"It's not my child who you're being given charge over, old friend." Thanatos watched a ripple of confusion cross an unaging, but weathered nonetheless, face. "He is the last of an ancient line blessed by me in ages past with my blessing reborn in him."
Chiron thought rapidly. The only instance even rumored of Thanatos showing favor to a mortal line... wasn't truly to a mortal at all but to one of Magic's own children. A wizard and necromancer who befriended Death's Avatar of all mad things.

"A Peverell?"

The white slash of Thanatos's quick grin showed in the burgeoning light. The centaur always was quick.

"A Potter." He said with a quirk of his brow. "Harry James Potter, last of his line and a godling with it."

Chiron blinked. Not a half-blood but an actual godling, a child of the gods that would eventually gain immortality and godhood all on his own, without having to undergo trials and the tests of heroes in order to join his divine parent in the Heavens. There hasn't been a true godling in eons, not since the youngest of Celtic pantheon was born in their distant core universe.

"His human father was the last of my blessed, and unable to sire children on his own. But I wasn't the only god who favored James Potter nor found his wife to be a stunningly beautiful - and powerful - witch. A pact was made. Now in my arms is the orphaned result of that pact. A Wizarding child of great power from his human parents, with a full measure of immortality and gifts from his divine father and blessed by an Avatar of Death. A prophecy child, as well." Thanatos gave a humorless smile as Chiron goggled at him. "His trueborn name is Frey Haraldr and no before you ask I'm not going to reveal who his divine parent his, while Harry James Potter is his Wizarding name bestowed on him after undergoing an adoption ceremony with the now-late James."

Pulling himself together Chiron came quickly to a realization about the toddler that he could now clearly see.

"He could never live in the mortal world." He shook his head. "Not until he freezes into his immortality. Wizarding, maybe. But most definitely not mortal. Monsters would find him before the day was out."

"That's why I've brought him to you, old friend." Thanatos smiled, as they moved inside the home he'd created for Harry. A wave of his hand and trunks filled with books and grimoires from the Peverell and Potter vaults appeared as a fire started up in the monstrous hearth carved into one wall. While the outside of the cabin was foreboding and stark, the inside was rather welcoming with the large fire lit and the crystal lights filled with flame. A large, open room with two doors leading off of it, the cabin had a certain flair to it. One door led to a sumptuous bathing room, including a Roman bath and steam shower while the other led to a gigantic closest filled with clothes of all sizes that would fit the godling perfectly up until he reached his immortality. Along the opposite wall from the doors were weapons of all shapes and sizes, many of which came from Harry's family vaults.

As they moved farther into the room towards ebony wood crib in the place where one day would stand a king-sized bed, the trunks opened and the books began to sort and organize themselves out onto the bookshelves as Chiron shuddered at the feeling of distinctly foreign magic invading the Camp - if only for a moment and a benign purpose. Thanatos shot him a look and gave him a short explanation.

"Harry's - or rather Frey's - father. While my powers made the building, his have furnished it. He would have claimed Frey the moment Lily was struck down but he would be no safer there than he would be among the mortals. Until his child reaches his immortality and his life no longer at risk, my old friend will have to content himself with doing what little he can from a distance, although he may be able to sneak away for a visit once or twice a year."
"Who will look after the child while he's still so young?" Chiron finally asked the question that had been burning at his mind since he saw child being brought into his care. He knew full well that Thanatos could only spend the time that he had already because of it was All Hallows and couldn't parent a mortal child due to the limits and demands on his time. If Frey was only going to see his father once or twice a year, he would likely see his patron the same or even less. Adding to Chiron's concern was the reality that Camp Half-Blood simply wasn't equipped to raise such a small child, especially one that would be alone in his cabin instead of tucked away with his half-siblings like many of the demigods who stay throughout the year at the Camp.

"I'm still the Harvest Lord." Thanatos smiled as one of his handmaidens stepped from the shadows, her gleaming bronze hair adding warmth to the room. "A few of my ladies will take turns caring for Frey and teaching him. Once he's old enough to train they will let you know. Until then Heidi," he motioned her forward as another bed appeared along with a dresser and a few decorations and comforts. "Will be his primary caretaker with others assisting as needed."

"It is an honor, my Lord." Heidi said with a soft smile and a nod towards both god and centaur as she took the godling into her arms and proceeded to finish settling him down into his crib for a much-needed nap. Murder and mayhem and intrigue, all in one night. The poor mite was knackered. "Caring for a youngling like this will be a joy, not a duty."

"Heidi was a children's nurse before signing up to help in the battlefield tents in France during the human's Great War." Thanatos explained to the curious Chiron. "She is the most qualified among my ladies to care for and love a child. Others will come and go, to teach and train Frey or simply to give Heidi a rest. But she will be with him until he leaves for schooling according to his parents' wishes, then returning every summer as he does."

"That will certainly make things easier." Chiron admitted.

"Oh," Thanatos said with a wicked grin. "Nothing about Frey will ever be easy. But his father and I conferred upon his "orphaning" and we agreed with this course. It is best for all involved."

Motioning to Heidi, he cast a look at the sleeping toddler. "Come." He said, stepping out of the building. "Frey's father wants to see him before I go and my masking presence with me."

Loki Odinson waited in the shadows as his longtime friend and companion of his lone daughter Hela stepped outside, taking his son's new trainer and caretaker with him, grief filling him. The Potters were two of the lone Midgard inhabitants that gave his jaded heart hope for the future. Most were still ignorant, rough, rude creatures but mischievous James with his Marauders and lovely, fierce Lily were two apart. That that fool Dumbledore was at this moment setting things in place that would have the last two loyal Marauders segregated from Frey - as he doesn't yet know and Frigga-willing won't find out about Frey missing for years to come - filled him with wrath. Remus and Sirius were true believers and followers of Loki, like James. And due to a prophecy that would rule - and ruin - his son's life if he allowed it, and the rules enforced by his father Odin, Loki couldn't do a damned thing about any of it.

All he could do was collude with Thanatos to have Frey removed from the situation and use his not inconsiderable power to keep the aging Headmaster from learning of Frey's location in a place other than where he left him.

Petunia Evans-Dursley.
What a waste of human flesh.

If Lily was a bright beacon of hope to his jaded self then Petunia was a sop to his disdain, being everything he hates about humans.

He would usher in the end of days before he would allow that woman, that creature, to come within ten feet of his son.

He wasn't going to let Frey be used by a Fate. He already lost Hela because of Fate, Odin casting her down into Helheim, banishing her for no more crime than that of being born. If he wanted Frey to become the strong, powerful warrior, mage, and god the Norns foresaw upon his birth, Loki was going to have to bend the rules. In truth Frey doesn't belong at Camp Half-Blood, it being the province of Greek demigods. But thanks to Thanatos, he now has a legitimate place here and the legal protections he would need among the wizards to continue to stay here once he started attending school.

Loki sighed as he stared down at his son.

There wasn't much he regretted about the pact between himself and the late Potters that gave birth to his beautiful son but that clause is something he wished he could undo.

Potters go to Hogwarts.

The End.

While the Harvest Maidens could train his mind and to an extent some of his abilities, Chiron could make a legendary warrior of him, and Thanatos could share his wealth of wisdom, only Loki himself could train his magics outside of a wizarding school. Once a year or maybe twice if he's lucky isn't enough time to train him fully, even with the help of the Potter and Peverell writings and texts. Frey had to go to a wizarding school.

Beauxbatons would make a statesman and diplomat of him, training him with a grace and elegance.

Drumstrang would make a warrior and general of him, lashing his power to his will.

But Potters were for Hogwarts, where their ability to bring out the best in their students was only outshone by their ability to enhance the worst of their traits. If Loki had left things alone, Hogwarts, especially Dumbledore, would've taken a hero and made a martyr. Now he could only hope that the next ten years worth of work coupled to summers returning here would prevent the worst of the old coot's meddling. He could only hope.

Frey Haraldr Lokison would be no man's martyr.

Loki himself would guarantee it.

Bright green eyes, a few shades lighter than Lily's own emerald and more in line with Loki's own shade of Avada Kedavra green, peered up sleepily at Loki's hovering form, pulling him from his thoughts.

"Far." A little voice said, confused. Little Harry/Frey wasn't used to seeing his Far outside of his dreams where Loki would peek in from time-to-time and cuddle or play games with his young son. It wasn't the same as being there, but it was what they had.

"Morning, little prince." Loki crouched down and lifted Frey's sturdy little body into his wiry arms, reveling in the feel of his son.
"Mama." He looked around in worry at the new surroundings. Bad things came in the night, hurt his Mama and made his Daddy yell. Bad things. A bad man.

Closing his eyes in pain, Loki held him close a moment before looking down into the too-old eyes of his son. Seeing death at such young an age...

"Mama is in Valhalla, little prince." Loki said softly. And she was. He'd checked. While James was in Elysium among his family, Lily'd preferred Frigga to Hera and Odin to Zeus. Her own, er, encounters with Loki only cemented that belief. Although he was sure that if Thanatos had been given the option by the Valkyries he would've taken her as one of his own Handmaidens.

"Daddy?"

"Elysium."

A little lip began to tremble as his young mind recalled what little he'd been taught about those places. People who go there don't come back. Not ever.

"Far!" This time it was a mournful sound as the little one buried his head into his Father's silken Asgardian doublet, tears finally unleashing in a torrent of sobs.

"Shhh, little prince." Loki rubbed one lean hand along his son's back and gave him a kiss on the head, voice lowering in conviction over his next words. "It's all going to be alright, Frey. Far will watch over you. It's all going to be okay."
Chapter Two

Seven year old Frey Lokison danced in place as he waited anxiously for his Far and his Grim (as he'd taken to calling Thanatos after hearing Chiron ribbing the Death god over his mortal cover). Every year since his parents - his other parents - died he got to spend time with his Far on his birthday and with both his Far and his Grim on All Hallows Eve. Thanks to an artifact Chiron "loaned" Frey's father that was a gift from Chiron's father - the Titan of Time - those two visits a year wound up being a little longer than a single night or a single day.

During that time none of them need to eat, or sleep, or do anything other than spending time together. On All Hallows they limited the extra time to only a week, spent mostly teaching Frey about Wizarding traditions from both the general culture and the Peverell and Potter family histories with Loki inserting knowledge about the magics behind the traditions and what things are similar or different between Asgard and Midgard. But first they perform three rituals, all to honor the dead and loved ones lost. They start with the general All Hallows Eve ritual that both the Peverells and Potters still follow, Olde Magic, before undergoing the Greek one for family in Elysium to honor James and then the Asgardian for Lily.

It was the one time of year where Frey felt connected with his other parents.

The rest of the year was devoted to his studies with Heidi and the other Harvestmaidens. Even though he was blessed by Grim and was Far's son he still needed a solid eight hours of sleep, which was about two hours less than a human seven year old child. His Far told him that he would keep needing less and less sleep until he "froze" into his immortality. Living forever sounded fun to him, he'd get to spend time with his Far and sometimes Grim and finally meet his Uncle Thor and his Grandparents and his Far's friend Lady Sif. But he also understood something else. That he would never get to spend time with his Mama or Daddy in Elysium or Valhalla.

Far had gone to the Potter home in Godric's Hallow and collected the family albums and the wardstones that would allow Frey to access the Potter estates when he was older. It helped keep his other parents alive in his memory. A mother that loved him enough to sacrifice her life on the chance to save him and an adoptive father who loved his mother enough to make a deal with a god to give her a son and continue his family line then fought a madman to try and give his wife and son time to escape. His other parents were heroes, just like Grim said he would be one day.

Frey didn't quite know what to make of that. He was only seven after all, the youngest "camper" at Camp Half-Blood he'd rather spend time with the naiads in the lake than studying Wizarding laws and etiquette with Heidi or learning archery and swordplay with the older campers than philosophy and social-political fundamentals with Chiron. Frey for all that he was younger knew that he was different from the others. Most just had their home-study programs for regular school so that the ones who stay here all year can graduate one day and go to college once their monster draw fades. He was different. He was learning all of that, reading, writing, mathematics, Ancient Greek and Olde English and Norse, plus all the "hero" classes. But he had other things to learn too. The different things.

The Lord things. That's who he was, thanks to his Daddy. Lord Potter.

How to manage an estate. How to know friend from acquaintance from foe from influence-seekers.
How to wield political power in a way that matches his ideals and doesn't offend his conscience. All things Lords need to know to survive plus all the things he needs to know to fit in. Things like dancing, what Heidi calls "social graces", horseback riding both on horses and pterippi, and what Chiron calls "noble arts" like how not to offend an important guest even if they're both his enemy and rude. Plus poetry, art, and lots of other things.

Then there were the birthday visits with his Far where they fit a month inside a day with Chiron's gift.

A month every year where Loki tries to teach his son things even more above and beyond than his current curriculum. But that was expected. Frey wasn't a normal child with normal expectations but the expectations they had for him weren't completely unreasonable either. No one expected him to be a statesman and warrior and poet all at seven years of age. No. They were merely laying the foundation for later in his life when all the little things they taught him now would combine into a much larger picture. Frey would be the very essence of both a modern-day renaissance man and an olde-world gentleman and warrior.

He would be a Prince of Asgard and Lord Potter, he would have responsibilities in two worlds with two different sets of expectations. And while good manners are good manners wherever one roams, it's the little nuances that separate one born into a life from one who didn't quite belong. It was those little things that would be the difference between his little prince being treated like a Prince and Lord or like a second-class citizen who never quite measures up to the rest. Raised in Midgard or not, Loki'd be damned first before he allowed some of the bigots in Asgard to make his son feel shamed for any reason.

Part of his birthday "month" was always spent in pure fun for both divine-father and godling-son. Playing with their magics. Loki while born with much of his own, only became God of Magic after being trained in the arts by his mother Frigga and blessed later by Magic herself. He was uniquely suited to helping a wizard-born godling learn and grow in his magics. And with the warding surrounding Camp Half-Blood, no one was ever the wiser.

..."Far!" Frey rushed towards the shadows as Thanatos and Loki stepped from them and into the cabin. A once rather sparse large room with its weapons and black walls, over the years toys and mementos of a child's presence slowly crept in, creating a unique sense of both might and warmth. From the pretty multicolored glass orbs that Loki and Frey use in their magic practice to the leopard skin rugs that Grim brought back from a trip to "collect" a poacher, there were signs of life all around.

"My little prince," Loki swooped up his son into his arms beaming a smile up at him as he took in the small signs of growth and maturation that have occurred in the last three months since he's seen him. To Thanatos's eyes he changed even more, shooting up another couple inches from his visit last All Hallows Eve.

"You're getting big." The Death god observed as he plucked the child from the air as Loki tossed him in a habit that he would be far too old and big for if the ones tossing him about like a Quaffle weren't gods. "I almost didn't recognize you this time."

Frey grinned and rolled his bright green eyes. With Loki's genes and not living in a dark place, he'd never developed a need for glasses.

"You always say that!"
"And it's always true." Thanatos swung the child before placing him back on his own two feet. "One of these times I'm going to show up and not even know you anymore."

"Mmm." Frey hummed under his breath and cocking his head to one side. "Regina from the Apollo cabin said that I'm going to be bigger than Far one day."

The gods traded a glance. Apollo was the Greek patron of many things, not the least of which was prophecy. It's not unheard-of for one of his many, many children to have at least a touch of foresight.

"She did, did she?" Loki arched a brow as they settled down onto the furs before the fire and set up Chiron's device. "What else did Regina say?"

"That I'm like you but I'm like my, my..." Frey frowned thinking back to the exact wording she used. Regina was almost a grown-up and sometimes used words he didn't know yet. "Tempest-us,"

"Tempestuous?" Loki prompted thinking about his stormy brother Thor. Heart of gold but a temper to shake the heavens themselves. He winced. Lily had a devil's temper and Loki wasn't known for being a forgiving man. With that combination Frey could just as easily be the god of Grudges as of Heroes or whatever his designation will be. Not even the Norns who he consulted in absolute secrecy can foresee what type of god Frey will be.

"That's the word." Frey nodded. "Tempestuous uncle, but in good ways. She said that I'll be tall and strong, like you and uncle combined."

"That's all good things, Frey." Thanatos smiled at him. A dark-haired green-eyed god that split the difference in height and muscle mass between Loki and Thor? He would be magnificent as a mature man.

Frey frowned. "She said something else too." He said slowly, thinking hard. "That just because my path is straight and true doesn't mean that it's not dangerous and dark. That there are things in the shadows that could help or hurt me and that not everything in the Light is as it seems. That I'll be both hunter and hunted of those closest to me and those I've never met."

"It sounds like Regina was trying to scare you with her gift." Loki growled a moment, eyes glowing. Who the hells tells a seven year old that his path will be "dangerous and dark?"

"No." Frey said after a moment with a sigh before grinning brightly up at the two most important beings in his world. "She said that I just have to have faith in me and in you, Far. Then everything will turn out right."

"Excellent." Thanatos clapped his hands, wanting to get the topic off of prophecy as quickly as possible. There's already been too much soothsaying around Frey already, he'd have to talk to Chiron about watching the Apollos and especially this Regina around Frey. "Nothing to worry about then."

"Nope." Frey grinned, almost bouncing in place as Loki set up the ritual space. "Nothing to worry about."

... Nine year old Frey wiggled in excitement in his spot by the window in the camp's van. They were on their way to their annual visit at the Natural History Museum for the kids who stay over during the year and this is the first time he was old enough and with enough training to go. Silena from the Aphrodite cabin told him all about it this summer when she was visiting and her brothers and sisters
were helping Heidi with his etiquette training.

Frey liked archery with the Apollos and his bladed weaponry training with the Ares' better but no one was nicer than the Aphrodites. To him at least. When he gets bigger that'll change according to his Far, when the girls start noticing him as a boy and the "boys start seeing him as competition due to their own inferiority" at least that's what Far says even though Frey didn't quite understand what his father meant.

Girls were still icky.

Except for the Ares girls...but he wasn't sure if they really count as girls since they didn't like the same things as the other girl campers.

Silena told him all about the two places he wanted to see the most: the butterfly exhibit with the thousands and thousands of butterflies and the Hayden Planetarium. One of the things Chiron was starting to teach him was astronomy and how to read the stars. Frey wanted to see if he could spot the World Tree or one of the Bifrost's portals in the maps and exhibits in the Planetarium.

To finally see something of his Far's world, even just the edges of it where the Yggradsil 'verse brushed up against the Olympian 'verse.

Heidi even agreed to let him go alone!

As long as he stayed close to one of the older campers. His favorite was one of the satyrs named Grover. Grover was really young for a satyr but he's in training to be a Seeker like his uncle, getting a chance to go and search out the Elder god Pan. He's one of the only people Frey spent time around during the year that wasn't either one of his actual trainers/caretakers or one of the demigod teens.

The satyr might still be a lot older than him but not in a way that makes Frey feel like a pest if he hangs around outside of lessons like the older campers do - even if only on accident - sometimes.

It's better during the summers when there's lots of campers, but during the year it can be weird. Chiron said that soon they should be getting more younger campers during the year, that the birth of demigods tended to work in cycles according to events on Olympus.

More people to try and make friends with sounded good to him.

...

Okay he took it back. Frey thought to himself. The Museum was huge and not as much fun when you can't see over anything to find your friends or one of your teachers.

He's going to catch so much hell for this from Grover. And that's before his Far and the rest of the camp find out. At least he had the better part of two months before his birthday, Heidi won't be so wound up from him getting lost after some time had passed and she might not rat him out too badly to his Far. Might.

Looking around he spotted one of those “you are here” maps that every public place seemed to have. Heidi taught him about those the last time they needed to go shopping. She wanted something new to wear for Grim.

And Frey learned one of the best lessons of his life so far.

Never go shopping with a woman with *that* look on their face. Never again.
Finding his place on the map he traced one finger along it looking for one of the three places where Chiron said groups were to meet up.

*The Hall of Amphibians and Reptiles.*

Good, there's one.

Rushing through the corridors, he finally came to a quieter hall with bunches of glass display cases showing off different species. Spotting a fifteen-foot-long crocodile he grinned. Found it.

“Frey!” A voice shouted, the person hurrying over as fast as he can with the crutches he had to use outside of camp to hide his satyr's legs in human clothes.

“Grover!” Frey waved, smiling. “I think I spent too long in the Planetarium and the others didn't even notice I wasn't still with them.”

Grover smiled and tapped his young friend on the back of the head.

“That's what you get for having your head in the clouds.” He teased. “I was worried when I saw your Apollo buddies without you. They were too, no one wants to take on your patron you know.”

Frey rolled his eyes. Everyone was sooo scared of Grim or “Lord Thanatos” as everyone else called him. When a god saved you from living a miserable – and horrifically short – life there's not much to be scared of in their reputation, no matter how fearsome.

Before he could tease the older satyr over what to him was a silly fear, a faint hissing caught his ear, accompanied by the sound of scales scraping on tile.

“You hear that?” Grover asked as he started backing them towards the exit, noticing for the first time the lack of normal mortals in the exhibition hall.

Eyes darting around the room, searching the shadows for danger, Frey gave a short nod as he pulled a dagger with a gleaming black blade from its sheath in the small of his back. Adrenaline and no small amount of irritation were coursing through his lanky prepubescent body.

“You know.” He observed idly to Grover as the satyr took out a club from his pack. “This really sucks. And whatever is coming is pissing me off.”

“What?” Grover chuckled incredulously. Leave it to “Death's munchkin” as the Hermes campers dubbed Frey to get pissy over a looming monster attack.

“Seriously.” Frey's voice was hardening as the creature began creeping from the shadows. “You know how long and how hard I had to lobby Heidi to get to come on this trip? And that was after I got tentative approval from my Far and Grim. After a dumbass monster decides to take me on on my first trip off-camp I'm *never* going to be able to leave again. I'm nine. I need to be free to explore and see things besides camp. And this *bastard* is ruining it!”

A hissy chuckle sounded as the monster stepped firmly into the light, causing the two much-smaller forms to cringe. Scaly with a thick body and three elongated triangular heads, it looked like some kind of giant Komodo dragon. Which really sucked because a Komodo dragon's jaws could crack bone and their bacterial-cesspit-mouths were the closest thing to a deadly toxin you could get without actually having venom glands.

“Grover?” Frey asked, horrified at what he was seeing. “What the heck is *that*?”
“That,” Grover said after taking a deep breath, trying to control his utter terror. “Is one of the three-headed hydras.”

Frey blinked.

“Like Heracles's hydra?”

“Nope. This is one of that hydra's many, many offspring. Looks like this time the King Hydra got busy with a komodo dragon.”

“Oh, goody.” Frey said his voice growing faint as the monster crept closer and closer. “How do I kill it?”

“Hydra, hydra, hydra.” Grover thought furiously. He knew this, he knows he knew it, but he'd never functioned well under pressure.

“Anytime now Grover.” Frey yelped as he dodged to the side to avoid a strike from one of the heads as it hissed again. Only this time Frey understood what it was saying.

§Heroes. Silly little heroes to leave your nest. Yes. Silly little heroes. Komo eats silly heroes. Been sooo long since Komo was lasst free.§

“Grover.” Frey's voice was pure warning as he and the satyr darted all around the exhibition hall to avoid the monster's strikes. “It wants us for lunch. How do I kill it?”

“Hydra. Hydras' heads grow back in sets of three.” Grover grunted out as he dove behind a display of crocodile remains from the iron age. “You either have to hit the heart or cut off the heads and cauterize the wound at the same time.”

“Fantastic.” Frey hissed as he used his smaller and more agile body to dart under the massive thing. “Grover, I want you to go for the door and get Chiron, hells get anyone. I don't think I can take out this thing on my own. I'll distract it.”

“Freyyyy.” Grover whined. “You're only nine. That's not a good idea.”

“You got a better one?” The godling demanded while dancing to and fro under the beast. “There's tons of innocent bystanders that are going to be Purina-Hydra-Chow if we don't kill this thing. Get moving.”

“You're the hero-in-training.” Grover sighed as he skidded to a stop at the doors. Turning to look back he stared at the sight of the tiny child dancing around the monster like he was playing a game of hopscotch. “Pan's blessing be upon you, Frey Haraldr.” He whispered before darting out the door, hoping that there would still be something left save by the time he found someone to help. Thanatos was going to kill him. Dead. Grover was soo dead.

Panting slightly in exertion as Frey forced his little body to dart and weave around the hydra's legs while keeping out of striking range of the three heads, he thought quickly. He can't use his magic. That's a no-go. Even with the Mist, wizards can still pick up on his magic use when he's outside of the camp's wards. That left him with the gifts from his Far and Grim.

The heart. A voice that sounded soft and sweet, like the one that he heard in his dreams sometimes, whispered through his mind. Pierce the heart. Center of the chest under the left-most head.

Okay then. He'll take Advice-from-the-Ether for Two-Thousand, Alex. Here's hoping he's still alive for his Far to punish after this. Focusing on the power he got from his Far instead of from his other
parents, Frey summoned his last birthday gift from his Far to his hand, the adolescent-sized sword modeled after his Potter ancestral sword only with a shining black blade of Stygian steel instead of goblin-forged silver and a great ruby with the Potter sigil carved in it on the pommel coming instantly to his hand. Pouring on the speed, he pretended he was running the gauntlet with the Ares campers or racing against Chiron in his normal form, racing for the display case opposite the hydra.

§What are you doing, silly hero? Come back so Komo can eat you.§ The hydra – Komo – darted his right head out after the fleeing form.

Jumping up and pushing off with one foot against the bullet-proof glass, Frey twisted in mid-air in a move his Far had spent the better part of their last visit teaching him. Blades angled down, his sword sliced through the center and left heads like butter, buying him precious time as the right head course corrected and darted toward him.

To no avail.

Frey landed bang-on target, his sword slowing his descent down the monster's chest as he thrust his dagger home in the creature's heart as the center and left heads started to reform. The creature crumpled to the ground, almost squashing the boy under it as the doors banged open, revealing a panting Grover and an implacable Chiron as Frey wriggled his way out from under his first kill.

Giving the youngling a short, approving nod, Chiron spoke.

“Don't think that because you won we're not going to revisit proper techniques for monster-slaying, young Frey.” The trainer's voice was dryer than the Sahara. “Or that I won't be telling your patron that you sent off the older and more experienced guide while you stayed behind.”

“Yes, sir.” Frey said, voice small.

“That being said.” Chiron waved one hand towards the carcass as he arched a brow. “Aren't you forgetting something?”

Frey frowned for a second before grinning. He couldn't be blamed for forgetting for a few moments...this was the first time he's face a monster on his own, although he'd seen it done before when monsters would attack camp in the summer.

“I, Frey Haraldr, ward of Thanatos, offer this sacrifice as tribute to my divine parent.”

Chiron nodded, pleased. Something told him that young Frey knew exactly who his divine parent was and was only hedging because of his audience. Either way it was well done of him to offer the hydra to his parent instead of his guardian.

As Frey finished speaking, a golden shimmer surrounded the slain monster before it vanished, leaving only something small and black in its place.

“What's that?” Grover asked as he and Chiron made their way over to the now-crouching Frey, cocking his head to try and get a better look at the bundle which turned out to be something wrapped in ink-black cloth.

Frey looked up at them with a grin as he held up the gift. He'd heard of kids getting gifts from their godly parents when they'd done or offered up something particularly pleasing but didn't think he'd ever get something like that since he was closer to his Far than most demigods were with their divine parents. Now he'd gotten a battle spoil too.

“It's a hydra-skin sheath,” Frey grinned. “For my dagger.”
“And what have we learned about adventuring with Grover?” Chiron arched a brow at the now ten-year-old Frey as he continued prepping the boy-would-be-warrior for his second trip out of camp...and his first real mission.

He'd come along way in the last year and a half from his first venture out into the real world. Killing the hydra was more dumb-luck and sheer foolhardy bravado than any actual skill, something he'd worked hard to correct in the youngling. The reaction of Thanatos wasn't what the centaur had expected either, the ancient being simply laughing at the “minor scuffle” and reporting that the lad's divine-father and his father's brothers had gotten into much worse at Frey's age. Chiron hesitated to ask just what “worse” could be.

Something told him he doesn't truly want to know.

“Whatever can go wrong, will.” Frey answered partly serious and partly cheeky.

Chiron held in a snort. Murphy's Law could be renamed “Grover's Law” as far as the Cloven Council was concerned. He spent almost as much time trying to keep them from firing Grover from being a guide as he did keeping Frey from getting into fights with the satyr elders who offended the youngling's sense of fair play.

“Young Grover was sent out to guide a trio of demigods to Camp Half-Blood days ago and hasn't returned. The last we heard from him he was running from a warehouse in Brooklyn.” Chiron said, voice turning serious as he pinned Frey with his gaze. “You're the best trained fighter we have healthy right now.” Which was true, most of the older year-rounders were down with some form of flu that Frey didn't seem to be affected by thanks to his Wizarding heritage. “Your job is to find Grover and his charges and get them to Camp. Frey.”

Bright green eyes looked up at him, his youthfully round face on display with a stoic expression, his wild back-length hair held back in the Norse warrior-braids he favored.

“One of the demigods is the daughter of Zeus.”

Frey's eyes widened comically as he sucked in a breath.

“The compact...?”

Chiron nodded.

“Zeus broke it. Hades is furious and has unleashed his servants on the young girl. They have to get to camp, Frey.”

The consequences otherwise were unthinkable.

His young charge nodded firmly before listening with care as Chiron described the group's last-known location, a mere ten miles away, before stepping into the shadows as Grim had taught him and shifting himself to the given location.

Among Artemis's huntresses.

...
they do it took weeks for the guys at camp to stop being cranky and the satyrs to stop acting weird. Frey didn't see the big deal. So they don't like guys.

Big deal.

He doesn't like pizza despite Grover's best efforts but you don't see him complaining about pizza to everyone he meets or yelling at people because they like pizza.

Heidi said that the huntresses are what you get when a bunch of bitter teen-aged drama-queens gain immortality.

That doesn't really give Frey hope for when he finally gets to go to Asgard.

“Brzztsssp.” Frey blew a raspberry at the leader of the huntresses when Artemis wasn't around, drawing the attention of both groups.

“Argh.” Zoe growled rolling her eyes. “Go away little boy.”

“No problem ice-princess.” Frey grinned brightly. “As soon as Grover and Co. are ready to go.”

“Frey, my man.” Grover trotted over to his little buddy's side. “Chiron sent you?”

Frey nodded as he got a good look at Grover's newest charges. Not a bad group, a couple even had weapons with the girl who must be Zeus's kid fiddling with one of Hephaestus's shield-watches.

“Seriously?” Thalia couldn't believe it. First the “ice-princess” tries to get her to abandon her friends and now this...little kid came to help them? This is their back-up? “You're just a little boy.”

Rolling his eyes, Frey unsheathed his sword, the same one he used to cut off two of Komo's heads. With a pointed look at mini-Zeus's leg, he spoke up as the huntresses started heading off.

“I'm in better shape than you are and I don't have Hades's minions out for my blood.” He motioned in the direction of camp with his sword. “There's a whole lot of hellhounds between here and safety, Ms. Thing. Plus all three of the Furies. If you want your boyfriend and the little one to make it to the boundary in one piece, you're going to need my help.”

Narrowing his eyes at the little-dude with a big attitude, Luke took in the easy grip on the sword and the calm demeanor. There was more to this kid than met the eye. And he was right about the monsters, that's for sure.

“But...”

“Lead the way.” Luke cut off Thalia with a look. “Another sword is always useful.”

Frey nodded, accepting that they'll take his help.

“Can she run?” He asked him.

Thalia grimaced both at being ignored and at her wound.

“Not very well and not for very long.” She admitted.

Reaching around Frey grabbed one of the potions Heidi had been drilling him on, having him make large batches of it over and over until he'd memorized it. It was one of the easier but still effective healing potions, always a good thing for a hero-training-camp to have on hand. Tossing it to the girl he shook his head at her suspicious look after she caught it.
“Drink it or don’t. I don’t really care.” He said with a shrug. “It won’t heal you completely but it will help get you to camp. Your call.”

With a pissy look on her face Thalia knocked it back, gagging on the rancid taste as Frey chivvied them into motion.

Ten miles had never been longer to the boy than it was right now, with a little girl and an older one wounded and a ton of monsters between here-and-there.

…

“Run Annabeth!” Thalia screamed as she fought off another hellhound. “The arch is right there!”

It'd been a hard stretch to run, just as hard as Frey thought it would be. It was a small but mixed blessing that the monsters were focusing all their energy on Zeus's daughter, Thalia, he'd learned. It freed him up for doing damage and helping the little girl Annabeth but was seriously impacting his ability to save Thalia's arse.

Or his own for that matter.

“Luke!” He shouted as he gutted another hound. “Grab Annabeth and get across the boundary!”

Not looking to see if the older boy would listen or not, Frey got back to his original mission: getting Thalia to camp. Slipping one arm around her waist – and thankful that she hadn't gotten her grown spurt yet – Frey helped prop her up as he switched his sword into his off-hand. Together they hobbled toward the wards, her using her shield, Aegis, while he sliced and diced his way through the monsters. They were within feet of safety when they heard a shrill scream.

Quickly scanning, Frey noted Grover and Luke over the wards with Luke hanging onto Annabeth with one hand. The little girl was in the grasp of a Fury and struggling to get loose and through the wards. Thalia reacted just as Frey went to pull them inside the wards.

“Hey! Ugly!” She shouted, throwing her shield like a discus and nearly decapitating the Fury who released her hold on her prize.

Pulling Luke toppled backwards at the sudden release, leaving Annabeth safely within the wards.

And Thalia shield-less and on the wrong side of them.

In a rare show of intelligence, a hellhound leapt forward, fangs ripping into Thalia's now-unprotected side as Frey hauled her to safety, his sword slashing down and taking the beast's head.

But it was too late.

Frey stared down at the wounded and dying girl in his arms as her friends rushed over, crying as she struggled to breathe. He held back his own tears as he looked up at Grover, the satyr staring down at him in gentle understanding.

“It's a rough lesson.” Grover said as he squatted next to the dying girl. “But it's one that every guide and hero learns. I just wish you didn't have to learn it so soon.”

“What...,” Frey coughed back his tears. He didn't even really like Thalia. Hells he didn't even know her. Not outside of what she did to save Annabeth. “What's that?”

“That no matter how good you are, how strong or smart or fast.” Grover tucked a piece of Thalia's
hair behind her ear, speaking lowly to avoid catching the attention of the girl's mourning friends. “Or in your case how powerful you or your dad is, there's always going to be someone you can't save. All you can hope for is that that person isn't yourself, so that you can go on fighting and trying to save the next person and the person after that and the person after that.”

Frey snuffled back his sobs.

“That's a shitty lesson, Grover.” He said, fire returning to his eyes as he stared at the remains of all the monsters. “And I don't feel like learning it. Not today.”

Standing he traded his sword for his dagger, the same one he slew the hydra with, and sliced open his hand, invoking an ancient rite as Chiron and the other campers rushed over to them.

“I, Frey Haraldr, offer up this offering of my own blood and tribute of every beast I slew this day, to Zeus, King of Olympus. That He might find love in his heart for his blood-child, Thalia Grace, and spare her Hades's fire.”

As the last drop of his blood hit Thalia's ruined shirt, thunder crashed overhead causing all present to look up at the heavens.

All but Frey, who was forced to shut his eyes as Thalia was struck by her father's lightening. When he opened them, where a dying girl once stood was now a tall, strong pine tree with a lightening bolt carved into the bark.


Grover put one hand on the tree, listening hard. A smile split his face as he turned to look at his young friend.

“She's alive.” He said, wonder in his voice. “He listened to you, Frey. He saved her. She's a tree...but she's alive.”

...

Loki stepped from the shadows into his son's home inside the wards of Camp Half-Blood and crept silently over to the form cuddled up in the middle of the massive king-sized bed. He could barely catch sight of his son amidst the black spider-silk sheets and the myriad furs that were gifts from Thanatos from his many travels. The Greek had taken his duty to Frey seriously these past ten years, more seriously than Loki had ever thought to hope for, and his Harvestmaidens had taken excellent care of him when neither of them could.

He could say much the same of the centaur. He'd long respected their abilities to read the stars but many of their kind tended towards extremes, bouncing between utter disarray like the “Party Ponies” or complete stoicism like the herd that lived in the Forbidden Forest. There were few and far between that struck a balance between the two, Chiron and Firenze between two among a handful that Loki could bring to mind. The hero trainer had done well by Frey, very well if his performance against the hellhounds from the previous winter was any indication. He'd relied far less on blind luck and much more on his skill – hammered into him by both the camp trainers, the Harvestmaidens, and Thanatos and Loki themselves – to surprising results.

And that was before he took into account his actions to save Zeus's daughter. That was a heavy debt the Olympian leader owed, one that won't be easily balanced.

Yes, they've all done well with him and he's begun turning into the warrior prince that Loki always saw within him.
But soon he would have to go away and finish training that other part of himself, the part of him that itched and yearned to break free.

On the night Thanatos spirited Loki’s son away from underneath Dumbledore's nose, he'd sensed something sinister afoot. Something more than the soul-fragment that was trying to bond to his son. Time and observation had proved Loki’s observation true.

Frey's magics had been bound.

Most often done when a child was in danger of catastrophic accidental magic, binding their magic lets their bodies grow stronger to be better able to contain and channel the raw forces at their disposal.

Except Frey, from what Loki had spied out when clandestinely keeping an eye on his son and his mortal parents, had no problems controlling his magic. The opposite actually. Frey's control was innate, near perfect, even at a few months after birth. A thought proven when while watching Sirius gambol about the room as a big black dog, Frey spontaneously shifted into the form of a cat. A cat that later turned out to be a jaguar kitten, rather than a full-grown house cat. Such transformation required exquisite control.

It boggled the mind that someone would bind the powers of such a talented child.

And it had the magical fingerprints of Albus Dumbledore all over it.

Perhaps the Headmaster was threatened by his son's early signs of power. Perhaps he didn't want the child to perform accidental magic in the abusive muggle cesspit he tried to dump him in. Perhaps there was another reason behind it.

There really wasn't any way to know.

It simply left Loki with a conundrum. Frey would be perfectly capable of performing magic to the same standard as other children close to his age with his core still bound. Which was an option if they don't want Dumbledore to become even more suspicious than he already will be over Frey's guardianship.

Or...

Loki could undo the binding, releasing the full measure of Frey's power which was operating at about ten percent of his whole as things stand. If he'd been left alone, he'd have about half of his total current magical core strength. Apparently when his core was bound he still was trying to perform magics supposedly beyond his age and his core grew to compensate for it. Growing so that if all he could draw on was ten percent, it would be ten percent of a more powerful whole.

But if Loki undid the binding he would have to spend all the rest of the summer with his son and hope that no one on Asgard would notice. Even then they would still need to use Chiron's gift to gain extra time. Frey would just be too powerful to unleash on the world without Loki being damn sure of his control being sufficient.

Plus there were still what his son had taken to calling “Princely Primer Programs” to get through, his training for Asgardian and Wizarding society alike.

Staring down at his son Loki smiled when the boy snuffled and turned over in his sleep, showing his strong features that even at one-day-off-eleven were beginning to hint at the handsome god he would become. His face was thinning out, not as round as it used to be, with hints of Loki's own sharp cheekbones and piercing eyes. The rest of him was all Lily, generous mouth, elegant nose and chin,
smooth forehead. Only the firm jawline showed any hint of James, the one remnant of his minuscule amount of Potter blood.

It was there in his body too. Tall for his age at five-three, he was strong with it at a firm one hundred and ten pounds with no sign of extra fat on him. Daily weapons practice, running with Chiron, and flying on the pterippi gave him strong, lean muscles with none of the brutish bulk of his uncle Thor as a child.

Frey Haraldr Lokison was a child and heir any man – or god – would be proud to claim.

Only Loki couldn't claim him.

He wouldn't be able to until Frey reached his physical peak and “froze” into his immortality in the way of godlings. His son and one joy was still all-too vulnerable until that day, likely more than a decade off. It was unbearable, this infernal waiting.

But for this summer at least, if Frey agreed, they could be together.

He'd arranged things neatly with Thor and Sif, created a cover story about him being off on a knowledge-seeking hunt. Granted they don't know it's only a story. But it would work and that's what counted.

By the end of summer, Frigga willing, his son would be as ready and powerful as Loki could make him. Using Chiron's gift to the max would give them roughly three years in the space of just over a month. A month a day for thirty-odd days. It would have to do.

Frey already had the mind of a child much older between Chiron's gift usage and his run-ins with monsters and battling hellhounds to save a demigoddess.

That was the way of it sometimes with Asgardian children. They rarely stay children for long, especially if they’re born into the nobility like himself and his son. It wasn't a pretty fact of life but it was real.

His son couldn't afford to stay as a child, not anymore, not with them still going in blind as far as much of the Wizarding world was concerned.

Not the least of the challenges would be getting his son to answer to Harry again, let alone what it's going to be like for a fifteen-year-old's brain to be stuck in an eleven-year-old's body...even if that body was mature for its age.

“Far?” Frey asked sleepily as his eyes cracked open. “It's not my birthday yet, that's tomorrow.”

“I know, little prince.” Loki felt a pang over the favored nickname that wouldn't apply very well by the end of summer. “I came early to talk to you, there's many things we need to discuss...”
Three

Chapter Summary

Author's Note:

I feel I should mention that in this story Harry, or rather Frey, will go through a wand a year. The reason behind this is simple, because of how I've framed the story around Death's relationship with the Peverells and Frey being the last of the line, the only wand that will truly accept him as a master is the Elder Wand or Deathstick from the Hallows lore. Because of that there will be a little scene either where I show him and Loki and/or Chiron fashioning his newest wand or he will think about it sometime during the first part of that chapter. For more information on the different wand woods that I use for Frey's wands, go to Pottermore which has J.K. Rowlings' information on wandlore.

Oh! And my Frey/Harry is played by Ben Barnes...with AK green eyes of course :)

For Frey's warrior braids: think (and yes, I know she's a girl...but the braids are awesome) Daneryes Targaryan's khaleesi braids from Game of Thrones...

Thanks for the reviews! They feed the muse!

~Sif

Chapter Three

Heidi held tight to Frey's arm, the godling showing his gentlemanly side had offered it to her and waited for her acceptance before he side-along apparated her to the Apparation point on Platform 9 ¾. This was done for a reason, allowing those who were present at the platform to assume that the bronze-haired beauty was the one apparating her young charge instead of simply shadow-stepping like the Harvestmaiden preferred. They could've made it work if she'd insisted, the woman being no fan of the squeezed-tube effect of apparating, but in the end Chiron voted against it, the risks of being discovered doing something so blatantly non-Wizarding too great in the condensed atmosphere of Kings Cross Station.

Unlike when she visited Diagon Alley to collect her charge's school things, list of supplies and Frey's current measurements well in hand along with the key to his trust vault at Gringotts.

The latter of which shopkeepers were more than happy to charge in lieu of galleons-in-hand when they heard the name on the vault...for a small fee of course on the Gringotts end. One percent was a negligible price to pay to avoid the questions that might be asked by the Goblins over having a Harvestmaiden shopping for one of their most prestigious customers and long-standing accounts. The greedy little bastards were much more vigilant and discerning about such things than the wizards and witches that surround them.

She had to admit, she had fun doing Frey's school shopping while he was busy with his Father.
It was the first time she was really allowed to do such a thing for the young master, her Lord and the
youngling's Father usually supplied all his needs before they even appeared as needs. The two of
them took excellent care of the boy in her charge. Though Heidi admitted to a nearly overwhelming
curiosity regarding the identity of Frey's Father.

There were hints of course, tells that someone, like her, who spends an inordinate amount of time
around Frey might pick up. But they were just that: hints. Shadows of rumors and supposition,
hardly anything concrete.

But that was the province of the gods and the little hero-in-training to sort out and in the end none of
her affair.

That however, didn't stop her heart from pulling a little bit at the thought of her charge being gone
from September through the end of June. Nor did it settle the twinges she felt at knowing that in a
few short years, he would be grown and would no longer need her care and guidance at all.

She will enjoy returning to the company of her Lord, of course. And that of her sister
Harvestmaidens and the shadow warriors that serve Lord Thanatos.

But she would still miss her little Frey.

Her god-in-waiting.

And what a glorious day that will be, that of Frey's ascension to the pantheon of his birth. She hoped
that she'll be there to see it, the true fruit of her labors. Proof that all that has been done and that still
needs doing wasn't in vain.

A wonderful day.

Until then she still had shopping to tide her over and the wizarding shopping district was a
hoot...literally.

She purchased the finest of everything for her charge, only the best will do. Fine cotton and thick
woolen robes for the various season, including a set of emerald green silk formal robes so that he
would be prepared if he gets invited to a holiday ball or some-such event. Inky-black dragonhide
leather trousers – shed skin rather than harvested, Frey would have her head if she bought the other.
A warrior to the core even at eleven, he disliked taking the spoils of another's kill. Books of course,
but she picked up a few extra that would help him along on dueling, magical beasts, runes,
arithmancy, divination, and warding and combat-magics. All subjects he's at least had exposure to
but not been thoroughly drilled on like he has charms, transfiguration, potions, and magical plants.

Chiron had walked him through potion-making starting from when he was first old enough to stand
on a chair and stir a cauldron, the art going back well into history and one that the hero trainer still
enjoyed to this day. It helped that healing salves and potions could prevent the need for demigods to
become dependent on nectar and ambrosia for healing. It wasn't unheard of for the more battle-
happy demigods and goddess to become addicted to the powerful substances.

Whoever his father was, he'd drilled Frey quite relentlessly on charms, transfiguration, and defensive
and combat-magic, even adding it to Heidi's list of the many, many subjects Frey needed to learn.

Visiting the apothecary was an adventure for the former-nurse, having been steered towards one in
Grey Alley, just off of the main shopping district but not so disreputable as Knockturn Alley, by a
very helpful – and nearly drooling – clerk in the cauldron-maker's shop who'd sold her the finest of
pewter cauldrons and potion-prep tools including a variety of knives, mortars, pestals, and stirring
rods made out of many different metals and materials that boggled her mind but that she knew Frey was pleased by. Inside the aromatic store, she'd been cautioned to purchase everything separately rather than just buying one of the stock “Year 1” potions kits. A caution she'd passed onto her charge.

Apparently, only a few parents or students took the time to select the best ingredients, a practice that led to them gaining higher scores in their potions class. Unless they were alumni or current students of one of the school's houses called “Slytherin House”. Either the Potions Master was biased or he simply enjoyed marking down students due to their own laziness...or both.

For a trunk she selected the finest model they had that was still school-appropriate. She'd not be supplying her young, impressionable, prepubescent charge with a ready-made bedroom or Lord Thanatos forbid, a full apartment. Thank-you-very-much. But one covered in black leather – again dragonhide – with silver fittings and her charge's Wizarding initials: HJP, in silver leaf...that was acceptable. It had all the best charms: featherlight, expansion, security based around Frey's blood (which they added to the lock once she arrived back at camp), an automatic shrinking/unshrinking charm with a tap of a wand, wheels and a handle that popped out with another wand tap on another trigger, and five separate compartments that revealed themselves on a turn of a key and a different password for each compartment.

She appreciated the wardrobe compartment herself, one wave of Frey's wand and his clothes tidily arranged themselves. No worries about her youngling looking unkempt. Frey, being male and therefore having very different priorities, was a fan of the weapon's compartment. Especially since it was one of the compartments that was charmed against any and all magical detection by his Father. The magical luggage also had a standard compartment for his school odds-and-ends with another expansion charm, and two library compartments. One where Frey'd arranged his school-appropriate books, including a few that Chiron had given him when he'd started him on brewing that were rare but wouldn't raise any flags. The other was the second compartment charmed by Frey's Father containing all the eyebrow raising books: curses, advanced subject matter in all school subjects as well as combat-magics and warding, and his family history and magic books and grimoires.

The silver dragonhide school-bag with the featherlight and expansion charms with a hidden weapons sheath was another winner.

Much like her only purchase in Ollivander's wand shop: a frightfully-expensive basilisk-hide wand holster with undetectable, impervious, and anti-summoning charms.

She may be nearly a century old former-muggle Harvestmaiden...but she knew what Frey liked.

Like what she picked up after getting a telescope and star charts and other odds-and-ends: Frey's pet, a gorgeous pure-white snowy owl with just the barest hint of black on her wing tips.

Frey promptly hugged the life out of her and named the owl Hedwig.

Sighing, she stared wistfully down at her charge as he just about danced in place. He was so excited to start the next chapter of his life.

But he would be so far away. Both from her side and her protection. As a Harvestmaiden Heidi was no pushover.

He was growing and soon he would be gone.

Smiling for him as he pulled away and checked to make sure he had everything before saying goodbye, she tugged him into a quick hug, brushing one gentle hand down his clubbed-back hair.
He looked like a proper pure-blood prince, not a warrior's braid in sight in his dragonhide trousers and boots, a simple fine-cotton shirt in startling white already showing signs of stretching across his broad shoulders. Giving him a quick kiss to his brow, just over the faint silvery-scar, she saw him off, waving like every other parent and guardian on the platform.

She would miss her sweet, fierce boy.

…

Frey smiled and waved out the window of the Hogwarts Express from the empty compartment he'd found in the back of the train. He'd miss his caretaker. Heidi'd morphed from nanny to teacher to friend over the last ten years. He'd miss her.

He knew as well as Heidi did that this - going off to Hogwarts - marked the beginning of the end of her term of service as his caretaker.

In a few short years, she wouldn't be returning even during the holidays to watch over him anymore.

Fingering the wand-holster he gave a soft smile. But she'd made sure he would think of her while he was gone. He might not be able to see her like he would Grim on All Hallows, nor his Far either, Loki's magic being far-too-powerful to risk his shielding failing while withing the halls of the school, but she would still be with him nonetheless.

Like his other-parents, whose memories had never faded.

Pushing his sleeve back he stared skeptically at the wand at his arm. His Far and Thanatos had already warned him about regulating his power and being sure not to push too much through it. He'd made it with guidance from one of the elder-satyrs who used to train wizards in wand-lore before they forgot about the true intelligence and culture of cloven-kind.

Ebony and a heartstring from the hydra he slew two years ago. The first a gift from one of the dryads, the second kept by his Far for this day. Quite resilient and an even eleven inches long. It would do...for awhile.

Grim, as his Lord Thanatos persona that He rarely uses around Frey, told him that as the last Peverell the Elder Wand of legend was his. His to find, his to win, and his to Master.

None other would suit him so well.

A shocking revelation, even for his sixteen-year-old mind in its eleven-year-old housing to fathom. Demigods - or in his case a godling - might mature faster and spending a total of three years compressed in a couple of months did a lot to help him grasp a lot of the things his Far and the others had been trying to teach him...but when it came to things dropping in his lap like being told that one of the most famous wands of all time was his...times like that he still felt like an eleven-year-old kid trying to step into his Far's shoes.

But that wasn't as bad as some of the other things his Far and his guardians told him this summer.

Unbinding his powers sucked. There's just no other way to put it. It sucked. Suddenly he was blowing things up every-flipping-time he tried to do a spell. Plus there was the pain of it. Frey's taken wounds in battles against other heroes-in-training, from his instructors during his own training, and of course in monster battles...but still having his powers unbound was the worst pain he'd ever known.

Then there was that other thing.
The staying-under-the-radar thing.

One point which everyone agreed with, was trying to keep Frey off of Dumbledore's watch-list as much as possible. Nobody had managed to figure out what the old man's angle with interfering with Frey was and until they had an idea Frey wasn't to rock the boat. As much as possible for Frey anyway.

Which really blew because that meant he couldn't help his Uncle Siri who Heidi found out on her trip to Diagon Alley was being held in Azkaban prison. For apparently “betraying” his parents. Which Loki knew full-well he didn't do. Oh. And for killing the real traitor (which no lie, he very well could've done) and a dozen muggles.

There was nothing. Frey. Could. Do about it.

It was infuriating.

And enough to make him want to shit-start with Dumbledore just on principle.

Send his godfather to prison? Eat-shit-and-die.

So there.

Plus! Plus! Uncle Moony was freaking impossible to find. Frey didn't have many memories from when he was with his other parents but Uncle Siri and Uncle Moony were two of the good ones. That they were followers of his Far in spirit if not in practice was just a bonus.

He didn't even care about Heidi dictating his clothes: they were a little posh for his preferred everyday wear and the robes were a little cumbersome but nothing he couldn't work with. He could always wear his own clothes on the weekends according to his rule book. But making him club-back his hair instead of braiding it the way he liked was just adding insult to injury on top of everything else.

Stupid Wizarding school was more trouble than it's worth. Although he couldn't deny his need of it. He might've been able to get away with not going if not for his Far unbinding his powers. After that it became down-right dangerous for others to be around him until his got them under control. Which he did now for the most part but that was mostly just that. Control. Outside the little his Far and the others had taught him and his natural skills with fire, ice, and his animagus transformation, there wasn't much he knew about using all that lovely power that had been locked away inside of him.

His fire-whip (made from actual fire and not requiring his wand at all) was a thing of beauty. Deadly. But a beauty.

Would've seriously come in handy against that freaking hydra.

The sound of feet moving in his direction from further up the train had him sighing and looking ruefully at his pretty Hedwig in her cage before moving to take a book (basic dueling) from his trunk and sitting sedately on one of the benches, his wand covered by his sleeve once again and his dagger with its hydra sheath firmly covered and disillusioned at the small of his back.

“Well girl.” He said with a roll of his eye. For all that sometimes he felt small, as if he really was eleven and confused, mentally he really was older for all that his physical form didn't show the years he'd spent training with his Far and Grim. “Time for the playacting to begin. Ready?”

Hedwig gave a soft hoot as she ruffled her feathers into place as the door rattled and Frey released the locking charm he had on it to give himself time to adjust into what would be his role for the next
nine months.

“Idealistic boy-hero, take one, action.” He mumbled under his breath with a roll of his eyes as a bushy-haired brunette girl tumbled into his carriage along with a somewhat-chubby boy.

This was going to be a long school year.

…

Long was an understatement, Frey thought to himself as he restrained the urge to pinch the bridge of his nose or rub his temples to help ward off the headache brewing behind his eyes.

This girl was an encyclopedia.

But not in a fun way like a lot of the Athena campers back home. No. In the know-it-all-bookworm way that took everything written between the covers of a book as pure gospel.

Even to the point of regaling him with everything that she'd ever read about him. Him for Yggdrasil's sake! You'd think she'd be smart enough to know that if anyone would be an expert on The-Boy-Who-Lived, and wasn't that a stupid moniker, it would be him.

Apparent she's an expert in, well, him.

“Hermione.” He'd finally reached his wits' end with her babbling. “You've just spewed so many so-called facts at me I can barely keep them straight. I'll take them in reverse order.”

His tone was firm and no-nonsense, cutting her off without regard when she started to splutter. Her companion, Neville, someone he needed to get to know without the tag-along, simply watched the dynamics unfold as he shifted nervously from foot-to-foot. Frey had definitely gotten the better hand dealt to him when it came to guardians than his godbrother. The kid's a panicky-wreck of an eleven-year-old.

“One.” He started counting off. “No, I don't know what house I'm going to be in. Personally, I think choosing a house based on what other people think or because a so-called great or awful wizard came from that house is idiocy. You should go into the house that suits your personality and goals the best. You clearly belong in Ravenclaw. Gryffindor would eat you alive within a month. They're the house of the brave and courageous, not of the ridiculously smart and bookwormish. Two.”

He raised his voice slightly to continue speaking over her and preventing her from truly interrupting him.

“Neville would probably do well in Gryffindor. Both of his parents were Gryffindor and much of the time base traits like bravery and intelligence are thought, in the Wizarding World, to run in families. Plus I think it was pretty brave of him to barge into my compartment to find his missing toad. He cared more about his familiar than he did about what I would think.”

Neville blushed beet-red at the praise from the more mature-sounding and looking boy. Praise from The-Boy-Who-Lived. He sat a little straighter and raised his head from its downtrodden slump. Harry was right, that was pretty brave of him.

Frey smiled at the instant change in the other boy. Maybe working on Neville wouldn't be such a chore after all. They shared a bond through their mothers...even if Neville didn't know it yet. And same physical age or not, he'd always done well with mentoring younger campers. Annabeth was already coming along great.
“Three.” He held up another finger as he locked eyes with the visibly-fuming Ms. Granger. “None of those books were written with either my or my guardian’s consent and none of those so-called authors or biographers have ever talked to me. And they certainly weren’t there when my parents were murdered.”

Those publishers were in for a rude awakening and an unpleasant lawsuit when Chiron’s lawyers get a hold of them. He kept Hades’s Furies on retainer. Vicious when they’re after a demigod but a better lawyer and/or accountant didn’t exist.

“Four, and the reason you came in.” He arched a brow. She’d never even given him a chance to tell Neville if he’d seen his toad or not. “No, I haven’t seen Neville’s toad. *But,*” he stressed the word as Neville started to look puny again. “If you go and find any of the prefects or one of the professors on board they can summon...”

He looked at Neville to fill in the blanks for him.

“Trevor.” Neville said in a voice surprisingly deep for a young, and nervous, boy. “His name's Trevor.”

“Trevor.” Frey nodded sharply. “They can summon Trevor for you.”

Considering the matter closed, he turned back to his book and tuned them out. Or attempted to at least.

“But...” Ms. Granger had managed to find her voice at last, mind spinning with everything the rude – to her mind, really he’d been rather contained – boy had said.

“Good day, Ms. Granger.” Frey said firmly without looking up. “Neville.”

The other boy turned back once Hermione was out of the compartment, meeting those bright green eyes with his own mellow brown.

“Y-yeah?”

“We should talk sometime, *without* the audience.” Frey gave him a crooked little grin over the top of the book, one mirrored by its recipient.

“Yeah, sure.” Neville said before moving to catch Hermione. “Anytime, Potter.”

“It's Harry, Neville.”

“Harry.”

…

The rest of the ride went pretty smoothly. He’d only had to ignore and alienate one other boy – one remarkably more annoying than the Granger girl with bright red hair – who’d been on the verge of spewing vitriol all over Frey when he was pulled from the compartment by his older twin brothers. Now they were the others that his Far told him to be on the look out for. Fred and George Wesley had all the budding mischievous nature and talents that had brought his Dad and his Uncles Siri and Moony to his Far’s attention all those years ago. The Weasley twins, if his Far was right and he usually was about things within his purview, were even well on the way to surpassing the Marauder legacy as the finest pranksters and purveyors of mischief in Hogwarts’s history.

Frey couldn’t wait to meet them under better circumstances.
But the meeting he'd been waiting for happened a scant hour outside of Hogsmeade Station. Draco Malfoy, the Heir of the Noble House of Malfoy, had finally acted on the rumors of Harry Potter being on board the train and made his way to his compartment. House Malfoy was one of the few old-houses left who still keep to their ancient traditions – and worship. Not even the mad reign of Tom Riddle over the late Abraxas Malfoy had broken them of honoring the gods.

While relatively new to England's shores, only going back five hundred years or so, the Malfoys could trace their lineage back a thousand more in their homeland of France. Back before the Church and homogenized Western religion to the olde-ways. At their roots the Malfoys were Celts and Gaels. And, as things worked back then, Norse.

One thing the Northmen excelled at was spreading far and wide from their homeland. Often in search of the next village to pillage and army to fight but also for trade and commerce. Norse men would take foreign wives and concubines and foreign men were enamored with the statuesque good-looks and golden hair of the northern shieldmaidens who would accompany the raiding and trading parties.

The Malfoys had such a shieldmaiden in their family history. More than one actually. And with those northern beauties came the iconic blonde hair and pale eyes and skin of the Malfoy line. Their religion came with them as well, blending seamlessly into the rites practiced by the Malfoy family. One god in particular gave His blessing over the family and the line, guaranteeing them an heir with every generation.

Loki Odinson.

It was just the sort of meddling that appealed to him, keeping a strong line of Wizards and their strong magics from dying out while gaining powerful worshipers. And all under his both Father Odin's nose and that of the ruling pantheon of a different 'verse.

Fun fun fun.

That piece of patronage bumped Draco up to the top of Frey's get-to-know list. Possibly to the top of the maybe-friend list as well. It would depend on what sort of Wizard mini-Malfoy turned out to be.

The sound of voices in the corridor grew Frey's attention, a smirk crossing his face for a moment as he heard one young piping voice order a pair of slightly-lower voices to stay rather firmly.

Mini-Malfoy already had minions and they hadn't even reached school yet.

A mellow knock on the compartment door had him calling out permission for entry. Whether he was a little snot or not, at least Malfoy had some manners, unlike the majority of the others on board the train. It'd proven one thing to Frey at least, in the Wizarding world he was very much considered public-property and considerations like personal privacy were waved in the face of his "status". Something else he was thankful Lord Thanatos saved him from.

And thankful to his Far, mental age-confusion and body-angst aside, for making the decision to prematurely mentally age him. Dealing with all of this with an eleven-year-old's mind instead of the fifteen-to-sixteen year old one he currently had would've been a ruddy-nightmare.

“It's open,” he called out softly after releasing the locks he'd placed on the doors. One too many pubescent visitors had him aching for some privacy to sort himself out.

The boy who walked in was both exactly what he expected and a complete surprise. Far told him that today's Malfoys were of the power-mad and blood-conscious sort. Frey'd been expecting pure
arrogance and swaggering pride. And the blonde was proud, no doubt about it. But he was also graceful and fluid in his manner instead of swaggering and arrogant.

That's what Draco Malfoy was.

He knew already his place in the world and didn't feel the need to ram it down people's throats. Well...not in front of Frey, not yet at least. He could see the other boy doing just that if he ran into the annoying Weasley.

Draco was a pure-blood prince and was secure in that safe box, not mature or rebellious enough yet to start bucking his father and branching out.

Frey chuckled a little to himself.

Maybe he could help that along. If the Malfoys do indeed still keep the Olde Ways...Frey would be remiss if he didn't plan some mischief in honor of his Far.

Draco scrutinized the patiently-waiting boy carefully. This wasn't what he'd expected Harry Potter to look or act like. Everyone knew that he'd been raised in seclusion, away from the Wizarding world. His father had instructed him to get close to the Boy-Who-Lived if at all possible. To learn about his power and how he defeated the Dark Lord.

But this...this didn't look like someone Draco could easily fool or manipulate.

His green eyes were piercing and calm, watchful. He was dressed in the finest of materials, even some that Draco'd never seen before while the styles reminded him of paintings of when the Malfoys were Malfois and battle-mages. Olde.

That's what he made Draco think of. The Olde Ways. From his hair to his manner to his dress and demeanor. Harry Potter, Scion of the Light, had been raised steeped in the Olde Ways.

How perfectly fascinating.

Especially since his father'd been ranting for years about the “barmy old fool” Dumbledore doing his best to obliterate the Olde Ways from Magical Britain.

Finally making a decision, Draco squared his shoulders and stuck out his hand.

“They told me you were here.” He said simply. “My name's Draco Malfoy, Heir of the Noble and Ancient House of Malfoy. Pleased to make your acquaintance Lord Potter.”

Frey flashed him a wry grin. The boldness was refreshing after hearing others gush. Taking the offered hand in a firm grip he replied.

“Harry James Potter, Heir of the Most Ancient and Noble Houses of Potter and Peverell. Technically I'm not a Lord yet.”

Draco shook his hand and cocked his head to one side, confused for a moment.

“Not entirely.” He shook his head as they let go, feeling unsure about both correcting the young Lord and needing to look up the second House he'd claimed as his. Peverell rang a bell but it was a distant one. He went on to explain. “You might not be able to sit on the Wizengamot or access the Family vaults but when you turned eleven you automatically became the Lord of any Houses that are yours by either blood or magic as long as there wasn't another claimant to the title.”
“Really?” He trailed off thinking hard. Things like this happening are why he’d been having such complex lessons for so long. And still there were things he didn’t know from not growing up in Wizarding Britain. Stupid convoluted laws and rules. “I’d never heard that.”

Draco shrugged, still not entirely comfortable with the situation.

“It’s not really that well-known.” He tried to make the other boy feel better about his lapse before a peer and fellow Heir. Thankfully this happened with Draco and not someone like Pansy Parkinson. She’d act all nice but then she’d ridicule and belittle the boy behind his back. “The last time there was a Young Lord was back in the 1400’s I think.”

Mainly, Draco was relatively certain, since before the Grindlewald and Voldemort Blood Wars there was always another claimant to a Lordship, even if it was a distant one that waited for the stronger Heir to take up the charge, they often still existed in off-branches and distant cousins.

The Potter Line, however, was just one of dozens in the last hundred years that had dwindled and withered down to a single Heir or Lord - another issue that had Draco’s father ranting and raving over the diminishing of their people.

“Well I don't feel like a total idiot then.” Frey grinned, happy that he got an answering smile from the lithe blonde that became visibly more comfortable once he’d made it clear he wasn’t offended over being corrected. “Thanks for the lesson, Draco. Can I call you Draco?”

“Only if I can call you Harry.”

“Deal.” They each gave a firm nod to seal the pact and Draco made himself at home on the seat opposite Harry.

“You should go to Gringotts and have them do a blood and magical inheritance test.” Draco went on to advise. “That'll tell you all the titles you can claim and when and if they have any property or vaults attached.”

“Sounds interesting,” Frey said intrigued. “I'll do that.” Heidi should be okay with taking a detour to Diagon Alley before leaving for their flight home for the summer. He'd just have to clear it with Chiron first. He gave a mental groan, hating that they'd have to use mundane travel to help keep Dumbledore and the Ministry off of their trail.

“So,” Draco was kinda eager to change the subject to one less potentially-problematic. “Any idea about what house you want to be in?”

Frey shrugged.

“I'll probably be in Gryffindor like my parents.” Plus that'd make it easier to hide in plain-sight. “Even though I'm probably better suited to Ravenclaw or even Slytherin.”

“Why would you go to the house of the stupid and reckless if you'd get on better somewhere else? I'm going to be Slytherin just like my parents and all of their families.” He boasted a little at the end, unable to help himself even in the face of a more-mature peer.

His companion gave a downright cunning grin.

“Easy.” He said throwing Malfoy a bone. He wanted the kid to like him, especially since he wanted him renew his line for his Far. “Everyone expects their “hero” to be a Gryffindor. If I went to Slytherin, where I probably belong, I'd automatically be “Dark”. If I went to Ravenclaw they'd be worried about me being a recluse or a bookworm and watch me to act out like my father and his
friends. Hufflepuff doesn't even bear thinking about. But if I'm a Gryffindor...” He trailed off, testing to see if his potential friend could follow the thought to its conclusion.

Granted it might be a little much for an eleven-year-old.

“Everyone would see what they expect to see and ignore everything you did that contradicted it...as long as you do something inline with their expectations every once in a while.” Draco frowned for a moment. “That means we probably can't be friends at school.”

Frey shook his head, he already had a plan for that.

“No,” he smiled. “We can still be friends. As long as I make it a point to be friends with at least one person from each house, no one will think anything of me having a “snake” as a friend too.”

“All they'd see is a goody-goody Gryff without the normal pratty attitude.” Draco grinned. Yeah, this boy may be Olde but he was a Slytherin through and through. “Now all you need to do is rig the sorting somehow.”

Looking out the window and seeing how close they were to Hogsmeade Frey bid Draco goodbye, telling him he'd see him later.

Watching as the train rolled closer and closer to the ancient castle buried in the midst of Scotland, he took a deep breath.

It was time to put his Wizarding training to the test and see just how much of Loki's son he really was. His Far is a master of illusion and deception, even gaining the appellation of silver-tongue. Now it was Frey Lokison's turn to play a perfect Harry Potter. Even though that's not who he's been for the last ten years.

…

Frey grinned and waved at the friendly half-giant that exclaimed over him before climbing into a boat with Draco and his bodyguards Crabbe and Goyle, keeping up his calmly interested expression all the way through the ride to the castle and being greeted by a stern woman named Professor McGonagall. From what his Far said she had a soft spot for pranksters like his other father - as long as they were Gryffindors. He hoped she still had it.

He got a childish kick out of how the ghosts steered clear of him when they popped by to scare the “firsties”, something Draco watched with a calculating look on his angular face. The blonde aristocrat was already coming along nicely, especially since their little *tete-a-tete* on the train. Frey was mostly absorbed with scanning for those people his Far and guardians told him to either watch-for or be wary-of.

Draco, watch-for. Possible ally. Check.

Weasley twins, watch-for. Possible allies. Double check.

McGonagall, Flitwick, and Hagrid, friends/favorite teachers of his other-parents.

Then there were the others.

Dumbledore, of course, sitting at the head table and watching over everything with a twinkle charm on his eyes masking his manipulative nature.

A few other students and teachers who according to his information still followed the Olde Ways.
But it was the last name on the list that his Far and Grim want an answer about just where his allegiances and ideals lay.

One Professor Severus Snape.

A curious mixture of an old pure-blood Scion and muggle upbringing, he's a marked Death Eater according to Grim and his mother's oldest friend according to Far. He was one of the biggest enigmas in the game Dumbledore'd set up when Voldemort rose to power. An enigma that was Frey's charge to unravel.

Frey gave a little grin when soon after the Sorting Hat finished its song a frustrated and frowning Ms. Granger sat and sat up on the stool, apparently arguing with the Hat for a good five-minutes. She must not have paid much attention to what Frey told her. Eventually the Hat shouted “Ravenclaw!” and the flushed girl stormed off to sit with her new house to lukewarm applause.

He gave a genuine smile and clapped louder than ever when Neville was sorted into Gryffindor, excited to hopefully get to know his godbrother better.

“Good luck, Draco.” He whispered, buffeting the blonde's shoulder before the boy strutted confidently up to the Hat and was rapidly sorted into Slytherin.

Two more people between him and the Hat. He rolled his head on his neck and clamped down his mental shields. No one is sure what information the Hat passes onto the Heads of House or the Headmaster and he's not about to screw himself over by being reckless.

Finally it was time.

“Harald James Potter!” Professor McGonagall called out, the din in the Great Hall rising in a rapid frenzy before falling into a hush. Everyone wanted to see where the Boy-Who-Lived would be sorted. What sort was he?

Was he a Lion like his parents? He is a hero after all.

A Raven? A Badger?

Or, Merlin forbid...a Snake?

Ignoring the eyes watching him from every corner of the Hall, some burning more than others, Frey walked to the stool with the calm grace that was quickly becoming his trademark among his year-mates. It wasn't the aristocratic glide of Malfoy but it was somewhat similar only more...predatory if they would take the time to categorize it.

Lifting the Hat he perched on the stool and lowered it onto his head.

“My my.” Frey heard whispering in his head. “You have impressive shields, young Lord.”

“Thank you.” He replied politely.

“I'll need you to lower them, young one.” The Hat was both chiding and apologetic in tone. “I need to get a feel for what makes you, you, to do your Sorting. Though with shields like this I should probably just send you to Slytherin right-off. You'd do well there.”

“Not Slytherin please.” Frey worked quickly, trying to figure out a way out of this without giving an inch. “Too much attention for me.”
“Hmm.” The Hat pondered. It’d been a long while since there was someone who could keep him out. And that young one went right to Slytherin where he remains to this day as the Head. “If you won’t let me in, and Slytherin won’t do, what do you suggest young Lordling?”

“What about Gryffindor?” He asked, nearly pleading. He really, really doesn't want to let this Hat into his head. “Like my parents and Uncle Siri and Uncle Moony?”

“Ahh...” The Hat made an enlightened sound. “A future Marauder are you? Well then it better be...”

“Gryffindor!”

And no one saw the wink Frey shot Draco accept for the two of them and a chuckling Hat.
Chapter Four

The first week flew by quickly for Frey, followed on swift wings by the next and the next. Almost before he knew it Samhain was upon him with all of the last two months disappearing in a combination of utter boredom coupled to unerring deception as he strode to act out the part demanded of him while still holding true to both his raising and his purpose at Hogwarts. During the first week, he'd readily established that while for the most part his contemporaries in Gryffindor don't care for him, Neville and one of the girls in their year named Parvati being notable exceptions, neither are the rest willing to either antagonize a powerful wizard-in-training nor completely turn on their own. His ability to make friends with both the upper years of his own House and those of other Houses serving him well in his pretense of being an affable, friendly, but still not-to-be-trifled-with young man.

One of the first steps he took towards this aim along with keeping his friendship with Draco alive and well was the inception of a study group. Originally just for History of Magic, a true throw-away class if ever there was one, and only consisting of himself, Neville, Draco, and Draco's friends Blaise and Theo, it's efficacy was quickly shown by their excellent test scores on their first HoM exam. When Neville's utter failure at Potions turned from bad to abysmal, Draco was prevailed upon to add to the scope of the groups studies, followed swiftly by Frey's helping them with DADA, a subject where he truly shone due to a combination of natural ability, interest, and his playing his part as the "Heroic" Gryffindor.

After the first month of being left mainly on their own in their little alcove of the massive library, their course of studies had expanded to cover all the core subjects when their rising test and homework scores and ability to tally up House points began to be noticed. By the close of the first week of October they were confronted, and not by who they thought.

Draco and the other Slytherins had taken pleasure in knocking the bushy-haired Ms. Granger off of her pedestal and truly enjoyed the look on her face whenever she was bested in class, the Ravenclaw falling from first across the board to sixth behind the group members except in Potions where she still fought for fourth behind the group's Slytherins. Professor Snape, while not too odious to the pair of Gryffindors who'd befriended his godson, still couldn't stomach to give them praise of any sort. It would've made sense then, to most, for the muggleborn girl to attempt to join them in their studying. Instead, she seemed content to believe them “cheaters” and that no one could possibly best her so thoroughly in academics.

As if Padma's joining was a sign, several others followed in the next week including a few upper
years who took it upon themselves to help “the firsties.” Naturally, theses elders were from Hufflepuff but their knowledge of where to find the right resources for essays and which Professors might spring a surprise exam were invaluable.

A highlight of their pre-Samhain October was the start of flying lessons, where Ron Weasley was successfully taunted into both breaking the rules and getting thrown into detentions with Filch but also broke his wrist and arm when he fell from his broom. Since he’d been being a prat to Neville...again...Frey felt that was justice well deserved. On his own part Frey enjoyed the sensation of flying although he was worried about being in the domain of both the All-Father and his uncle Thor as well as Zeus. At least he wasn’t struck from the sky like he’d heard of the Greek doing to the offspring of his brothers.

Neville was eventually coaxed onto a broom and was soon enjoying himself alongside his new-found friends and friendly-acquaintances much to the pride of a beaming Madame Hooch who promptly awarded him ten-points to Gryffindor for bravely facing his fears.

Sitting with his mismash of friends at the feast, Frey restrained the urge to fidget in a combination of nerves and excitement. This was the first time he’d be presiding over the All-Hallows rites and he’d convinced both Neville and Draco to join him. Their little odd-coupling was coming right along, with Draco being less of a clone of his father and Neville learning to have confidence from the Slytherin Prince (Prince of Cockiness as Frey liked to tease when it's brought up.)

Something else was adding to his disquiet. His godling survivor-sense or monster-dar as Grover calls it, was going crazy. Or moreso than usual.

That had to be his least favorite part about Hogwarts, behind even incompetent or belligerent Professors and caretakers. All the different magical creatures were messing with his ability to sense when monsters were around. At least he knows Care of Magical Creatures will either be a huge help or a massive failure if he decides to take the class.

In theory the wards around the school itself should keep monsters out...but there wasn't a guarantee of that. Likewise the wards surrounding the immediate grounds eventually weakened the closer you were to Hogsmeade and/or the Forbidden Forest.

Before Frey could write-off his internal warning system for the dozenth time that week, the stuttering nincompoop Professor for DADA stumbled through the doors of the Great Hall.

“T-t-t-Troll! In-n-n the d-d-dungeons! T-t-thought you should know!” And with that pronouncement appeared to faint like a sissy and faceplant into the hard cold stone of the castle floor.

The Headmaster rose immediately to his feet and ordering the students to their Houses took off with several professors to find and contain the beast, much to Frey's disgust.

“You guys can't go to your Houses.” He hissed at his Slytherins and Hufflepuffs. After exchanging glances, Draco and the others agreed. “Neville.” He was about to do something that would get him in soo much trouble....his Dad would be so proud. “Take Draco and the others up to our common room.”

“What?!” Neville did a double take as did their other friends. “McGonagall will kill me for giving the password out to the other Houses.”

“Blame me.” Frey said with a shrug as he climbed with fluid grace to his feet. “I'm sure Professor Snape will have zero trouble assigning me detention until the Winter Break for breaking one of the main rules. But they can't go back to their common rooms, it's too dangerous.”
The older Slytherins and Hufflepuffs from the surrounding tables heard him and agreed to herd their fellow housemates up to Gryffindor...and to let Frey bear the burden of the points-loss and detentions.

Draco grabbed his arm before he could disappear. “And where do you think you’re going?”

Frey just gave him a reckless grin as he folded up his braided and loose hair into a club at the base of his neck, failing to give the blonde an answer.

Muttering under his breath about recklessness unbecoming a snake-in-hiding, the Malfoy heir took a quick glance around to make sure they weren’t observed sneaking off before following his friend.

“It’s a troll, Harry.” Draco whisper-whined as they crept through the shadowed halls, the other boy leading him unerringly towards one of the lavatories, following the ripe stench of, well, troll. “A troll. What do you think two first-years are going to be able to do against a troll?”

Frey hummed under his breath. “Wait and see, my Dragon. Wait and see.”

A shriek sounded from down the hall, making them hurry towards the inevitable conflict. Peeking around the shattered door frame of the girls' loo, they spied the unfortunate victim of the misplaced mountain troll.

“Granger.” Draco hissed, rolling his eyes. “It had to be Granger. Can’t we just leave her?” He asked only half joking.

Frey chuckled under his breath as he grasped his dagger in one hand and his wand in the other, preparing to rather thoroughly blow his cover to his friend. There was no way Draco would fail to ask more questions about his upbringing after this. It just depended on how much information it would take to satisfy the other boy without endangering himself.

“She fainted.” Frey whispered, spying the still form huddled under the sink as the massive-smelly creature bashed around the bathroom, shattering porcelain with every swing of his club. “When I say 'go' sprint over to her and get her out of there. Use the levitation charm, you've got it pretty well mastered and it'll be easier than trying to carry her.”

“And what'll you be doing?” Draco asked with just a touch of fear trembling in his voice. Yeah, dart all the way across the large room and levitate an annoying mudblood to safety without getting smashed. No problem.

The godling gave his younger friend a rakish grin. “Distracting the troll, of course.”

Of course. Draco snorted to himself. Just as easy as that.

Gripping his dagger and sending a tripping hex at the lumbering form of the troll, Frey shouted “Go!”, his accomplice taking off like a shot for the crumpled form of their fellow first-year. Watching out of the corner of his eye for the blonde to be thoroughly distracted by his given task, Frey ducked a blow as the troll climbed back to its feet with a foul-smelling bellow of sound. Darting around the creature, he quickly sliced at both its heels with his Stygian-blade the never-dulling dagger making simple work of the thick hide and thicker tendons, sending the beast crashing back to the ground.

Having to dodge back against the wall with a thud and a sharp pain through his shoulder at a particularly well-aimed smack of the club, Frey gritted his teeth and rose once again to his feet as he caught sight of Draco maneuvering the slack form out of harm's way. Sending the club flying out a window with a wave of his wand that burned his hand as the over-powered spell overheated the
ebony casing, his hissed a curse under his breath. He'd have to be more careful from now on or he'd be out of a wand – something that would definitely draw too much attention to the godling.

Dodging the still-flailing arms and legs of the monster, Frey went to the smelly-thing's weakness, its neck, and with a precise jab of Stygian iron severed its spinal cord. Stumbling back as he caught the tail-end of one of its death-throws, he picked up the sounds of approaching teachers.

Well, if nothing else taking on a troll would shore up any weak spots in the boy-hero guise he would be wearing for nine-months of the year.

Whispering rapidly under his breath, he dedicated the slain creature to his patron Thanatos before concealing his bloodied-dagger just as the professors Dumbledore, McGonagall, Snape, Flitwick, and Quirell appeared. As the Headmaster opened his mouth to question Frey and Draco – who was still hovering over the unconscious Granger – the troll followed the path of slain-monsters everywhere by turning into golden dust and vanishing. The Headmaster's mouth closed with a sharp click as the rest of the teachers goggled at the sight, Draco and an acting Frey not far behind in their shock.

"An illusion?" Flitwick ventured in his nearly-squeaky voice.

"It didn't feel like an illusion." Frey muttered under his breath – but not quite quiet enough if the sharp-eyed glare of his head of House was any indication.

"Or smell like one either." Draco whispered to his friend, almost laughing in his post-danger high.

"Quite." Professor Snape sneered. "Would either of you care to explain what you are doing out of your common rooms?"

"Well..." The boys drawled turning to look at each other and the crumpled Ravenclaw at their feet.

"It wasn't very safe of the Headmaster to send the Slytherins and Hufflepuffs down to the dungeons when that's where Professor Quirrell saw the troll." Frey began, the train of thought quickly picked up by his partner-in-slaying. Not that Draco really knew that he was now a partner-in-slaying...but still.

"So Harry suggested that we and the Puffs go up to Gryffindor Tower with Longbottom showing them the way."

The professors exchanged chagrined looks at the oversight, all but Snape who looked partly relieved for his snakes and partly vindicated that a first-year saw the same problem with the Headmaster's orders that he'd been complaining about throughout the search for the troll. At times the old man's blatant prejudice erupted in spectacular fashion that would put the other Houses in harms way or utterly dispirit them. This evening's events were no exception.

"One of the 'Claws mentioned that no one had seen Granger since Weasley made her cry earlier," Frey continued, now completely spinning a yarn for the teachers while Draco waited for a chance to shore up any holes in the story. "So we decided to split off and find her.

"We don't like the swotty wreck." Draco inserted with a snobbish sniff, making all the professors but Snape frown at his words. "But we didn't want her to be troll-food either."

"She passed out about the time we got here following her shrieks." Frey could barely keep a lid on his disdain. Seriously. She was a little eleven year old girl. If she hadn't been so hysterical she could've just dodged around the lumbering menace and run for it rather than shrieking and crying like some damsel-in-distress. "Draco went and levitated her out into the hall..."
“...and Harry distracted the troll with tripping-jinxes.” Draco added before frowning in thought. “It must've knocked itself out or something.”

“Or something...” Frey muttered under his breath. “And then you came and it just...”

The boys looked at each other and shrugged, Frey wincing a little at his sore and wounded muscles.

“Poofed.”

“Fascinating tale, boys.” Dumbledore twinkled at them.

“However.” Professor McGonagall scowled at them in concert with Snape. “You were extremely reckless and put yourselves knowingly in danger!”

“Indeed.” Snape drawled as Flitwick levitated his unconscious charge with the intent of taking her to the hospital wing. “Fifty points from Gryffindor for putting yourself and others in harm's way Mr. Potter.”

Minerva McGonagall rolled her eyes in exasperation at her colleague's blatant favoritism.

“And twenty each to Gryffindor and Slytherin for thinking of others and coming to a school-mate's rescue despite your own feelings.” She added.

“Now Minerva,” Albus twinkled at his old friend. “I think an additional twenty each for bravery would be in order as well with another twenty to Mr. Potter for leadership for sending the other Houses to safety.”

Severus rolled his eyes at the blatant pandering to the Gryffindor. At least with the points to Slytherin, Draco still earned thirty more than did Potter with the deduction.

The head of Gryffindor clapped her hands sharply. “We will debate the disappearance of the troll another time. Now, Mr. Potter.” She cast a stern eye over her young lion. “To Madam Pomfrey with you.”

Leaning quickly over to Draco, Frey whispered. “Midnight, medical wing, you and Neville.”

The blonde nodded as his godfather swept him away to collect the rest of their house from the territory of the red-and-gold.

At least being friends with Harry wouldn't be boring.

...
Disclaimer: Yep, I still don't own HP, Avengers, or Percy Jackson...

Author's Note: The rites that I use for Samhain, Yule, etc. all come from my brain and are NOT under any circumstances supposed to reflect any religion or ethnic group's practices past or present. Also, because of the mental aging I've done with Frey, he won't be developing feelings for people in his own physical age group until they're around sixteen physically with his age disconnect he's got going on so his first couple relationships will likely wind up being with someone older like Viktor Krum or Cedric Diggory or even a crush on Snape rather than say, Draco Malfoy.

Chapter Five

Three boys, one older in mind than in looks, huddled in a corner of the Hogwarts infirmary underneath the protection of a ward cast by Frey's wand and wordlessly, much to the admiration of his two friends. Loki knew before he sent his son to Hogwarts and fulfilled the bargain between himself and the late Potters that the young prince would need a way to perform the Rites without drawing attention from Dumbledore or any of the other professors.

The ward was a simple thing, merely cloaking any magics cast in a specific area for a period of time. It wouldn't conceal large-scale magic like the Unforgivables, but it would allow one to practice the Olde Ways unhindered.

Each boy sat an even distance from the others, creating a triangle centered around a small fire glowing in a simple obsidian chalice the size of a cooking pot. Frey said a word and blew into the chalice, making the fire dart up towards the ceiling before dying back down, much to the surprise of both Neville and Draco. They'd seen others do such things during the Rites, but never someone as young as they are. Wandless magics like that was commonly held as impossible until their cores stabilized in their late teens.

But then, nothing about Harry so far went along with what was “commonly held” to be true one way or another.

In front of each boy was a bowl, no more than a large stemless glass really, each a gift from one of each boy's god-parents and presented at their Naming. They were as individual as both the child and the giver. Severus Snape presented the new Malfoy Heir with a Ritual vessel wrought from purest silver and studded with emerald cabochons each the size of the then-infants palm. The Potters gifted newborn Neville with one of pale yellow gold with an ornamentation of embossed lions and owls in a slightly darker gold tone.

Like many things about Frey – or rather Harry as he was known to his godfather Sirius Black – his Ritual vessel was unique. However unlike the others, it wasn't new. Sirius – being Sirius – decided to buck the common ways and go back to an older tradition, gifting his new honorary nephew with a Black relic that harkened back to the early days of his Ancient and Noble House. A true Ritual Vessel from the Olde days, it was roughly carved and shaped from solid rock before being engraved and polished. That wouldn't be so startling or make such a kingly gift if not for the rock it was made
Sirius Black gifted his godson with a Ritual vessel made from pure black diamond.

The scandal of giving away such a rare and prized family treasure was horrendous. Sirius was well pleased at his mother's screeching.

Each boy also had a selection of three herb or plant sprigs and a ritual athame, Frey using his Stygian dagger in place of the normal curved blade.

Beginning the Rite, Frey glanced at each of the others then receiving nods that they were ready began just on time, a mere five minutes before midnight.

“On this, the Hallowed Night, take these small offerings and hear our pleas.

Take our words and pass them to those who have gone before thee and me.”

Reaching over he picked up the first herb sprig, yew leaves for Thanatos, he lit them from the ritual center fire and then dropped the smoldering bundle into his vessel.

“To my patron Lord Thanatos, Avatar and God of Death and Shadows. Watch over my parents and all my family who have gone on before me.”

Draco and Neville murmured their own words, Frey only knowing who they invoked by watching which sprigs they tossed into their vessels. He held back a laugh when he saw the hops and heather – Loki's mixture – tossed in by Draco. It seemed the Malfoys did still hold true to their patron. Neville's offering merely intrigued him, grape leaves for Dionysius and laurel for Apollo. Perhaps he sought their favor in curing his parents' madness.

Continuing Frey reached for the next – dried tiger lily flowers.

“For my mother Lily, may she be safe and happy in Valhalla.” He said speaking lowly so as not to be overheard, the others following his lead. The Samhain Rites may be celebrated with others but was still considered one of the most private of the Olde rituals. Trying to eavesdrop on someone who was being circumspect was considered the height of rudeness and feuds still rage over lesser insults.

Waiting for the others Frey cocked his head to one side as he studied the smoke, picking out the various shapes he saw for later interpretation. He couldn't actually speak to the dead – not yet anyway – but they could send a message or two through the ether on the All Hallows if you knew where to look.

Picking up the last – wolfsbane and dogwood in honor of his father's best friends – Frey began to finish the little but important ritual.

“For my -adoptive-” he whispered under his breath “father, James. May he long enjoy Elysium and the Isle of the Blest.”

“As the night closes and the veil reforms, we beseech thee ancient powers.

Hear our words, hear our cry.

All those of ours on the other side.

We live in honor of your name.
We remember and we stay true to our ways.

Magic to magic and blood to blood.”

With the last words Frey picked up his dagger and pricked his palm allowing his blood to run down and sprinkle over the herbs which ignited with a whoosh the others' offerings following suit. They burned hot and white for an impossibly long moment before extinguishing with a gust of wind, taking all traces of the offerings with it and leaving only cleansed chalices behind in the shadows of the new day.

…

After the Samhain rites Draco and Neville hurried off to bed but not before a true bond of friendship and comradery formed between the three boys. In the weeks following, they managed to continue to baffle their professors over the triadic friendship that crossed House lines. While their study group deflected most of the scrutiny, the more insightful adults surrounding them couldn't help but notice the more intimate bond between the most unlikely of friends.

After all, who ever would've thought a Malfyoy would become bosom-buddies with a Longbottom let alone a Potter.

Despite the mild upsurge in attention, Frey continued to coast under the radar for the most part. Yes, he was in the top of all classes. Yes, he'd managed to continue his “hero” training by suckering Draco and Neville into sparring practices, the other boys having had fencing and dueling lessons with tutors. But in reality, nothing was worthy of too much attention from the professors, even with the jittery behavior of Quirrell and Snape's general sour demeanor.

…

Before they knew it, Yule was upon them and with it Winter Break.

In keeping with the charade that Frey still lived with the extremely-unpleasant Dursleys for Dumbledore's sake, the young godling signed up to stay over the break even though he'd much rather go home and see Heidi and Chiron and spend the holiday sparring with Luke and teasing Annabeth.

When invited by Draco to the Malfoy's Annual Yule Ball, Frey regretfully declined. As much as he'd love to have a shot at investigating and...liberating (steal*cough*cough) some of the ancient and Dark artifacts Draco's family was sure to have collected through the centuries, Frey wasn't firmly planted in the role of the “heroic” Harry he was supposed to portray in order to stay under the radar. He'd made inroads and only a few of the professors still watched him such as the venerable Headmaster, Potions Master, and just confusing DADA instructor.

Quirrell was a mass of confusion for the young godling. Nothing about him made sense. Not one single, solitary little thing.

How does a supposedly confident, well-liked professor according to Cedric, one of the older Hufflepuffs he'd become acquainted with, turn into a stuttering, jittery wreck of a wizard? What even possessed him to venture off into Albania in order to research vampires to begin with when he already had a cushy job teaching Muggle Studies at one of the most prestigious wizarding schools in the world?

What, how, when, where, why, all of them questions with few answers and baffling blanks in the mystery of Professor Quirrell.
Especially when you add in the few, but noticeable “glitches” as Frey’d taken to calling them.

They mostly happened around him which would naturally catch his attention even without his superior survival senses insisting something was “off” with the professor. But they also occurred, if much more rarely, around Frey’s other object of curiosity, Professor Snape. Which led Frey to the question, what in the world did the two of them have in common that leads to the “glitches”?

Glitches: times where a person’s, in this case Quirrell’s, behavior appeared to freeze, chip, or crack, showing another persona underneath the surface. Like a sudden flaw in an otherwise flawless mask that appeared from too much wear and tear.

In the case of the Professor Snape-induced glitches, it was very subtle. Something one would only catch if they were watching Quirrell for another reason already. Not something that one would note if merely seen in passing, no matter the number of occurrences.

Quirrell watched Snape like Snape watched Quirrell.

And sometimes his eyes would shine red for the briefest of moments.

Snape watched everyone and everything within his purview with a discerning and gimlet eye. He didn't miss a trick and was always aware of his surroundings and company. Frey could easily see why and how he pulled off being a spy, even if his loyalties were still in question to the godling. For some reason that Frey had yet to discover, Snape watched Quirrell with more than his usual dose of disdain and wariness he used with most of the rest of the human species.

Which was alarming in itself as the only other beings Snape watched like that that Frey had noticed were himself, Draco, and the Headmaster.

For Quirrell to be as observant of Snape as Snape was of him was completely out-of-character, even for his less-neurotic self from before he went to Albania.

The glitches around Frey – or from Quirrell's perspective, young Harry Potter – happened with some regularity. Usually during the course of the DADA classes something, a question a phrase something, would spark something within Quirrell and the stuttering would fade into a smooth baritone and the nervous tics would disappear. In those moments Frey could almost see the persona hiding underneath the stuttering wreck. Then also like Quirrell's observances of Snape, every now and then Frey would look up and catch his teacher's eye only to catch a tinge of red.

All of which led Frey to two possibilities.

Either A. Quirrell was intentionally hiding his power and potential for some reason only known to him and possibly through use of a Dark ritual (hence the red in his eyes) or B. Quirrell was possessed by a spirit or shade of some sort.

Unfortunately while Frey's been well educated in many things by his Far, his Patron, and his caretakers, he wasn't an expert in either Dark rituals used for concealment (his Far had considered using one on him before he came to Hogwarts but quickly abandoned the idea) nor in possessions. Honestly he wouldn't even know where to start researching either and digging through his library compartments in his trunks was likely to consume most of his Yule break.

Not that he had much else to devote his time to with most everyone gone...

Hmm...

Projects upon projects.
And he still wasn't sure about the allegiances of that slippery bastard Severus Snape!

…

The Yule holiday found Frey celebrating alone in the Come-and-Go Room as the house elves called it. Loki called it proof of Rowena Ravenclaw's eccentricity. No teacher in their right mind after all would create such a thing where children were able to stumble upon it, no matter how unlikely it was.

Ronald Weasley of all annoyances had decided to stay over break while his parents gallivanted off to Romania to visit his brother or some such thing. How two apparently not-quite-stable but not-quite-poor financially parents could afford to do so was just another of the wizarding world's mysteries as far as Frey was concerned. What kind of parents would spend so much on a trip instead of buying new clothes and school supplies for their still-at-home children Frey didn't know.

But it certainly made him grateful his Grim spirited him away from both the Dursleys and wizarding society. Neither seemed to him to have their priorities in order.

A lovely little house elf named Timsy directed him to the seventh floor corridor and the awful tapestry of the Barmy's ballet-trolls when he asked about the room. Loki wasn't sure of it's location and cautioned him to be careful when inquiring about it. It would be a massive asset in continuing his training but only if it wasn't known to the entire school. It wouldn't take much to have every Ron Weasley in the place trying to improve their Quidditch game or some such nonsense.

Frey'd snuck out into the Forbidden Forest, selecting a smallish-oak and cutting it down with a quick flex of his magic. After cutting off a two-foot long section from the stump end and debarking it he magicked the rest of the tree away for the elves to use as firewood for the many, many fireplaces in the drafty castle. Once the log was allowed to dry (with some help from his magic) Frey then cut runes into the smooth wood: Uruz for a time of great energy and health along with masculine potency and wisdom, Eihwaz for protection and defense, Perthro for the mysteries surrounding him and then Mannaz last to represent himself rather than Hogwarts at large. While he didn't know if the last was needed as he'd not heard of another performing Yule rights, Frey still took the precaution. Lastly he wrapped the log in a garland woven of fir, holly, yew, and mistletoe before sprinkling it with wine for the offering.

Saying his Yule words as the longest night covered the land, Frey held vigil until the morning dawned, giving thanks to his Far's pantheon for the new day and the return of the sun.

Before he could climb to his feet and return to the Tower for some sleep after the long night watching the flames dance and allowing his mind to roam free and unfettered by the stresses of living what amounted to a double life, the fire from the log shot up sparkling green and silver and gold. Frey grinned brightly at the sign from his Far as the new flames burned up the log completely, leaving a wrapped bundle in its wake and the warm sensation of his father's embrace surrounding him. Concentrating fiercely, Frey wrapped his hands around the small gift he'd fashioned, a small carved plaque depicting Loki cuddling a younger Frey, and sent it off to find his Far wherever he might be with a flash of light and a sudden and massive drain on the young godling's powers.

Pleased with himself that his new trick had worked – even if it made him a bit...ok...a lot woozy – Frey picked up the Yule gift from his Far and unwrapped it with eager hands. Inside of the silken material which turned out to be a small belt pouch and a gift all on its own sat a shining cloak pin, the sort used to fasten old-fashioned cloaks like the black winter ones preferred by the Hogwarts staff and made up part of his uniform. Frey had one already which while blank to begin with became engraved with the Gryffindor lion up on being sorted but this one was much more to his taste. Elegant but by no means simple, it was an oval around three inches tall and half as wide made out of
hammered old gold. He held it in one hand, awed by the age and powerful protection magic he could feel permeating the metal.

And carved in painstaking detail was the symbol of the Norse pantheon: Yggdrasil, the Tree of Life.

Frey knew that if anyone was there they would see the most ridiculous of grins on his face. He simply didn't care. After eleven years (sixteen if you count all their time-bending) Loki was starting to take steps to claim his Firstborn son and Heir and he couldn't possibly be happier.

…

Christmas came with much less fanfare on Frey's part and much more on everyone else’s. He’d sent out gifts to those close enough to expect them: a new pair of dragon-hide boots for Draco, chocolate for the girls from their study group, a wand holster and some rare seeds for Neville, book vouchers for Blaise and Theo. He knew Heidi would’ve kept to their agreement and waited to open her gift, even though it'd been sitting on his bed since the day he left and knew she was sure to appreciate the silk scarf he'd found on one of his training missions with Chiron.

He also sent out a few unexpected gifts.

A warm cloak to his Uncle Moony, wherever he was holed up. Blankets with warming and cleaning charms to Uncle Padfoot in Azkaban, delivered by way of one of Thanatos's Reapers...which probably gave the old dog a semi-stroke. The notes with both were simple and likely to have all the more impact for it: Missing you, Harry.

If that didn't get the werewolf moving, nothing would.

The last gift on his list was all at once the most reckless and the most calculated, with both the biggest change for failure and derision as well as rewards.

To Professor Severus Snape, Frey sent a small hand-bound volume filled with copies of letters and journal entries from those found among his Potter documents Thanatos liberated from the Vaults. All were written by his late mother Lily and all were about her friendship with the little boy from down the river: one Severus Tobias Snape. Interspersed among the writings were pictures also gleaned from the vault contents of Lily both as a young girl and older both with and without Snape. There was even one that must've been taken without his knowledge on the day she asked him to watch over her son. The worry was evident in both their faces, but none-the-less Severus was happy for his oldest friend as she carefully placed her newborn son in his arms.

Frey only hoped that the Professor didn't skin him alive for his presumption.

He sent it without a note but then he didn't quite think one was necessary.

…

Covered in the cloak he'd received among his other gifts, Frey crept through the Hogwarts corridors. He'd felt the compulsion magic that was placed upon the magnificent garment that simply reeked of Lord Thanatos's divinity and was letting it lead him to wherever the giver wanted him to go. His instincts told him that he was safe, a feeling bolstered by the Hallow concealing him. Even with the shady compulsion magic, it still felt amazing to have the Hallow once more in Peverall hands. It more than anything else was his inheritance from his adoptive father and he'd not felt right ever since he'd learned of it – and of it's disappearance before his death and Thanatos's reappearance in the mortal world.

The card that accompanied it wasn't exactly soothing either, more like a prompt towards misbehavior
in an eleven-year-old's hands: *Use It Well.*

Use it well.

Most first years would use it to pull pranks, sneak out of the castle, and otherwise drive Filch further into drink. Using it well would not be high on the agenda. And something told him the sender was well aware of that.

But still the sender wanted him to see something specific and as curious as ever and wanting to get to the bottom of some of the manipulations that loomed over him, Frey went along for the ride.

Eventually coming to a stop before an ornate mirror tucked away in an abandoned classroom, Frey restrained his need to look over toward the corner where he could sense the Headmaster hiding within the concealing shadows. At least he knew the sender of the cloak wasn't out for his blood. In theory.

Studying the writing along the gilt edge a moment he rolled his eyes. Apparently the venerable Headmaster wanted a boost along the path of understanding the Boy-Who-Lived. The Mirror of Erised. Said to show you your heart's desire and known for bewitching and ensnaring weak and strong alike with it's visions of what could or couldn't be.

Deciding to bite and already having a good idea of what it would show, Frey lowered the concealing hood of the cloak and allowed his eyes to rest on the picture shown for several long moments. Yes. He could see now why so many have been lost to the depths of the Mirror. There he stood in Odin's golden Hall, his Far on one side and his mother on the other with the god-King himself beaming down with pride at the tableau.

Knowing how the Headmaster would interpret his words and wanting him to make that false interpretation to deepen his cover, Frey spoke as he lifted his hood once more to cover him.

“Already knew that. I dream of my parents,” well *parent* anyway. Loki really is fond of dreamwalking. “Every night.”

Turning he left the room, leaving the Headmaster to his comforting – but utterly wrong – conclusions about his boy-hero wanting nothing more than a sappy reunion with his parents.

…

A flying body nearly tackled Frey right off the stairs leading up to the Great Hall. Consisting of bright blonde hair and babbling, Frey rather thought it was the shock of Draco completely abandoning his public Slytherin mask for the moment that nearly caused him to lose his footing instead of the total mass of the airborne eleven-year-old's body. He'd taken harder hits from Annabeth once he taught her how to properly utilize her body weight in combat.

“Harry!” The blonde's voice was so high with excitement it was nearing a squeal while the amused forms of Blaise and Theo watched from a safe distance as they climbed the steps. “I love them! They're perfect! Thank-you-thank-you-thank-you!”

Draco knew he was acting out of character as he just about hung from the larger boy's neck and shoulders as he expressed his thanks. And he honestly couldn't care less. The boots Harry sent him for Christmas had sent him into raptures and his euphoria had yet to abate. They were perfect Opaleye hide, extremely rare and exquisitely crafted with the Malfoy crest on the other upper and the Slytherin crest on the inner upper. Even his father was envious and his father has only the best of everything.
They were perfect.

*Harry* was the perfect friend.

Or just perfect.

And Draco was perfectly happy to show his appreciation. He'll have to do something equally as wonderful for Harry's birthday.

Patting Draco on the back with the hand not occupied with carrying his book bag, Frey glanced over at the patently-amused Slytherins watching their Prince assault the Gryffindor with his effusive thanks.

“I guess he liked his present then?” He asked them dryly as the Prince showed no signs of calming down anytime soon. To the point that Frey was almost carrying him into the Great Hall for breakfast. Hopefully he'll regain his senses before Frey had to split off for the Gryffindor table.

Although...

The thought of the scene Weasley would make over being joined for a meal by Draco would almost be worth the embarrassment of having treated the blonde as a necklace in front of the whole school.

Thankfully before it could get to that point the Malfoy heir regained his composure and let go of his friend, straightening his hair and clothes with a sniff.

“Like is a weak, shallow word to describe Draco's feelings about quality footwear.” Blaise said with a chuckle at the now-tidy blonde. “Loves with the fire of a thousand suns would be much more appropriate.”

“How did I not know this?” Frey questioned them only half joking. “I just thought he'd like the boots since he's commented on mine a time or two. Didn't think it'd earn me a Draco-sized spider-monkey attack.”

Theo, already having trouble controlling his amusement, completely lost the plot at Harry's description of Draco's enthusiastic greeting/thanks.

“While I don't appreciate my friends making fun of me.” Draco said with a sniff, looking up at the ceiling with arms folded across his chest. “I can't deny the accusation over my love of good boots.” Looking down at the toes of the footwear in question he glanced back up and bestowed a quick smile on his famous friend.

Chuckling Frey told Draco he was welcome before separating for his House table with a congenial wave.

“Think he has any clue Draco's officially put him at the top of his future-husband list?” Theo asked Blaise in a whisper, the Malfoy Heir's preference for his own sex having been made clear the summer before, shortly thereafter presenting his parents with a list of possible matches that he wouldn't kill if they considered for his betrothed. Needless to say, his father was surprised when Harry Potter appeared at the top of the list immediately following the opening of gifts.

Harry had already had a place on it, the two boys having been getting closer ever since the train ride and the brunette being quite fanciable. Not that Draco is sure one way or another where Harry's interest lies when it comes to romantic leanings, or if he's even begun to think of such things at all.

Which wasn't a problem in the wizarding world, whether the Potter Heir ever returned Draco's
feelings or found another wizard fanciable, same-sex marriages and couples simply choosing to use a surrogate and then going through a blood-adoption to maintain their House lines if the couples in question were Heirs or Lords/Ladies.

Blaise just laughed. “Not a chance.” He shook his head before taking his place at Draco’s left. “Not a chance at all.”

Time rolled quickly by for Frey and his friends and study-buddies following the Winter Break as the professors began piling work onto the students in preparation for their end of year exams with a few of the older study partners in fourth year like Cedric panicking over the practice OWLs that they were subjected to at their end of term tests. The idea was great in theory, give the students a pre-exam run up so that way they can focus more on their weaker subjects. Great. Except it made for four years of end-of-term panic with the fourth years and sixth years stressed over the pre-exams and the fifth and sevenths in total meltdown over the actual Ministry tests.

Which tended to make excellent entertainment for Frey and company, especially on those few rare times where the mischievous nature Frey had inherited from both his fathers demanded to come out and play.

Honestly, between himself and the Weasley devil-twins it was a wonder Filch hadn't had a complete breakdown by the time March melted into April and April into May.

So when Neville came running up to him with a story about the devil-twins finding a three-headed monster on the third floor...Frey was understandably skeptical.

After all, back in February when the Valentines Day madness was infecting the entirety of the Hogwarts population, Frey'd taken upon himself to challenge the twins to a prank war. The likes of which was never to be seen again once the twins finished school although was likely to be repeated every year until then. The rash of hair-changing potions, dung bombnings in the shower rooms, and Snape's robes turning polka-dotted and starting to sing, were the things of legends culminating in Frey's coup de tat: conjuring a veritable herd of two-headed dogs who proceeded to chase Mrs. Norris and Professor McGonagall throughout Hogwarts until the combined efforts of the professors and upper years banished them all.

Following after Neville and gathering Draco, Blaise, and Theo along the way, Frey ventured at last up into the third floor corridor whereby he found an injured George Weasley who was shaking on the floor beside his wide-eyed twin and their friend and accomplice Lee Jordan. Theo, being the most familiar with healing spells, quickly cast an Episkey. Seeing that the charm failed to do more than slow the bleeding, he traded worried glances with the rest of the group.

“We need to get him to Pomfrey.” He said, regretfully. There would definitely be detentions awarded for this. Anytime there was blood or other bodily fluids involved detentions were a sure bet, one of the reasons the devil-twins were on such familiar terms with Snape's cauldron scrubbing equipment and Filch's threats of thumb-screws. “This is too serious for me to heal.”

“What the bloody-hell did that?” Draco asked eyeing the wound as a now-focused Fred and Lee began levitating George towards the infirmary.

“Look for yourself...” George began, pointing towards a door in the hall with a shaking finger.

“...but don't say...” Fred continued.
“...we didn't warn you.” Lee finished, being completely in tune with his long-time friends' way of speaking, often lapsing into himself when they were around, much to Snape's displeasure during classes.

Feeling the sticky-aware feeling of his monster-dar going bonkers, Frey glanced at his friends before moving towards the still-cracked door across from him, the others falling in at his back and sides. Opening the door wide, his eyes shot open comically wide at the sight of the three-headed black dog chained to the wall, the other boys whispering furiously at the sight.

“Well...” Draco drawled. “Now we know what the Headmaster meant by 'dying a horrible death' if we ventured into this area.”

“Indeed.” Theo choked out. “What is that thing?”

“Three-heads, canine, apparently vicious by the tear in George's leg...” Blaise thought out loud. “I'm going with Cerberus.”

“W-w-who would house a Cerberus in a s-s-school?” Neville stuttered, his old shyness coming back in full force as he watched the beast anxiously.

“Our venerated Headmaster, apparently.” Frey said dryly, cocking his head to one side as he tried to remember if Cerberuses were protected by Thanatos. He didn't think so....but he'd have to check his books before he did anything...final.

“My father always said Dumbledore was a barmy old goat.” Draco rolled his eyes with a haughty sniff. “Never thought he'd be this barmy though.”

“Going to 'tell your father about this'?” Frey teased the blonde gently over his recurring threat to Weasley every time the prat does something truly foul.

Draco stuck out his tongue as his friends all laughed, Frey ushering them all out of the doorway before locking the thick door with a whispered spell, one thought circling through his mind.

“...what could be so important in a school that a Cerberus was needed to guard it?”

...”

“A Philosopher's Stone.”

That night in his dreams he stared blankly at his Far. Loki was known to yank his chain every now and again in the guise of “helping” Frey “think beyond the Bifrost” Loki's way of encouraging creative solutions to set problems, such as his own way of using the hidden doorways and back-trails winding through Yggdrasil to avoid Heimdall's all-seeing-eye.

But this took it to a whole new level.

“You're telling me Dumbledore has hidden a Philosopher's Stone in the depths of the school in some kind of magical scavenger hunt-slash-obstacle course? And that my Uncle Thor and his Warriors Three are betting on the outcome?”

Loki shrugged. “Eternity can be boring. And in Asgardian terms my brother and I are barely in our twenties. Betting on the Savior-vs.-Voldemort has a more even odds schema than say...” he searched his mind for one of his brother's more idiotic challenges to his friends. “Who can steal Lady Freyja's corset or Lord Tyr's sword.”
Frey was flabbergasted. His Far had never talked about this side of his Uncle Thor before, mainly sticking to his more harmless pranks and adventures on Vanaheim.

Seeing his son's incredulous look, Loki just shrugged once more and reiterated:

“Eternity can be boring, especially in times of peace.”

The godling grinned putting another piece of the puzzle in place.

“So you do things like sneak down to Midgard and have an Heir and Uncle Thor...”

“Picks fights and bets on the outcomes of the more interesting of Midgardian events. You've become a particular favorite after slaying that troll and not being trapped by that thrice-damned Mirror. That a priceless magical object even Odin would like in his collection is on the line only makes the stakes that much more interesting for those in Asgard.”

Frey chuckled. “And how did the Trickster bet?” There was no way Frey would believe his Far would forgo an opportunity to brag about and profit from his exploits, even if it was merely through a wager about a supposedly random Wizarding orphan.

“On the orphan Mage of course.” Loki grinned. “I always tend to back the dark horse in these things and am rarely proven wrong to the point that Heimdall always collects my bet last when we play these games.”

“What are the obstacles?” With all of Asgard watching him alongside a manipulative old coot there was no way Frey could abstain from going after the Stone now, even if Voldemort wasn't in play. “And is Voldemort what's possessing Quirrell? I thought it had to be but he can't be the only malevolent Wizarding spirit floating around.”

Loki nodded solemnly. He'd hoped that he and Thanatos were wrong over the depths of the Headmaster's manipulations but the quest for the Stone and allowing a possessed teacher inside the school merely proved their suspicions correct. Thanatos sending a Reaper, one of the few Dark creatures that no wards could control or contain, to inspect the Professor once Frey came to Loki with his observations of the man.

Whether complicit in his own possession or not, now Quirinus Quirrell was Voldemort's creature.

“A Cerberus, as you know,” Loki smirked at his son. Finally a monster that Frey couldn't simply slay. All creatures of Shadow like Cerberus, Shadow wolves, and Thestrals were sacred to Thanatos and all the other Avatars of Death. Although Loki would've like fashioning his son a cloak of Cerberus hide, it was more flame-proof than dragon-hide. “Devil's Snare, keys charmed to fly that must be caught to open a locked door, a giant chess set that you'll have to play across, a logic puzzle, another troll, and that bedamned Mirror at the end.”

“Nothing too worrisome then.” Frey said sarcastically. Most of it wouldn't be a problem but the chess set sent up alarm bells. If he couldn't figure out a way around it he would have to try a second time, this time with a companion or two to play across the board. It would make offering up the Stone to either his Far or Grim problematic.

“Not for a Prince of Asgard.” Loki said proudly. “Not at all.”

... 

He couldn't wait. Not for Dumbledore to leave or for Quirrell to be occupied. That Stone needed to be gone from the castle before the Headmaster leaves once more for his duties with either the
Wizengamot or the ICW. Voldemort will move as soon as it appears Dumbledore was busy. With children knowing of the creature in the corridor and Snape limping from a bite wound to his leg, the mad spirit's patience had to be close to evaporating.

Not that Frey could really blame him per se. If he had to live as a shade for ten years, he'd be low on patience and goodwill as well.

A few moments of colluding with one of Loki's servants, Peeves the Poltergeist who's love of his Master's son was only eclipsed by his love of troublemaking, and the scene was set.

He felt a small twinge of regret, the devil-twins were likely to be blamed for the sudden rash of dungbombs that were about to go off in the Great Hall and all the surrounding corridors, including the ones leading outside and up to the various Towers. For all intents and purposes, the entirety of the school, except for those few who chose to stay in their rooms and study for exams like Frey was supposedly doing, was about to be trapped in a veritable fog bank of stink and smell. And unlike standard-issue dungbombs, the output of these couldn't merely be vanished. It would settle in the halls and corridors until whisked away by a good old-fashioned breeze.

Frey wasn't the son of the Trickster and a Marauder for nothing.

If that didn't distract and annoy the teaching staff for the half-hour he needed, nothing would.

Except flooding the place or setting it on fire but those were both very last resorts.

Knowing that Peeves was on his way, Frey didn't wait around for the bombs to go off, instead utilizing the extra few minutes to sing a quiet little lullaby he'd gotten stuck in his head after watching an animated movie with Annabeth this last summer.

“Dancing bears,

and painted wings,

things I almost remember.

And a song,

someone sings,

once upon a December.”

After the first stanza the dog's three heads started to droop as Frey mentally thanked Heidi's love of the shadow creatures for knowing how to get around it. Another stanza had the creature well asleep.

“...figures dancing gracefully,

across my memory.

Oh, far away,

long ago,

growing dim as an ember.

Things my heart,

used to know.
Once upon a December."

Sliding down through the trap door, Frey allowed himself to slip into the grasp of the deadly Devil's Snare. Channeling his magic into his hands and then sending it to course along his body and radiate outward, he set himself alight, never in danger himself as the elemental creatures of Camp Half-Blood had long since taught him how to do simple spells with the elements. Things such as hovering an inch above the ground by using the air as a cushion or send fire or water coursing along his skin.

The plant let out a shriek, dropping him as quickly as it'd grasped him. Landing in a crouch, he formed a small blue-bell flame a foot in front of him to help with the inky shadows covering the area.

“I must be under the castle itself.” He mused looking up at how far above him the rough-hewn stone walls went and then down at the floor that continued to slope downwards. However, he wasn't too far underground as he could still feel the tingle of the castle wards pinging on his mind.

Moving forward, not worried about how he would get back to the Tower as the plethora of shadows meant he could just step through them and into his bed since the hangings were closed and he would actually know where he was going. You didn't just step into the shadows and go anywhere. That would be the height of idiocy. You'd end up on the moon or next door to the Earth's core.

No, you had to know exactly where you wanted to end up.

Otherwise he wouldn't put himself through all this and would've just shadow-stepped into the chamber that held the Stone.

Opening the door at the end of the tunnel, Frey found the room with the charmed keys, Professor Flitwick’s contribution to this farce of a test. He wondered absently how many of the professors actually believed Dumbledore when he came up with crap like this?

Odin knows Snape certainly didn't seem to buy into it but went along with it anyway if what he knew of the man's character held true.

Smiling lightly for the sake of his Asgardian audience, Frey held out one hand and simply pulled with his magic. While the part-goblin was powerful and knowledgeable, there were few charms or wards that couldn't be bested through sheer power and will. One just had to want it bad enough and have the mojo to back it up and most anything in the wizarding world could be bested through might.

It wasn't an elegant solution. Not something his Far would approve of, that was for sure, and Frey would likely hear about it tonight. But with the Headmaster occupied and not monitoring him for the moment and finally having the attention of at least his Uncle if not his Grandparents, he wanted to show off a little. Be a little flamboyant.

Not the most mature of decisions but for Hel's sake, he'd been hearing about them all his life. He wanted them to remember him even if they were unaware of who he actually was to them.

A chance like this might never present itself again until Loki was finally able to take him to Asgard itself.

With an almost inaudible 'pop' the charm on the correct key broke, falling down softly into his hand. Unlocking the door, he propped it open with one of the brooms present before doing something that would appeal to Loki's sense of elegant magic usage.

Cupping the key with his hands, he channeled his magic again, this time into his lungs and then breathed out onto the key. Wings once again sprouted from the handle of the little tarnished silver key but instead of simple feathered wings, these were ephemeral fairy wings that sparkled and
danced in the low light. Flitwick would no doubt be boggled over the change before writing it off as an oddity of magic.

Entering the next room he blinked, bringing up what his Far called Mage-sight. Magic permeated Hogwarts, making keeping his Sight active more of a hindrance than any kind of help but down here he could clearly see the webs of magic honeycombing the room. It was mostly Professor McGonagall's distinctive red-gold but here and there was a threading of Dumbledore's bright yellow. Monitoring charms and a net to prevent the Stone from leaving the room if someone made it to the end and back. Frey smirked as he disabled the monitoring charm along with building in ten second delay in the charm work that would trigger the chess set.

A few seconds was all he needed to step into the shadows by the chess set and back out of the shadows on the other side. Another few seconds to open the door and it was as if no one had ever entered the room at all.

As he stepped across the doorway, flames sprang up behind him and likewise blockaded the archway into the next room where Frey's monster-dar sensed the troll.

Still using his Sight, he Saw that Snape had set a trap on the potions that made up the logic-puzzle. He'd be alerted at once if any of them were disturbed. Frey swore under his breath. This wasn't the simple charm the Headmaster had woven in among the chess set, relying on McGonagall's magic trace to hide his own much fainter touch.

This was a complex, powerful, and unique warding charm, likely of the Potion Master's own design. Even with Frey's power reserves it would take more than he wanted to give to undo it and there would be no way he could reset it afterwards. Not exactly how he wanted to waste his rapidly diminishing time and power before having to fight and slay another monster and then work around the traps Dumbledore himself set around the Mirror.

“This is not going to be fun.” He muttered under his breath as he quickly fire-proofed his clothes. Thank Odin for Heidi's extravagance. He thought to himself. Her insistence on the best of everything was paying off in his dragon-hide boots and cloak. His silken shirt and woven pants were likely to get signed beyond repair but at least he wouldn't end up naked after his mad-dash through the flames.

Crouching down in a sprinter's stance he braced himself against the back of the table holding the potions, lifting the cloak's hood to cover and protect his head and hair. Exploding into motion with all the strength of his burgeoning immortality, lunged straight through the flames and unsheathing his dagger in a smooth, practiced motion, leapt onto the shoulders of the mountain troll waiting on the other side.

Flipping himself around, he hooked his ankles behind the creatures head and before the slow, lumbering monster could react to it's easy meal suddenly on top of it, Frey stabbed the Stygian blade up through the bottom of the troll's jaw and into it's brain. Releasing his hold, he sprang away, bracing his hands against the troll's chest and pushing, finishing his flip and shoving the troll onto the ground all at once.

Looking down at the dead monster he grinned to himself as he cleaned the knife on the creature's raggedy garment.

“Ok.” He admitted. “Maybe that was a little fun.” He looked down at the holes in his once-fine pants and groaned. Heidi was going to kill him if Loki didn't beat her to it.

Whispering too low for any eavesdropping Asgardians to pick up he dedicated his kill to his Far and
Continued, sheathing his knife.

Entering the last chamber he came to a stop before a familiar Mirror. Ignoring the scenes that played out inside it and knowing that anyone spying on him couldn't see what he saw – a good thing since most of it revolved around Asgard and Loki with sprinkles of his Mum and Dad – he focused utterly on the spells cloaking the room. Dumbledore had gone all out.

With a twist of his wrist his wand slapped against his palm from its wrist holder. He winced, knowing that the spell work he was about to use was going to fry it. He'd have to be extra vigilant through the last month of school and exams not to give away that he'd burned out the core. Maybe use a glamour on it or something.

Lifting both his hands like a conductor he began chanting in Ancient Greek, waving his wand in graceful arcs as he sought to set up a cloaking net of his own to hide himself and his actions and magic from the massive networking of spells Dumbledore had interlaced throughout the chamber.

“Hide and seek,
lost and found,
cloak me and mine from both air and ground.

Shadows born
and shadows mastered,
help the one
who Death won't gather.

Peverells past
and Peverells gone,
none may know
what this Peverell won.”

Rising with his command the shadows stretched out from the walls, covering the floor and ceiling and buffering the room from Dumbledore's magic. Moving freely inside the dome of dark, Frey ignored the wood burning against his hand at the demands of his power. Funneling his power into the very tip, he struck the Mirror precisely in the center of the silvered glass.

Rippling like a pebble in a pond, the glass parted, revealing the cache inside it.

Containing much more than the Stone, Frey arched a brow at what must be one of Dumbledore's hiding places for things both Dark and Dangerous. Recognizing more than one item, he shook his head at the old man's folly. Many of the things contained in the Mirror were a death sentence for anyone but their creator or master to use, not least among them was an Elven seeing-stone, a *Palantir*, right out of Tolkein.
Taking out a warded and bespelled bag from his pocket, a precaution just in case he came across things on missions for the Camp that he didn't want to touch him (like a gorgon's head or one of Persphone's Pearls) he quickly and efficiently raided the space. Many of the items would wind up either with his Far or Chiron, being too risky for him to keep until he has many more years of experience, but there were a few he knew he'd like to hold onto. Like the book on bloodwards that had his mother's magical signature all over it.

Task done and his magic beginning to strain at how long he's held the Mirror open, he reached out at last for his prize, the Stone.

Allowing the Mirror to close after he removed it, he held it up in his hand in an ageless gesture of triumph.

“I offer up my trophy to my Patron, Lord Thanatos.” He said with utter solemnity. “For no mortal should be able to cheat Death.”

With a flash the Stone disappeared, never to be seen in the wizarding world again.

In Asgard, Thor turned to congratulate his brother in good cheer.

“Once again you've chosen well, brother.” The blond god of Storms boomed, his voice like that thunder that was his trademark.

Loki smirked, covering his fatherly pride, concern, and exasperation with his usual mask of superior intelligence and unflappability.

“You chose wisely as well yourself, my brother.” Loki said with a wince as his hulking sibling clapped him on the back. “For once.” He jabbed.

Thor merely boomed another laugh as Sif made her way over to the celebratory duo. Of all of Asgard, only the two Princes through in their lot with the young orphan, most astutely it seemed.

“There is much more to that Seidrmadr than meets the eye.” She commented lightly as she joined them. “He holds to the Olde Ways it seems. He hasn't forgotten us.”

“No.” Heimdall agreed as he moved forward to give the brothers their winnings. “He is much like his parents, though he follows his family's Patron rather than that of either his dam or sire.”

“Who were their Patrons?” Sif asked her head cocked to one side.

Loki mentally cursed, knowing full well what Heimdall would say.

“The late Lady Lily was a follower of our own Queen Frigga.” Heimdall said, humor sparkling in his eye as he turned to the Silvertongued Prince. “While Lord James and the other Marauders followed none other than Loki himself.”

Looking up at the sky in mock-innocence, Loki ignored the shocked looks he was getting from his brother and long-time friend.

“Methinks,” Sif said dryly. “Loki had inside information on this wager.”

Loki rolled his eyes as he studied the faces turned towards him, waiting for an explanation.

“No.” He said with a sigh. “Not quite. I merely wagered on the boy having his father's luck and his
mother's brains. I had no idea of the extent of the child's powers. After all,” he reminded them. “His father was one of mine, not he himself.”

“True.” Sif agreed reluctantly. “However…I believe this Seidrmadr bears watching. If for no other reason than witness whether he will at last best his foe.”

“Agreed.” Thor said with a smile before frowning. “I do not like the sound of this Voldemort. He seems to be a cretin and a villain of the first-order. What thinks you, brother?”

He nodded, eyes shadowed. “Voldemort struck down the young one's parents as they were defenseless in their home, betrayed by one of their closest friends, before turning his wand on an innocent child. And that is only one of his crimes.”

Faces solemn at his words, the group broke up, each going their separate ways as Loki cursed silently. Spending time with his son just became that much more complicated.

…

The last month of school flew by with only the disappearance of Professor Quirrell to mar the ending of another school year. One day right before the end of term, Hagrid the Keeper of the Keys, brought tidings of the Professor's body being found in the Forbidden Forest by one of the males of the centaur herd with the back of his head blown off.

It seemed Voldemort had tired of his vessel once the Stone was out of his reach.

Frey and his friends all excelled in their end-of-year exams, each placing well at the top of the class with Frey only losing out to Draco in Potions, Neville in Herbology, and Blaise of all people in Charms. The godling congratulated them on their scores with their favorite chocolates picked up from Honeydukes by owl-order, transparently pleased by being bested by his friends. Draco was entertained as always by the now-commonplace tantrum thrown by Granger, her feelings of being put-upon not having been soothed but rather aggravated by having to be saved by her two arch-nemeses.

The blonde was rendered ecstatic over Frey's acceptance of his invitation to visit Malfoy Manor for the last week of summer, both his parents and Frey's guardians having corresponded by owl to arrange the treat for their excelling students. Draco would get Harry all to himself for once, no matter how small the amount of time would be.

His friend's and friend's guardians reason for agreeing was much less innocent. Frey wanting a chance to size up Lord and Lady Malfoy for himself and do what research he can into Voldemort's Horcruxes while staying at the home of one of his Inner Circle. His safety would never be in question, what with everyone and their owl knowing about the planned trip thanks to Draco's crowing to their friends.

All packed and having boarded the Express, expanded and warded bag of what few treasures he was able to keep rather than give over to his Far for safekeeping, Loki then giving some in turn to Chiron for the centaur to keep and study, Frey was nearly humming in satisfaction.

The year could've gone better. His Boy-Who-Lived mask definitely wasn't as smooth and blemish-free as he'd like. But all in all, it went well. Only Snape and Dumbledore seemed to be watching him at all anymore, his fellow students and the rest of the teachers having well-established him as a gregarious, friendly, unbiased boy who was smart as a whip and rather powerful, exactly as they would want a hero to be.
Now all he and Heidi needed to do was make it to Gringott's.

Then no matter what Dumbledore discovered about him or suspected, his control over him would be
gone, along with his control over the Potter and Peverall seats in the Wizengamot and ICW.

After all, thanks to his best-friend Draco, Frey knew he could claim his Lordship and become the
first Young Lord in almost five hundred years.

Making friends with the Malfoy Heir, no matter how risky initially or when the Dark Lord made his
comeback, was *exactly* the right decision.

Now it was only a matter of time to see when the Prophecy would reach fulfillment.

And for a godling who would be immortal one day, time wasn't something that mattered at all.

...
Chapter Six

After taking his leave of his friends, including a very brief, very formal introduction to Lord and Lady Malfoy during which he got the impression that the Lord was shocked by his manners and the Lady by his appearance, Frey made his way over to Heidi on the mundane side of the barrier at Platform 9 ¾.

“My little Lord.” Heidi murmured quietly, tears wetting her eyes for a second as she took in the changes in her charge.

Before he’d left for school, while quite advanced from most his age he still at least appeared to be an eleven-year-old. His gait was still a little gangly from limbs that grew in stops-and-starts, his face still plump with baby-fat despite his otherwise lean physique. He still had that air of...innocence, she supposed. Which again, was everything it should be after growing up in almost total isolation from the modern world except for a few trips into the City.

Frey had lost that sometime during the year.

He’d lost most of those things in all actuality.

His face was becoming lean and sharp, the aristocratic angles and planes of his face cushioned by a much smaller margin of baby-roundness. He was looking more and more like a perfect fusion of his parents with the barest hint of Peverell/Potter thrown in from his blood adoption. His gait was smooth and confident at all times, without the occasional hesitance that marked it before.

And that air of rarefied innocence was nowhere to be found.

Her little Lord was growing up and growing fast, both in maturity and body to match his advanced mind.

Her Lord Thanatos will be pleased.
“Heidi.” Frey beamed at the sight of his caregiver and friend, glomping onto her with a massive hug that almost lifted the Harvestmaiden off her feet. “I missed you.”

“And I you, little Lordling.” She smiled down at him, though not as far down as she once did. He'd nearly caught her own five-four height. He would likely outstrip her by the end of summer with the way he was growing. Leaning in closer she whispered in his ear as she fussed about with his hair. “As requested there is a car outside to take us to the entrance of the Alley then to Heathrow. My Lordling's parent,” who's identity was becoming crystal-clear to anyone who'd spent any time around the mischievous creature and his First Son. “Has a private jet there standing by.”

Looking up at her from under lowered lids Frey grinned, ready as always to tease the woman who'd been much like a mother to him while always maintaining a “proper” distance between them.

“You flew?” He asked, barely containing his laughter. None of his Patron's older Harvestmaidens would fly if given the option. They simply didn't trust planes when shadow-stepping was so convenient. But charades must be maintained if they didn't want Dumbledore to become even more suspicious.

Rolling her eyes at his teasing, she tucked her arm through his, leading him out into the heavy summertime-London air.

“And will do so again,” she said with a put-upon sigh. “And again until you're of age to fly alone to keep up appearances.”

Frey chortled under his breath as he held open the door of the long black car for her, ignoring her scathing glance at his reddening face and shaking shoulders.

Thanatos save her from troublemakers and their spawn.

…

Dumbledore paced in his office, one hand stroking his beard as he awaited one of his Professors.

The children were off for the Summer, the train had arrived at Kings Cross station and so there ended his and his staffs’ responsibility for them for another year. He could at last devote a small measure of his time to the problem that was plaguing him before the Wizengamot's summer session.
commenced. One that as things stood had the potential to become a disaster the likes of unforeseen proportions.

Harry Potter.

When the letter didn't address itself to Number Four Privet Drive, something he didn't know until after the Feast when the child's appearance raised some...red flags...Dumbledore was at first concerned. After running a few diagnostics, he discovered that magic of some unknown origin was cloaking young Mr. Potter's place of residence. Fine and dandy for keeping him safe from the remnants of Tom's minions but supremely unhelpful in discovering if Mr. Potter was, as he should've been, raised by Vernon and Petunia Dursley.

Under no circumstances could he understand how a child raised by what Minerva still insisted on calling “the worst sort of Muggles” raise up what seemed to be the perfect Scion of an Ancient and Noble House.

It was there in nearly everything the child did. Except for his rather mind-boggling attitude of having friends no matter their House affiliation, Harry Potter made a better pure-blood Heir than did young Heir Malfoy or Heir Longbottom. The way he walked, talked, studied, held himself, even ate smacked of a pure-blood education from the cradle.

Dumbledore couldn't fathom it.

This wasn't what he had in mind when he place the child with his relatives.

Harry Potter should've been awed by Hogwarts and magic. He should've been naive. He should've been many things and if meek and beaten down was among them...well so much the better.

Harry Potter was none of those things.

Harry Potter was blasé about magic and already quite impressive in his control according to Minerva and Filius.

Harry Potter was sharp and observant, sending the other Houses to Gryffindor on the All Hallows instead of simply going on like the rest of the students.
Harry Potter was many things. Meek and beaten down wasn't anywhere among them.

And so, Dumbledore called his most valuable resource into the doings of the Dark to him. He wanted, nay, needed to know what Severus had observed and suspected of the child who behaved as none of them could've predicted.

Oh, that isn't to say he hasn't put up a good show of it.

Being sorted into Gryffindor, being unaware of his Vaults at Gringotts' (another concern about his living conditions considering the sheer quality of his raiment and school supplies), saving the Granger girl despite his own dislike; those are all very well and good and expected from the Boy-Who-Lived.

But he didn't act without more red-flags either.

Befriending young Mr. Malfoy and spurning Mr. Weasley were at the top of that list.

“You called for me, Headmaster.”

…

To say that Severus Snape was less than pleased at his summons to the Headmaster's office directly after he returned from his turn at chaperoning the hormonal dunderheads to Kings Cross Station would be like saying that the sun was just a little warm.

Oh, he knew what this summons was about. There was no question in his mind that it was about the little Potter child. Before this year he would've spat and cursed the name however...he really didn't have much of Potter in him, epic pranking war aside.

Potter looked too much like Lily for his disdain to remain alive and thriving.

And the way he acted...
James Potter wouldn't have befriended a trio of Slytherins let alone the Prince himself for a million galleons.

His son on the other hand did just that and more. With top Marks in nearly every class and a convivial attitude towards most of his fellow students (the cretin Weasley and annoying know-it-all two notable exceptions) Harry Potter was quite less James's mini-me than he was Lily's son.

And with that realization came a dramatic change of heart in the dour Potions' Master.

He would stand by the Vow he made all those years ago and *protect Lily's son*. From whoever that threat might be. Including his employer.

Whatever it might take.

Steeling himself to do whatever he could to dispel Dumbledore's suspicions – and he had no doubt that the old man was suspicious – he took a breath and entered the office.

“You called for me, Headmaster?” His dark voice was heavy with dislike, a tone that simply rolled off of the old man's be-spangled shoulders.

“Ah, yes, Severus.” Dumbledore beamed over his half-moon spectacles as he moved to sit behind his paper-laden desk. “Lemon drop?”

Severus merely sneered at the offer, folding his arms across his chest with one hand clapping an elbow inside his robes.

“Ah, well,” the old man huffed, sucking on the tart treat in his own cheek. “Straight to the point then. What do you think of our young Mr. Potter?”

The dark man merely arched a brow and deepened his sneer.

“Oh come now, Severus.” Dumbledore rolled his eyes. “Even you can admit that young Harry has
little in common with his late father."

“That doesn't make him a shining light in the darkness, Headmaster.” Severus said smoothly. “Merely less objectionable than a cockroach.”

“Severus.” Dumbledore attempted to chide the man.

“Albus.” Snape snapped, unfolding his arms. “I know what you're after so ask it plain. Beyond his status as a moderately-intelligent student and friend of my godson, I have no opinion on Potter.”

“Very well.” Albus sobered, interlacing his fingers and then clasped his hands and laid them before him on his desk. “To your knowledge was Mr. Potter fostered in any of the old Dark families?”

Severus arched a surprised brow. That wasn't quite what he thought the Headmaster would be after. Though, after a moment's reflection he supposed it made a kind of twisted sense. Potter was nothing like Albus had told people he was. The story being commonly held that he was being raised like a young prince far away from the wizarding world. The Potter who appeared on September First was nothing like that child would be. That child would've been everything he was prepared to hate and despise. No this inquiry meant...

“Do you mean to tell me you've lost the Boy-Who-Lived?” He nearly smirked at the question.

Dumbledore scowled. He hadn't thought Severus would twit him over this, though he likely should've expected it considering the bad blood between young Potter's father and the Potions Master. Any hint of impropriety would either be fuel for the fires of his dislike or cause for amusement in the dour man.

“Not lost. Merely am...uncertain.” He admitted. “I placed him with his closest living relatives in the Muggle world...”

He was rather abruptly interrupted.

“You gave him to Petunia?” Severus's voice was nearing a shout. “Have you no sense? That woman hated and likely still hates, anything to do with magic or magical people. Including myself, James Potter, and her sister. What were you thinking?”
“I was thinking of young Harry's safety behind the blood-wards Lily's sacrifice enacted.”
Dumbledore chided the man, eyes like chips of hardened ice. “Petunia and her son are Harry's closest blood relatives and best match for keeping her sacrifice alive. There was no other place on Earth where Harry would've been as safe from Death Eaters. A moot point since as I've discovered, the Dursleys never took custody of him.”

Severus rubbed one hand over his face in a rare show of emotion. In this case fury mixed with exasperation.

“If you placed him with Petunia, yet she never took custody of him, and yet you cannot find him through normal means, why haven't you used your contacts at the Ministry to sniff him out. He's not with any Dark family that I'm aware of and someone would've made a fuss by now over the Boy-Who-Lived not being where he was supposed to be.”

Dumbledore shifted under his Potion Master's gimlet gaze.

“I did.” He admitted. “That's why I am...uncertain. Whoever has custody of Harry had the wills and guardianship papers sealed. Only Harry himself can unseal them and allow them to become a matter of public record once he is seventeen. The magic on the document prevents it. The same magic that has cloaked him from all attempts at tracking his whereabouts.”

Snape sank into a chair. For all that he would protect Harry against the Headmaster's machinations...this wasn't good news. Very few beings had that kind of power. And almost none of them were of the human kind. He swallowed convulsively. He remembered something the late Potter said to him once while gloating over the success of his latest prank on Severus. About the origins of his family and that blasted cloak. If Dumbledore had the same suspicions...

He could only imagine the kind of havoc the old man would wreak to control that kind of power.

He needed to be diverted. Post haste.

“If the wills were sealed.” He began slowly edging the Headmaster away from his suspicions.
“Then how did I receive a bequest from Lily?”

“Certain parts were allowed to become public knowledge.” Albus admitted. “Bequests to yourself, Remus, a few other friends who were alive and well at that point.” Including a bequest for Black
that the man received even though he was trapped in Azkaban. “The rest is utterly concealed.”

“That sounds like the work of the goblins to me.” Snape said with a snort. “Greedy little buggers must’ve not wanted that much gold locked down until the boy’s inheritance.”

“Likely so.” Albus said with a sigh. “However we still do not know the truth behind the child’s home.”

Severus shrugged. “He was picked up by a blonde woman on the muggle side of Kings Cross and left using muggle means. Wherever his home is, it likely is with some relative of Lily’s that we simply didn’t know about. Lily was wise beyond her years, she likely made arrangements in case her son wound up in Petunia’s hands.”

“That...is plausible.” Dumbledore had to concede. It was very like Lily Potter nee Evans to make such arrangements. “The goblins did seem to find her...less objectionable than most wizarding kind.”

“And young Mr. Potter has made plans to spend time at Malfoy Manor with Draco towards the end of break. I could always pop over and see my godson while he’s visiting, see what I can discover.”

“Thank you, Severus.” Albus said with a sigh. Happy at last to have a solid plan in place so he could focus on other things.

“You're welcome, Albus.” Moving towards the door he looked back over his shoulder at the Headmaster. “Albus, what of the Philosopher's Stone? Was it found with Quirrell’s remains?”

“Sadly no.” Dumbledore shook his head. The mystery of where that blasted stone disappeared to vexed him nearly as much as his plans failing to come to fruition. He would merely have to come up with something better next year. “It remains undisturbed and yet unaccounted for.” Along with quite of few of his secret treasures.

“Blessings upon your thief hunt then, sir.” Severus said with a knowing smirk. He'd advised against that plot from the start.

Nothing good would come of having such a thing at large.
Nothing at all.

…

Walking through Diagon Alley with Heidi was an experience. While she was familiar with quite a few of the locations from doing his school shopping last summer, the purely magical area still caused her to jump and start at times when her Harvestmaiden instincts regarding protecting her charge from threats ran headlong into strange sounds and sights in the wizarding district. Frey was amused to an indecent degree that a woman who served an Avatar of Death and hung out with a centaur and nyiads was rattled by witches and wizards.

Although, he had a moment himself when he caught sight of the inscription on the doors of Gringotts' London.

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.

'Yeesh.' He couldn't help but think a chill rolling up his spine as he remembered the tales of the goblin wars from his Far. Especially when the face of Luke Castellan, son of Hermes flashed before his eyes. 'Good thing demigods are rarely magical. Every single child of Hermes would take that as a dare.'

Nodding politely to the goblin warriors guarding the doors, he held one open for Heidi before following her inside the wizarding bank. Staring around in curiosity, Frey eyed the various weapons on display and the differing ages apparent in the ranks of the goblins. The bank was largely empty, a good thing for the secrecy of their business, most people busy with the ending of the Hogwarts term, either in welcoming home children or preparing for the inevitable post-school rush in the shops.

Approaching one of the tellers in his turn, Frey nodded solemnly before the goblin could bark at him as was their wont with wizards who waste their time with unimportant (to goblins) pleasantries.
“Honorable Goblin Ragnar,” Frey said spying the name on the plaque. “I request a meeting with the head of the Potter and Peverell accounts.”

Ragnar sneered down at the young wizard before noticing the aura surrounding him and his female companion. While she was cloaked mainly in black with rivers of gold and rust-red, the colors of the Harvest Lord, he was a confusing and confounding mish-mash of color. There was the black of the Peverell Patron, Lord Thanatos of course, as well as the bright green that came from the youngling’s dam and the white of her blood-sacrifice.

But there was another color present. Two actually. Both of which were the cause of the goblin’s shock and the subsequent behavior the youngling would be treated with.

Ichor, a kind of silvery-gold. The color of the gods.

The child had a divine parent.

And even beyond that, and most startling and rare of all was a color he and every other goblin had only ever heard of: purest purple, the color of ambrosia petals. Shimmering and unique, it denoted a Godling, a child of divine parentage that unlike a demigod would become immortal and with divine powers without undergoing the heroic trials. More importantly, it meant that one day the youngling’s aura would change utterly, freezing along with his immortality into a symbol of his divine province.

Ragnar was suddenly and completely grateful he hadn’t had a chance to be seen as rude by the child.

“Yes.” He said at last his voice like rough gravel. “I expect you would.”

With a stroke of his pen he sent off a note summoning the requested goblin. A few moments passed where Frey and Heidi studied both the goblin before them and their surroundings before the manager of Frey’s accounts strode through a door. Eyes widening in the same manner as Ragnar’s had, the goblin quickly ushered them inside a stark office decorated only with large piles of parchment and scrolls.

“I am Chief Account Manager Ironhide, manager of the Peverell and Potter accounts for over a hundred years.” The elder goblin said solemnly. “More importantly, I am the one goblin in this bank other than the bank Manager Ragnok himself, King of the Goblin Nation, who knows the circumstances of your placement and patron, young Heir.”
Heidi nodded regally. “I am Harvestmaiden Captain Heidi Lothbrok, the main caretaker for my charge.” Rather than name him she simply waved a hand. “His guardians could not attend, however for the purposes of this meeting that should not matter.”

“Excellent.” Frey said with a sharp nod. “I require a blood and magical inheritance test. I would like to claim any Lordships I am entitled to now that I am of age to do so and have a full accounting of my inheritance once I reach of age.” He thought for a moment. “And I'd like to know what's going on with any seats I may control and if I am able to change who manages them for me.”

Surprised but pleased at the turn what he thought would be a simple accounting meeting had taken, Ironhide nodded and with a snap of his fingers cleared his desk and made a ritual chalice, knife, quill, and black parchment appear.

“What you request is easy enough, young Lord.” Ironhide's voice was just as gravelly as Ragnar's but with a smoother edge. “However it is not inexpensive.”

“How much?” Frey asked, Heidi content to take the back seat now that everyone's positions have been made clear. She was simply there to provide a sheen of normalcy to those outside the room. In all honesty, she's been little more than a sounding board, adviser, and personal shopper for the last year or two. Her charge has merely outgrown her for anything other than keeping up appearances and having a stable adult in his life.

“One thousand, three hundred galleons, twelve sickles, and three knuts.” Ironhide named the prohibitive price with a blank face. With the danger of importing certain...questionable...ingredients needed to make the specialized parchment and treat the quill, Gringotts had no choice but to increase the price every year to the point that a once common-place service had become all but extinct.

“Done.” Frey said with an arched brow over the price and a wave of his hand. “You can take it from my trust account.”

On that long ago night Thanatos made sure to ensure that no one would be able to touch his accounts, not even the meddling headmaster. Any keys that the man might possess were actually to a “dummy” account that was in reality empty except for the single galleon to keep it open.

“Very well.” Having the youngling sign for the expenditure, Ironhide magicked the draft for funds to the fee collectors before warding the room for the procedure. Arranging the parchment and quill next to the chalice, he instructed the young Lord through the process.
“Using the knife, puncture your wrist just below the thumb on your left hand but do not take the blade away. Keep it there for the count of five galleons then remove it and hold it blade down above the chalice. The wound will heal on its own once the blade is removed.”

Nodding his understanding, Frey followed the directions precisely and stoically much to the goblin's approval. *This one will be a warrior. There's no doubt of it.*

Watching carefully as the blood collected by the blade flowed down into the chalice, Ironhide nodded then took the knife from Frey's grasp and returned it to its box in the depth of the bank where it would automatically be cleansed for its next use. Once the contents of the chalice turned white he continued with his instructions.

“Using your magic,” Ironhide gave Frey a firm glance. “And *only* your magic, grasp the quill and nib side down hold it in the chalice's potion. The ink should turn silver when your magic touches it. Once all the liquid is absorbed, you can pick up the quill and hold it above the black parchment. When it starts writing you can let go. It will only stop once it finishes its task.”

Again obeying the not-complicated but still precise commands, Frey watched as the potion which contained a fair amount of his life-blood did indeed turn silver and then the quill began writing in elegant script, the silver showing up nicely against the black. As it finished and the quill stopped, Ironhide again snapped his fingers and two copies appeared of the parchment.

“One for the Gringotts Archive.” The goblin explained. “One for you to take. The original should remain in your Family Vault.”

Looking over the finished list of inheritance, Frey looked up with a smirk and dryly asked:

“Which one?”

…

(Note: lines or words that are underlined denote obscured information that only Frey and the goblins can read.)

Patrimonium Frey Haraldr Lokison

Known As: Harry James Potter
Lord, by blood-adoption:
The Utmost Ancient and Noble House of Peverell
The Noble House of Potter

Heir, by blood-adoption and appointment:
The Ancient and Noble House of Black

Heir, by blood:
The Throne of Jotunheim

Heir, by adoption:
The Throne of Asgard

... 

“Well,” Frey said looking over at his companion. “If there was ever an 'oh-shit' moment, I'd say this is it.”

“What does it say?” Heidi asked but being circumspect by refraining from looking for herself.

“Let's just say my family tree just got a lot more screwed up.” He said with icy sarcasm. 'I wonder if Far even knows...if they've ever told him? And if they haven't....what the hells am I supposed to do?’

“If I may young Lord.” Ironhide nearly swallowed his tongue seeing what the inheritance ritual showed. While it didn't name anyone other than young Harry, no, Frey, it certainly lent itself to quite a few conclusions. “I believe the Peverell Vault is the oldest and therefore the most difficult to access with the strongest protections. That would likely be the best place to hide this.” He said motioning to the original parchment. “Until you are ready, if ever, to share the information it contains.”

“Thank you, Ironhide.” Frey said gathering himself in the wake of what was a devastating blow. And I can't even tell him. If Odin hasn't after all this time...there must be a reason. Plus, why would
Far believe me if he hasn't discovered this on his own? The parchment won't do any good, the spells in place would keep even him from seeing the obscured information...

“To complete the ritual and summon the Lordship rings,” Ironhide spoke crisply once the documents were safely squirreled away in their Vaults and Archives. “Simply hold your hands, palm up, over the chalice and incant: Domus annulos, domum rediret. (House rings, return home.)”

Following along as he has all along, Frey smiled when the three rings appeared in his hands: Lord rings for Peverell and Potter and the Heir ring for Black. He moved at once to put them on their respective fingers, not twitching at all as they resized to fit his hands. The Heir ring, nearly as old in feeling as the Peverell Lordship ring, was the least simple of the lot. Made of bright platinum and not at all tarnished by age, it was studded with sapphires, diamonds, and onyx all along the band that nearly took up an entire knuckle with the Black Crest with its stars, sword, and hunting dogs engraved in the metal between the stones, shaking his head at the obvious sign of wealth he slipped it on his right index finger.

One his ring fingers went his Lordship rings, the plain gold band with its large center ruby and engraved stags rampant for the Potters on his right hand leaving the ancient and heavy Peverell ring alone on his left hand.

Plain by comparison with the Black ring, the Peverell ring was actually much more valuable both in meaning and content. Matching his ritual cup by being carved entirely from a solid piece of black diamond, it seemed to suck up the light with its dull gleam that caught and captured the eye. Instead of the many carvings of the others, it simply had one of the Hallows symbol on the top while the family phrase was engraved inside: The last friend that shall be greeted is Death.

Happy with the end results of the meeting if still rattled by the information revealed, Frey arranged for them to send him the audit of his holdings and then set up another meeting at the end of the summer to discuss placing new proxies for his seats, as they couldn't be changed at the moment with the ICW already in session for the summer and the Wizengamot about to commence.

A pity, that.

He was looking forward to ruffling Dumbledore's feathers for good and all this time. Oh, well.

A pleasure for another day.
After leaving the goblins, Frey convinced Heidi to make a pit stop at the bookstore so that he could pick up some more books, wanting to know more about Jotunheim and Jotuns without alarming any of his guardians or his Far. He quickly added the few books they had on Norse Mythology as well as Mythical Creatures and Beings to his other selections on Care of Magical Creatures, Ancient Runes, Arithmancy, and Warding and Ward-Breaking. Catching the look from his companion he simply shrugged, telling her that it was never too early to take a look at his possible electives starting in third year.

Besides:

“all those magical creatures at the castle kept setting off my monster-alert-system.” Hoping that learning more about magical creatures would stop them from tripping his highly-tuned-senses twenty times a day.

Plus it was a good cover to discover more about his newly-revealed bloodlines.

After all, what if Jotuns had some weird food-allergy or Achilles Heel?

Inquiring minds needed to know. Especially if he was supposed to go to Asgard someday.

Deplaning in New York City after an exhausting flight that he'd rather have avoided by following his suggestion of boarding the plane in London and then once hidden inside simply shadow-stepping to New York, Frey was wired and tired and Heidi was just tired of dealing with an anxious, sulky teenager.

Climbing into one of the Camp vans with the Strawberry decals, Heidi started the engine and navigated their way out of the city. It wasn't long before Frey's greater-than-normal kicked in...in a big and smelly way.

Glancing into the passenger side's side-view mirror Frey groaned.
“Oh come on!” He complained, only partially-excited about having an outlet for his pent-up aggression. Despite the challenges of the school-year, he’d never really been able to let loose for fear of blowing his cover in some way or another. A monster attack was just what the doctor ordered.

But the rest of him just wanted to see the other campers and then collapse face-down on his comfy bed in his cabin and forget about Hogwarts and trolls and Stones for a solid twelve hours before reporting to Chiron.

“We're three miles out from Camp, little Lord.” Heidi reported, slamming on the accelerator as the monster picked up speed.

Nodding Frey ditched out of his safety belt and peeled off most of his clothes, leaving only his dragon-hide under-armor, boots, and knife sheath. Lowering the window he crawled out, hanging onto the side of the van with one hand and summoning his Stygian sword with the other. A Reaper's sword, given to him by his Patron.

“Keep driving until you get to camp and bring my jacket and things inside the cabin.” He ordered. “I'll jog the rest of the way once I sort out our bovine problem.”

Springing away from the van, he rolled smoothly once he hit the ground coming up in a wary crouch.

“Seriously?” He hissed as he got a better look at the creature rapidly closing the distance between them. “Who'd I piss off that a freaking Minotaur decided to become my welcoming wagon?”

Shrugging he ignored his own somewhat-serious question, deciding to ponder his...interesting run of luck when it came to outings outside of Camp or the wizarding world later.

Because...really?

Hellhounds, Furies, hydras, and now a Minotaur. Someone, somewhere had it out for him and those were simply the highlights, not the sum of his kills.

Crouching low to the ground he hid himself as best he could. In theory it would've been better to go up one of the trees and go for the high ground and advantage, hopefully striking a weak spot with sword or arrow but he didn't have enough time to make it far enough up a tree without being
spotted. So he was going for his tried-and-true heel-strike to make it stumble and fall down to his level.

Hey, if it worked on a mountain troll it should, in theory, work on a Minotaur.

In theory.

…

Frey grumbled to himself as he stumbled through the door of the Thanatos Cabin. Stupid thick-hided monster cows and their stupid giant swords. It took half a dozen healing potions to patch him up after he'd dragged himself up Half-Blood Hill and he'd lost his favorite dragon-hide under shirt.

Stupid, stupid Minotaurs.

At least his Far should be happy with his tribute, Thanatos had gotten quite a few during his school year just from the Stone being something only rightly held by one of the Death gods.

So hopefully the Minotaur, one of the more fearsome Greek monsters, would smooth over any prickliness over Thanatos gaining the Stone.

His Far could hold a grudge like no other.

He still had moments where he thought he wasn't forgiven for turning his hair blonde to match Uncle Thor two years ago.

Loki’s reaction wasn't pretty.

Although Thanatos thought it was bloody hilarious.

After stripping off Frey went to plummet face-down onto his bed when a dully-gleaming box in the
center caught his eye. He was suddenly glad he'd taken a moment rather than just belly-flopping because that would've bloody hurt to land on. Made of black ceramic, the sign of the Hallows was engraved on the lid of the hinged box. Curious about the gift, as he hadn't really done anything in Thanatos's name nor given him any tribute outside of the general sacrifices at meals since the Stone, Frey flipped the box open as he perched lightly on the bed.

Inside nestled in a thick nest of cushioning black silk and velvet were six small vials, all made of crystal, and filled with a gleaming silver substance.

Finding a note attached to the bottom of the box, Frey set the curious gift aside for the note, making sure it was safely residing on the center of the bed before turning his attention to his Grim's message.

Frey,

_The Elixir of Life is a dangerous substance in the wrong hands. I thank you most sincerely for gifting me with the source, the Philosopher's Stone. Many have been the years where I and the other Death Avatars have cursed it's creation as soul after soul has used it to cheat Death and escape us for a time._

_No mortal may escape Death forever._

_In appreciation for your deed, I have gifted you in turn with six doses of the Elixir. Not for your own use little Godling, as you've no use for such things, but there are other ways, other gifts the Elixir can bestow besides false-immortality._

_I will tell you more upon your birthday...if you haven't figured it out for yourself by then._

Thanatos

A frown wrinkled his brow as he studied the innocuous little vials once more. Nodding abruptly, having come to a decision within his own mind, he closed and warded the little box before placing it in one of the secret compartments in his school trunk. Later he would dig into his library and research the Elixir and try to puzzle out what his Patron meant.
A yawn nearly cracked his jaw in his exhaustion.

Much, much later.

Sleep now.

…

The next weeks flew by between training with the other campers and helping train the newer campers. Chiron had been right, more and more were appearing in his age range, the half-blood ranks swelling. Although in preparation for what he wasn't sure even though he was certain that they were in the beginning stages of something.

Being a prophecy child and raised as he was, he was pretty canny at picking out the lines of Fate when one of Her avatars decides to meddle.

Like using him to help turn Thalia into a tree...for instance.

In hindsight...total meddling.

In the moment...he just...had to.

The only cloud on an otherwise excellent summer of swordplay and *shudder* lessons, was that he didn't have any way to correspond with his new friends back in the wizarding world.

Yeah, he was able to catch up with Grover and Annabeth and Luke...but they were more friendly-ish than actual friends. Chiron and Heidi definitely didn't count. At least not yet. He wasn't ruling out an actual friendship developing once he'd been around a couple more decades and the age gap wasn't quite so outrageous.

It's not like any of the three of them really needed to worry about dying.

Except for him.
He could still die...for the moment anyway.

Although the tantrum Loki would throw in that unlikely event made even Thanatos shudder at the thought.

Well...

One other thing sucked this summer.

Loki wasn't able to visit.

He'd even had to cut waayyy back on the dream-time visits because Frey was under so much scrutiny from Asgard.

Apparently Thor had told a rather exuberant version of the Stone gauntlet at the next feast in Asgard and Frey was now their favorite mortal to wager on. They'd even taken to betting on the outcomes of his sparring matches according to his put-out Far. Even his Grandmother Frigga had started peeking in on him from Loki's report.

Though in her case it was more being worried about an orphaned child being placed in dangerous situations and not about the boredom-relieving rash of bets.

But, his Far did say that as long as he didn't do anything too exciting over the rest of the summer holiday that most of the fervor will die down along with most of the scrutiny. Not all, unfortunately. He was will and truly on their radar now. But most.

Which would be nice because prematurely-mentally-aged hero-and-god-to-be or not...Frey was still just a kid who needed his dad.

Not even Thanatos could fill the gap that Loki's continuing absence left behind.

Frey'd not realized prior to this separation just how much he relied on the Trickster's advice and
listening ear during their dream rambles or how much he enjoyed playing with his magic and hearing tales of his Far's childhood in Asgard on his birthday and Samhain until Loki was artificially taken away. It wasn't a searing hurt like the god’s death would be. Loki would be able to see him more regularly once things quieted down and Frey knew that.

But still...

This sucked monkey balls.

And the distance was just too great for him to be able to owl Draco and his other friends so he was stuck until the last week of August when he went to visit the blonde.

Thanatos interrupted his charge's brooding with a sharp whistle that startled the usually-graceful preteen into falling off the table he'd been leaning against into a pile on the floor.

Rumbling his low, rough laugh, the death god hauled the young man to his feet casting an appraising eye over him. Coming to a conclusion, he gave a nod and the ghost of a smile.

He was ready.

Not quite the power-house he'd been foretold to be, at least not yet, Frey stood a respectable five-eight, tall for his physical age and was lean and wiry with it. He'd shoot up more and fill out as time passed but for now he would likely tower over his fellow year-mates. All his weapons training and etiquette and dancing classes had made his motions very smooth and graceful, comfortable in his body even as it changed with becoming a teen and young adult.

And after his performance against the Headmaster's test and the Minotaur, Frey had both the physical and mental skills to complete the task Thanatos was about to set before him.

Even if it took him a lifetime to do so.

It would be done, of that the god had no doubts.

“Frey.” He spoke at last to the young godling standing patiently before him as the god inspected
him. “You've mastered many of the skills we've sought to teach you, and will likely master many more before you leave school and Camp Half-Blood. Normally demigods and demigoddess must seek a sign or an oracle before taking on a quest. However,” he paused seeing the caution and excitement warring in his charge's eyes. “You are no ordinary half-blood. The task I have for you involves the prophecy that stood to ruin so much of your life...”

Thanatos went on to explain about Tom Riddle and his search for immortality, culminating in his making the most foul of all artifacts, a Horcrux. Only he went further and attempted make seven.

“I removed the one that sought to latch onto you.” Thanatos said simply before moving onto the real purpose of the quest:

“Find the soul shards and offer them to me in tribute. You can keep their containers,” here he had to be careful knowing what one of them was. “Or offer them up to the god of your choice. Many of them, from what I've found, are in priceless artifacts.”

Frey managed to unhinge his clenched jaw. Immortality. His life had been irrevocably changed because of one megalomaniac's search for Immortality. The very thing Frey didn't have to do anything to gain other than survive. The irony of the prophecy struck him hard.

All Tom Riddle wanted was Immortality.

And it was the one thing he could never really have while the child he sought to “remove” as an obstacle merely had to exist to gain it.

He could definitely see his Far enjoying the turn of events.

“Let me make sure I understand.” Frey said, wanting to be sure. “In order to fulfill the prophecy, I either have to kill or be killed by Tom. In order to come out alive, I need to destroy his soul containers. You want me to find them, offer up the shard to you and do whatever with the containers. Then kill Tom once all of them have been...Harvested?”

“Essentially.” Thanatos gave a flashing grin. “Though you won't be one of my Harvestmen. Rather, consider it more like a graduation test. Once you finish your practical exam you'll be free of my guardianship and be considered a fully-fledged adult godling. Though that won’t impact when you freeze into your immortality any.”
“Very well.” Frey said with a solemn nod. “I accept this quest.”

A flash of light surrounded them, linking their hands in a bond before disappearing. The agreement was struck.

Frey eyed his guardian for a moment longer before mentioning something he'd heard in passing.

“Azkaban has a...” he sought the right description. “...very detrimental effect on it's denizens.”

Thanatos simply hummed in agreement as he studied the newer additions to Frey's weapons wall since he'd last visited.

“And lycanthrope destroys the host body after a time. They rarely live past fifty.”

“Hmm.” This time Thanatos gave a more vocal response.

Finally Frey just came out with it.

“What the hells are the other four doses for?”

Thanatos gave a twinkling smile eerily reminiscent of the Headmaster before mentioning:

“Did you know the Elixar can cure insanity. Or remove say a magical tattoo? The possibilities really are quite limitless in it's ability to revert damage. Times like this Wizards are so one-track minded. Immortality. Wooo. Did they never notice what the bloody stuff actually does?”

…
Warning for this chapter, it gets into the politics and culture of the Wizarding World quite a bit more than the previous chapters. I know that this area probably isn’t as interesting for many of you but it is information that Frey/Harry is going to need throughout the rest of the story and has a big impact in later chapters.

Chapter Seven

Mentally rolling his eyes at the action, Frey shadow-stepped onto a plane that had just landed at Heathrow Airport in London.

While he was ready to abandon the charade of him being raised solely in the mundane world without contact with anything magical or supernatural, his guardians were not. Chiron’s point, and the one that he’d eventually caved to, was that as long as the illusion of propriety met what people expected, they were likely to leave him be. Especially when dealing with wizards who were mostly stuck in the middle ages.

However, Frey had won the battle over him having to actually fly into London. With his ability to shadow-step and no need of a chaperon since he was being met at the airport, he’d convinced Chiron to let him step away from the plane just before takeoff and then step back when it touched down in London, saving him from having to take the trip.

It was the same measures he’d wanted to take at the beginning of the holiday but had been outvoted on.

Unfortunately for Chiron and the other adults in his life once Thanatos gave him his quest, they’d largely lost their veto power. Especially since he was only nominally considered a child at this point anyway with his current mental age actually being of age.

Ah...time bending.

There was a definite spring in his step as he de-planed and made his way over to the hidden magical waiting area where international port-keys arrived for customs clearance or those waiting to use muggle transportation lounged. While not common, there were a few countries where the magical
governments refused to allow international port-keys, preferring to have visitors go through the muggle arrivals process before vetting them for magical entry with most of those in the Middle East. Although sometimes travel would also be restricted due to a high-level threat, such as during Britain’s first Wizarding War or most of Europe during WWII and the treat of Grindelwald.

Making his way through the muggle-repelling charms, he spotted a slightly-taller Draco standing with Lord Malfoy himself.

Frey hummed under his breath at the sight. He would've wagered galleons to knuts that they would've just sent a house elf to collect him. Grinning a little at the fidgety form of the younger Malfoy and the scowl lurking beneath the mask of the elder he had a sneaking suspicion that the cause of this surprise was likely an epic fit thrown by the boy.

He'd certainly seen enough of them to understand why his parents had caved. Draco could be relentless when it came to getting his own way. Thank Odin he didn't share a dorm with him like Blaise and Theo.

The Malfoy Heir would've been hexed silent long before the first month was out.

…

Lucius, Lord Malfoy studied the boy seated beside his only son and Heir at his dining table. After picking the child up with all due haste from the international port-key arrival lounge in London, a trip that he would've skipped if not for the out-right rebellion it would've caused, Draco had spirited the Young Lord up to his wing and spent the rest of the afternoon monopolizing his company. Narcissa was rather put-out by the display of bad manners, which meant his night was likely to be better spent alone with a snifter of brandy than in his lady's company.

The child was an enigma.

A true puzzle.

When asked, any practitioner of the Dark Arts, Death Eater or not, would readily inform one that the toddler's survival of the Killing Curse could only be attributed to an Olde blood magic ritual. Likely one using a life-for-life sacrifice.
Which made Harry Potter rather inconsequential except for being the son of the rather remarkable Grey-to-Dark Witch Lily Evans nee Potter.

The true defeater of the Dark Lord.

It certainly explained Sev's fascination with the witch if nothing else.

And so, when he first laid eyes on the child at the beginning of the Summer, Lucius was prepared to be underwhelmed his Heir’s gushing – for Draco – descriptions and stories both during breaks and in his letter aside.

Children, even ones being groomed as the Head of an Ancient and Noble House, were often easily impressed by simple things.

Even a Malfoy, as the regrettable brand on his arm could attest.

Harry Potter however, was every inch the Scion of an Ancient and Noble House and nothing like Lucius expected.

He'd given Draco permission for the boy to visit knowing that if nothing else he could gather information on the child in the event that Voldemort was ever re-embodied.

After meeting him, he'd quickly set his contacts to work learning everything there was to know about the budding Lord Potter.

What he'd learned was certainly a surprise.

No one could find him.

The Ministry had been silenced, the records were well and truly sealed.

The Goblins were quiet, refusing to part with even a sliver of detail.
Even Dumbledore was stymied, according to Severus losing the child’s trail once he’d crossed over into another country’s jurisdiction.

However, the lack of information was in itself telling. Whoever had taken him in and wherever he’d gone, it was hidden from the wizarding world with an ironclad power that most would think over a thousand times before challenging.

Dumbledore and the Dark Lord being the likely exceptions.

Lucius couldn’t help but smirk at the one piece of information he had been able to uncover.

Potter had claimed his Lordship and as things would have it more than one, freezing his seats in the process.

While the barmy old coot had shrugged off the absence of the Potter proxies and the appearance of the Peverell seat, Lucius wasn't so blinded by the old man as to take him at his word. Neither were several others on the Wizengamot, ICW, and Hogwarts Board. Granted, the two may not be combined, and Lucius was the only one to believe them to be if his inquiries were correct, but the timing was certainly suspect regardless.

The mere name had the power to send shockwaves rippling throughout the various Houses, Ancient, Noble, Honorable, and every combination thereof.

It harkened back to the Olde Ways and the very foundation of their culture, one of the oldest and most respected Houses in all of Wizarding Kind.

And was, or so the Legend went, the name of the infamous Three Brothers.

Rumor and innuendo aside, the Young Lord was certainly impressive from other standpoints as well. He had a...presence, the Malfoy Lord easily understanding how he’d been able to gather students together from all the Houses for his study group. Young Lord Potter also was likely the tallest and fittest boy in his class, easily appearing to his eye as one in his mid-teens rather than just
embarking on his teen years. And if his claiming of his Lordships and his Marks were any indication, the child was clearly intelligent.

Yes, Lucius was intrigued to say the least by his son's best friend.

It should make for an interesting week.

…

Frey very much enjoyed being able to catch up with Draco. The other boy was a veritable font of information and gossip not only about their mutual friends and acquaintances like Blaise and Theo, but also about those he'd never met and the wizarding world at large. One thing that the Malfoy Heir had taken care to do after that first gaffe of Frey's was secretly educate him in the little nuances and hidden rules and etiquette of their society.

A boon that made being friendly with him worth it even if he didn't like him for his own merits, which thankfully he did.

It would've been awful to hang around someone like idiotic Ronald or pratty Percival Weasley if that was his only option to gain the knowledge and practice he needed to navigate wizarding politics.

Of course, if Frey'd had his way it wouldn't have mattered one way or the other. But with Dumbledore foolishly deciding that a toddler defeated the Dark Lord and then allowing his godfather to be falsely imprisoned, he didn't have any choice between his fame and wanting his Uncle Padfoot freed.

A project he wanted to start on post-haste with Moony still being the very devil to find.

Better one honorary, if slightly off, Uncle than none at all.

Plus there was always the Elixir.

Smiling at one of Draco's better jokes, Frey turned to his older hosts and asked about when they'd be able to visit Diagon Alley for their supplies.
“Tomorrow would likely be best, don't you think Lucius?” Lady Malfoy said lightly. “That way you boys can pack your things and be able to make the most of the rest of your holiday.”

“Indeed.” Lord Malfoy inclined his head regally. “Have you any errands in particular you need to run after being away all summer?” He asked, every inch the courteous host.

Draco turned to him and whispered in his ear. “Broomstick. We can try out for Quidditch this year! Father already bought me a Nimbus 2001 for my birthday!”

Frey laughed lightly before answering his friend rather indulgently.

“Yes, I need to get a broomstick,” although he'd probably not be trying out. Better to not tempt the Fates...any of them...into having him blasted out of the air by a territorial god. “But first I need to go to Gringotts and finalize a few things I set in motion when school let out. And I need new robes.” He grimaced seeing the light spark in both Lady Malfoy's and Draco's eyes.

Seeing it for himself, Lord Malfoy gave him a commiserating look. He didn't know how it'd happened but Narcissa had firmly planted her own love of being fashionably turned out on all occasions into their only child.

The Young Lord had no idea the ordeal he'd just let himself in for.

“If you need any assistance at Gringotts.” Lord Malfoy offered smoothly. “Don't hesitate to ask. I'm always willing to share my experience with the young Lords when they come into their titles. Even for those raised in the wizarding world dealing with the goblins and their morass of paperwork can be trying to say the least.”

“Thank you, Lord Malfoy.” Frey nodded politely. “I will keep that in mind.”

“You're welcome, Lord Potter.” Lucius said formally. “And call me Lucius.”

Draco watched this take place with wide eyes. Never before had his father offered his first name to be used by one of his friends. Although, with Harry being a Lord in his own right it wasn't as strange as it might've been.
It was still bloody weird though.

…

That night while the Manor and it's family were asleep, Frey was wide awake, tossing and turning as his senses ran haywire.

Everyone had warned him.

His Patron, his guardians, the older campers, even his Far Loki.

They all told him. The older he got, the more his body matured and grew closer to the peak of physical ability that was required for him to “freeze” into his immortality, the more his magic and his powers would also mature and grow often in uncomfortable waves of growth spurts to match those of his physical self.

And while Wizarding kind are more predictable in their growth spurts, experiencing spikes at seven, eleven, thirteen, and seventeen as their natural blocks on their cores wore away, godlings are anything but predictable.

Hence his current discomfort.

He'd had his first real power spike last month right after he shot up to five-eight in a matter of weeks. It was...painful and exhilarating all at the same time to suddenly by able to do things that were formerly out of his reach, even for a magical prodigy. It was also the first taste he's gotten of what could become his divine domain as his body started to adjust to contain ever increasing levels of magical power along with tuning into coming divinity.

If so...

It was looking more and more like Thanatos did more than bless him when he decided to take an interest in his life. Although his new sensitivity to things in the Dark and Shadows – traditional
domains of Death gods – could come from another source. His older half-sister is Hel, the Asgardian goddess of the Grave and an Avatar of Death. Also a friend of Thanatos’s.

So...if he really is destined to become one of Death's Avatars...he had more than one being to blame.

And the freaking sensitivity is driving him batty.

Fed up, Frey threw back the luxurious covers and climbed from the antique four-poster bed, slipping into a pair of soft-soled shoes and grabbing his new wand – desert ironwood, ten-and-a-half inches, very hard and brittle with a minotaur tail-hair core, excellent for blood magic and warding. The desert ironwood was a bastard to work with, it wasn't any wonder it was rarely used for wands. Still, this one was much more powerful than the last, it had to be to withstand his burgeoning power levels.

He hoped so, he rather fancied the pale wood with its black and dark red striping. Loki had surprised him once again with a trophy from a slain monster for his wand core. He'd had a laugh over that, deciding that if he really was going to have to keep making wands that he'd better keep up with slaying monsters, no slacking while at Hogwarts or on holiday.

Wrapping his Hallow around himself, Frey wandered through the Manor, following the tingling sensation that had refused to let him rest.

Something was here, something important and his powers weren't going to let up on him until he figured it out.

Entering a part of the Manor he'd not seen during Draco's tour, he walked through a heavy ebony wood door and felt like he was being slapped in the face by a pervading sense of wrongness. Shaking the feeling off Frey studied where he’d found himself. Taking in the emerald and silver décor and the bookcases stuffed from top to bottom along with the massive ebony desk, there was only one place in the Manor he could be.

Lord Malfoy's study.

Stretching out his magic much the same as when he worked with his Far on his abilities, he reached for the wrongness, calling it to himself. With a nearly silent crack a slim leather volume jerked from its hiding place behind a shelf filled with law books, dislodging them in the process, and fell onto the rich carpet with a thud at his feet. A short wordless gesture of his wand had the books back in place
except for the one before him.

And a creak from behind him had him whirling with a wand on the intruder.

Intruder was a little harsh considering it was actually Lord Malfoy's study and Frey was in fact the invader but...details. Merely details.

“And what might you be up to?” Lucius asked the young man before him calmly, as if he wasn't being held at wandpoint with a look on the other's face that promised pain.

Frey ignored the question, quickly casting a privacy ward before asking one of his own.

“Tell me, Lord Malfoy.” His voice was silky in its menace. “Who do you serve?”

“I don't know what you mean.” Malfoy furrowed his brow in consternation as he internally struggled over just what to do with the creature before him. Draco did seem to value him after all.

“It’s not a hard question, Lord Malfoi.” Frey changed his pronunciation of the name slightly back to its older incarnation. “Who do you serve?”

Lucius felt his eyes spring wide as the child before him loosened some of the restraints on his power, letting it flood the room. He recognized that power, at least in part. He’d been sworn to it the day he was Named, the same as his father and his father before him. The same as his son had been, no matter what delusions the Dark Lord liked to fool himself with.

“Loki, God of Mischief and Magic.” He said at once. He didn't know what relationship Young Lord Potter had to the deity, but he undeniably had some connection to Him however tenuous. “The Malfoys serve Loki.”

Frey lowered his wand, question answered. He'd thought so after witnessing Draco's Samhain ritual the previous fall but he couldn't be sure. However, how that worked with Malfoy Senior being a Death Eater he simply wasn't sure.
Normally being sworn to one of the gods would preclude any oaths to others such as Dark Lords.

“Good.” Frey said, his voice changing from menacing to soothing. “That's good. And your wife, the Lady Narcissa?”

“My wife is a Black, even though she married a Malfoy.” Lucius admitted reluctantly, moving around the curious creature to get a better look at what was on the floor before him. “They're all sworn to Hades, though Cissa does give Loki obedience as her deity by marriage. And you, Young Lord? Who do you serve?”

Frey simply smirked as he picked up the book to get a better feel for it. It couldn't have been that easy...

“Half-bloods don't serve by oath, we serve by deed.”

It wasn't strictly the truth but Lord Malfoy didn't need to know that. This new alliance was tentative to say the least. Besides he was sworn to keep his godling status secret from those who weren't aware of it already. A safeguard to prevent assassinations from gods unwilling to share power with a new, young deity.

Lucius sucked in a shocked breath. A half-blood. A true, living half-blood, not just the product of a pureblood and a muggle or muggleborn but an actual half-bloodied child of a god.

And the Lord Malfoy knew it had to be a god.

For all his sins, James Potter was not the type to be unfaithful even if his pureblood pride would've allowed it.

Lucius didn't hold the same high opinion of his mudblood wife.

Harry Potter was a half-blood.

It explained so much, not the least of which how he survived the Killing Curse and banished the Dark Lord as a toddler.
Demigods were known for their...durability.

“Who may I ask...?” He trailed off as he was subjected to a sardonic look. *Take a guess,* that look said. Of course. He shook his head ruefully. Why else would the Young Lord have asked about his oath? He was the child of his Lord. His *true* Lord.

Resolved to what was demanded of him now that he knew even if it wasn't confirmed, Lucius watched the boy as he studied the slim volume in his hands with undisguised disgust.

“How did you end up with *this*?” Frey asked, though he was relatively certain of what the answer would be.

“The Dark Lord gave two of his most trusted followers artifacts to guard in his last days.” Lord Malfoy answered quietly. “To myself, he bestowed that diary. A remnant of who he once was. I was to guard it with my very life.”

“Interesting.” Frey turned it over in his hands once more before grimacing and moving towards the fireplace with purposeful steps. “And the other?”


“Balls.” Frey cursed under his breath. If there was one kind of foe he disliked crossing swords with it was the batshit-insane. Bella Black certainly fit that description from what he'd heard. He *was not* looking forward to prying the Horcrux’s location out of her.

“Quite.” The older Lord agreed dryly, watching avidly as he removed a few things from within his cloak that covered him still, if only haphazardly. It was rather distracting watching different pieces of the boy disappear and reappear as the cloak shifted.

Under the Malfoy Lord's careful gaze, Frey tossed in a few things into the magical fire. Yew, of course, along with a piece of cypress. Both woods associated with Death. Then a bundle of nightshade, not enough to be poisonous, and lastly sage for purification.

Speaking in Ancient Greek Frey offered up the Diary to his Patron tossing the volume onto the
dancing flames. A piercing shriek cried out as something black and wrong mingled with the flames before being consumed by the very shadows on the edges of the fire. At the back of his mind Frey heard the faintest whisper: well done.

Extinguishing the fire with a flick of his wand, he levitated the now inert book from the fireplace, setting it down neatly on the desk.

“There.” He said with satisfaction. “It is done and the diary never left your care. If asked, you’ll truthfully be able to state that it never left this room or the Manor once you placed it within the safety of your wards. And as you didn't know what it was,” and still don't was left unsaid. “You can protest your innocence in the matter and none can prove otherwise.”

Without another word, Frey gave his host a little bow, returning to his room and hopefully to get some sleep before going to the Alley in the morning.

It was already shaping up to be quite the eventful day.

…

“My god.” Lucius whispered as he collapsed back into his desk chair. He'd never expected things to take the turn they had. There was only one thing he could think of that would fit the way Young Potter disposed of the evil pervading the diary. Only one that would require calling upon Thanatos to cleanse and deal with.

A Soul Leech.

All this time he had a Soul Leech in his study. Where his son was known to sit at his side and play at being Lord Malfoy or do his work for his tutors. If that fucking thing had gotten its hooks into his son...

He let out a growl.

Dark Mark or not there would've been one less megalomaniac running around.
No matter how many times he had to kill him to make him stay dead.

“You rang?” Loki said with a chuckle as one of his more interesting followers jumped at his appearance.

“Lord Loki!” Lucius exclaimed quickly rising to bow before being gestured back into his seat.

Loki waved a hand and locked down the wards on the study. As things were the wards around the Manor should protect him from prying eyes, he'd made sure of it in ages past, but with the extra scrutiny upon his son it paid to be sure. Odin forbid they figure out his relationship to Frey.

“Lucius.” Loki bestowed a smile upon his servant. “You're looking well, if rather more pale than usual.”

“Thank you, milord.” Lucius nodded his head in thanks. “I just had the pleasure of getting better acquainted with who I believe is your son.”

“I know.” Loki waved a hand nonchalantly. “That would be the purpose behind me visit.”

“Milord?”

“My son and heir,” Lucius's eyes widened at the additional information. “Has been set a task, part of which he just accomplished with your help, I believe.”

“Yes, milord. Although it was more a lack of opposition than actual assistance.”

“Yes,” Loki gave him a thin smile. “I have long protected and favored your family. Long been your patron. Rarely do I require anything of your family but now I am in a position where your assistance is required.”

Lucius sat up straight. It'd been generations since their patron asked anything of his family.

“If it is within my power, milord, it is yours.”
“Look after my son.” Loki said simply with a grave look in his eyes. “Watch over him, protect him from harm when you can. Look after him the same you would your own child. Things have occurred that keep me from being the guiding force I used to be in his life. With your help, I can at least protect him from afar.”

“Of course, milord.” Lucius said with the solemn understanding of one father to another. “It will be done.”

“Good.” Loki said rising to his feet. “You cannot overtly assist him with his quest. However…”

“Milord?”

“If your sister-in-law were to meet a fatal accident, I'm sure the world would be a better place for it.”

“That's an understatement.” Lucius muttered under his breath as Loki appeared to simply fade away. Leaning back in his chair he summoned the firewhisky.

It'd been one hells of a night.

…

Diagon Alley was definitely not same place that Frey had visited with Heidi back on the first day of the holiday.

Where before it was calm and nearly still with very few people shopping or running errands, now it was a teeming morass of wizarding kind. Taking their leave of Lord and Lady Malfoy, the former heading to the apothecary in Grey Alley and the latter to Twilfit & Tatting with their measurements in hand, with assurances of proper behavior and staying out of trouble, Draco and Frey headed straight for Gringotts. Picking up where they'd left off with their etiquette lessons, this time the Malfoy Heir was the one learning something.

How to select and appoint a proxy.
It was a process his father had explained to him in the unlikely event that he died before Draco reached his majority but not something that was generally used much anymore.

In most cases where a proxy would be needed, the deceased Lord or Lady would make an appointment during the course of writing out their Will. This appointee became the proxy and unless the Heir in question either A. brought them up on charges of misconduct or B. claimed their inheritance while still below the age of majority, they would stay as the voting and managing party for the Heir until they became the Lord or Lady. Often it was a trusted friend or advisor, a godparent most usually.

For Frey his appointed proxy and manager of his estate should've been Sirius Black and/or Remus Lupin. But with Dumbledore's scheming and Thanatos's intervention, the seats and estate had remained empty except for the false proxy Dumbledore appointed for the Potter seats by claiming his old friend Elphias Doge was the one Lord and Lady Potter had designated for the duty. Frey was less than pleased by that communication that was attached to the inventory of his inheritance and sent his way via mundane mail the week before his birthday.

Thankfully any damage Doge might have done to the estates was nullified by Thanatos's intervention even though the god hadn't been able to fix the proxy appointment.

For one thing it happened well after Thanatos was finished rearranging Frey's future and for another it had the potential to draw too much attention to just who was in charge of said rearranging.

And with the goblins' help his estates remained in excellent shape with his goblin account manager doing an excellent job of investing and allowing the House Elves a budget to work from to maintain the properties.

He had to admit not being able to access Potter Manor and Peverell Castle along with the smaller properties: a shack in Little Hangleton (not much of a loss though the land is supposedly nice), a seaside horse farm in County Kerry, Ireland, a hunting lodge in the Highlands, and a private island in the Virgin Islands; well...that did kinda suck. Especially the bits about the horse farm and the private island.

This was all leaving out the Black estates which as the Heir he received an accounting of but couldn't access until he either was gifted one by his godfather, took over the Lordship due to his godfather not managing the estates for a term of twenty years, or Odin-forbid, Sirius died.

Frey'd thought that the American inheritance laws he'd studied for his Law & Government class for his mundane diploma were complex, they had nothing on some of the Wizarding ones.
Reaching Gringotts they were quickly ushered into his manager's office once more, Chief Account Manager Ironhide greeting them with a grimace that was as close as most goblins ever came to a congenial expression.

“Lord Potter-Peverell,” Ironhide nodded as the two boys took the seats he waved them into. “I have received your completed paperwork and attached correspondence, everything is in order. You simply need to name who you would have act as your proxies as follows.” Eyes trailing down the rather length listing of seats and positions, he rattled them off.

“The Potter and Peverell seats upon the Wizengamot, the Potter and Peverell seats upon the International Confederation of Wizards, the Peverell seat on the Hogwarts Board of Directors, the Peverell seat on the Drumstrang Board of Directors, the Potter seat on the Salem Witches’ Academy Board of Directors, and the Potter seat on the American Magical Congress. There are also many seats left vacant for the Blacks, however until you are of age you cannot make decisions regarding the Black estate or until you are made Lord. There is however outstanding decisions regarding your business activities that require attention that would best be handled by a solicitor until you are better versed in your holdings and businesses.”

Draco’s eyes were ready to pop out of his head at the – even to a Malfoy – impressive list, while Frey simply nodded already deep in thought.

“Is there a solicitor Gringotts’ would recommend?” He asked after careful consideration. He could always hire one of the Furies if Ironhide didn’t have a recommendation. Despite their contentious relationship with his status as a powerful demigod, and their habit of eating people, say what you will Furies made great lawyers.

“Our more prosperous clients who either do not have the time or inclination to oversee their own affairs,” this was said with a heavy frown on the part of the goblin. Laziness or stupidity were never acceptable reasons to a goblin for not looking after your own gold. “Seem to prefer Carlisle and Bones. The latter is a squib and distant relation of the noble House of Bones but still an excellent man-of-business who can handle affairs in both the magical and muggle worlds.”

“If he had your approval…?” Frey trailed off with a questioning arch of a brow. Ironhide gave a hesitant but affirmative nod. “Then by all means retain him. I’m not interested in branching out too much at the moment, more in shucking off any dead weight in my portfolio and maintaining what is already working. After I’ve done more research into business matters and opportunities that will likely change, however.”

With a flick of a quill across a parchment by both Frey and his account manager it was done and he had a solicitor and man-of-business to manage most of his affairs.
“One thing I would like Solicitor Bones to look into is all the articles in the Prophet.” Frey mentioned with faux-casualness. “I don’t know the precise laws to quote offhand, but I believe many people could be found in offense of several.” Alecto, borrowed from Hades, had ripped into the unauthorized merchandise like the Fury she was, netting him quite the gains. But that hadn’t stopped the Prophet from continuing to speculate - or flat out lie - about him in its pages.

Ironhide gave a sharktoothed-grin at that, prospects of plundering some of their more annoying customers was always welcome to the goblins.

Giving Draco a small smile as if to say the ordeal was almost over to the fidgety blonde, Frey quickly made his way through the appointments.

“Remus Lupin I believe holds two Masteries, both in Charms and Defense Against the Dark Arts. And he is a Pureblood,” if one ignored his “furry little problem” which was most definitely not common knowledge. “He should make an excellent member of the Hogwarts and Drumstrang boards. If Gringotts can locate him.”

“Gringotts can locate anyone.” Ironhide said with a smirk. “It’s simply a matter of galleons.”

“Authorized.” Frey didn’t even miss a beat. His own attempts to find the wayward wolf had yet to bear fruit. It was time to let others have a go. “Whatever the cost. As far as the American seats,” he hummed a moment, thinking it over. It would have to be someone who could at least pass as magical. “Leave them vacant.” He decided with a sigh. “I have to do some research on their laws before I appoint someone.”

“And the British and International seats?”

Frey gave a blood-thirsty grin in anticipation of coming upheaval. Time to really rattle Dumbledore’s bones. He gave Draco a little smirk, jewel eyes glinting.

“I believe Lord Malfoy knows precisely how I want to deal with the Wizengamot and ICW.”

And if he didn’t yet, he would surely learn…
Finished with selecting the proxies, Frey and Draco stood and turned for the door, only for Frey to
turn back and look at his account manager with an inquiring gaze.

“Is it possible for the Goblins to start inquiries into why and how my Uncle Siri wound up in
Azkaban for a crime he didn’t commit or should I take that issues directly to my soon-to-be
Solicitor?”

Ironhide gave him a vicious grin. “Gringotts would be more than glad to assist in freeing the Lord
Black, Lord Potter-Peverell. I will get our best team on it.”

Draco sucked in a shocked breath. Lord Black? Sirius Black? Innocent? At least that seemed to be
what his Harry and Harry’s goblin were implying. He must tell his parents. His mother at least had
missed her “goofy but powerful” cousin.

“Excellent.” Frey nodded once. “Charge all expenses to the main Potter account. How long do you
think it will take for him to be freed?”

Here the goblin was cautious.

“Azkaban is a horrid place, Young Lord.” The gravelly voice warned him. “A barbaric punishment
no goblin would ever inflict. Even once freed it will likely take months if not years for Lord Black
to be fit for public arenas. Though,” he had to admit based on what was known of the man’s
devotion to his godson. “He’ll likely be safe around yourself no matter the level of damage.”

“Thank you.” Frey said simply, leading his blond companion from the towering edifice of the bank
and out into the summer sunshine of Diagon Alley.

“You’ll really see him freed?” Draco asked, his voice pitched low below the tumult of the crowds.
A particularly rowdy group of matrons had gathered outside Flourish and Blott’s. Thankfully his
parents had consented to owl-ordering their books for them, leaving them free to bypass that stop and
focus on the bank, acquiring Harry’s broomstick, and approving his mother’s selections at Twilfit
and Tatting’s. The latter wouldn’t even be on the list if it wasn’t for Harry insisting on paying for his
clothes, requiring his presence to approve the withdrawal from his vaults if nothing else.

The Lady Malfoy did have impeccable taste in fashion after all.

Frey nodded slightly, keeping the conversation as covert as possible as they stopped to stare at the
broomsticks on display in Quality Quidditch Supplies.

“He is my godfather.” Frey whisper back. “And he’s innocent besides being both a distant cousin
and the Lord of a house that I’m heir to. I’ll see him freed if I have to step into the Wizengamot
myself and use the Peverell name to start knocking heads together.”

“Understandable.” Draco said. And it truly was. Even if, as Harry said, Black wasn’t innocent of
his crimes as Harry was certain he was any Lord or Heir would do the same for one of their own.
Sirius Black according to what his friend had told him had been put away without trial and by the
Wizengamot inside of by a Lord’s Tribunal.
In other words…

Once the goblins and Harry’s solicitor got started on the Ministry, they were royally fucked.

And then some.

“So…” Draco trailed off smirking at his friend. “About that Nimbus 2001…”

…

After leaving Diagon Alley, Lady Malfoy having selected clothes that his Far and Heidi would definitely approve of and not seeming to notice the ruckus outside the bookstore before whisking off her son and his friend, the two of them chatting over the broom to be delivered in the morning, she shooed them off to finish any outstanding homework before the evening meal.

Together they spent a fun and entertaining rest of break playing wizarding chess, racing their new brooms – low to the ground for Frey - and engaging in mock duels before joining their elders for dinner.

“Harry.” Draco whispered from his spot tucked in on the other side of the bed.

Frey kept his eyes closed as he snuggled into a silk-covered pillow. Lady Malfoy had given into Draco’s pleas for a “sleep-over” on the last night before they left for second year where they both ended up tucked into one bed instead of in their separate quarters. They’d each claimed a side of the massive four-poster in Draco’s room which had a curious mix of childish dragons flying around the ceiling and snitches, quaffles, and broomsticks taking up poster after poster.

“Hmm.” He hummed keeping himself awake by pure dint of will. The week had flown by as he re-acquainted himself to playing down his mental age and acting like a twelve year old. Though he had enjoyed the surprise visit from his Far…

…Flashback…

Three days into his visit at Malfoy Manor, Frey was again haunting Lord Malfoy’s study. He’d spent the last couple nights visiting the Lord after his friend fell asleep, quizzing him about what he knew about the Dark Lord and his possible horcruxes as well as coming up with a workable plan for how his seats now under Lucius’s proxy would be voted in all matters.

On this particular night, he’d had a singular question for the Lord.

“What were your specific orders regarding the Diary?” Frey asked idly as he sipped carefully at a butterbeer. It was one of the few drinks in the wizarding world he actually enjoyed more than those in the mundane world. “Or was protecting it the sum of your orders?” There was just something about that damned evil book that tickled at his mind. Like it had a purpose beyond being a Soul Leech.

Lucius sat back against the luxurious leather of his desk chair. After that first night and the harrowing events in his study and the visit from young Harry’s godly sire, he’d actually found himself enjoying the company of the Young Lord. He didn’t think he would if for no other reason than he was just that: young. But for all that he acted very much the adolescent especially around his son, in private with the Malfoy Lord the half-blood showed his mettle, coming across as every inch the proper pureblood Lord.

And the conversations weren’t bad either.
The child had a dry wit and sarcasm that Severus would greatly enjoy if the dour man was ever able to look beyond a passing superficial resemblance to James Potter the boy enjoyed.

“I was to give it to a pureblooded blood-traitor when the Dark Lord commanded, to be taken and smuggled unknowingly into Hogwarts. It was supposedly able to release Slytherin’s Monster of all things.” Lucius would’ve snorted at the notion, except for the mention in the school’s history that he as one of the governors had access to. A history that included petrifications and a sudden death.

“A monster.” Frey nearly sighed. Of course his year wouldn’t be that easy. Destroying one horcrux before the year began hardly counted towards his monster-draw after all. There would be a monster. “Any idea of what caliber?”

“The you’ll-not-be-going-anywhere-near-it caliber.” Loki’s voice drawled from behind them, making both heads turn towards his place by the fire with a nearly-audible crack. “Or I’ll have your hide, my little one.”

Frey restrained his desire to roll his eyes at the not-quite-accurate nickname. He’d stopped being little for good over the summer. But it’d been a long time since he saw his Far even in dreams. The scrutiny was much too high at the moment.

Climbing to his feet with a smile, he clasped his father in a bear-hug, looking up at the god’s not-inconsiderable height. Thinking about that nickname he grinned inside. According to at least one Seeress he’d outstrip his Far before he stopped growing, out-doing him in muscle mass as well. Then it would be his turn to tease.

“Far.” He greeted him simply as the god motioned for his servant to leave them alone. “I thought it was too dangerous for us to meet?”

“And so it is.” Loki nodded once before holding his heir out at arm’s length to look him over. After a moment he nodded pleased with what he was seeing. “But…thanks to some meddling on my part over the years we’re safe enough here for the moment. As long as we don’t abuse the privilege, these wards should shroud us for a time.”

Frey nodded in acceptance. He had noticed that the Malfoy wards were both stronger and stranger than most he’d seen since entering the wizarding world last year. It made sense that his father had a hand in that. He was just happy he was getting some time with him, even if it wasn’t nearly as much as he’d grown used to.

“Why can’t I go after this monster?” Frey asked quietly after answering Loki’s almost rote set of paternal questions about his schoolwork and training. “It is in the school after all.” That made it within his temporary domain and his to hunt.

Loki sighed. He knew this was going to come up eventually with Salazar’s now-gigantic pet beneath the school but hoped he’d have a few more years before having to deal with the now-iniminent heart-attack this adventure will be sure to cause. Why his old friend just had to leave his snake in the school instead of releasing it into the wild like any sane person would do he’d never know.

“It’s a basilisk.” The god said flatly. He didn’t hold out any hope that knowing the monster was a King of Serpents would curtail his monster-slaying responsibilities for the moment but there was always the sliver of a chance...

Not really.

His son was far too much like himself and his mother for that to work. While that cold logic he’d
learned from Chiron and Thanatos could and sometimes did overcome his natural tendency towards half-blood heroics, he still was at heart a mortal child of the gods with the need to strive for glory they all possess, godling or no. And Frey was better at said heroics than most.

Lily would skin him alive, slowly, if she ever found out what their son got up to before he froze into his immortality.

“A basilisk.” Frey repeated, his voice just as flat as his Far’s. “Like big-ass-snake, killing gaze, venom, and impenetrable hide, basilisk?”

Loki nodded before adding: “Her name is Selena and she’s quite the beauty. Also quite mad from the centuries of isolation.”

“So it’s a crazed, lonely, female, basilisk that’s centuries old.”

“Yes.”

“Fan-fucking-tastic.”

...End Flashback...

There’s really no hope for it, Frey supposed. He’ll have to kill it, out of mercy even if his duty didn’t already demand as much from him. His Far would be no help, however. With his affinity to snakes and ability to talk to animals, Loki wasn’t a proponent of taking on the more…natural monsters.

Minions of the Underworld, Tartarus, and other “unnatural” creatures, yes. No problem. That’s one of the duties that goes along with being a demigod.

But Loki frowns on the others, the dragons and basilisks, the great wolves and ancient lions.

Unless, of course, like the situation with Selena where it’s been driven mad or was ill. Then the mercy of the deed outweighed the wastefulness of it.

Frey would do it, and offer it up to his father but there was no glory in it, not for him. Not this time. This wasn’t a kracken or a hydra or a drakon. It was a King or well…a Queen…of Serpents and it deserved to sleep.

And like it or not, he would see it done.

“Yeah, Dray.” He finally prompted the blonde after what seemed like forever. “What’s up?”

“I saw you the other night.” Draco whispered, almost afraid of what the fallout would be from this conversation but still resolved to have it. His friend, his best-friend, was hiding from him and he wouldn’t have it. “With my father in his study. You were…different.”

He probably wouldn’t have said anything, letting Harry have his privacy, if it wasn’t for one thing that struck him harshly. Harry was supposed to be his best friend. But the Harry he saw talking with his father was radically different from the one he knew. Or thought he knew.

And Draco would get an answer out of his friend if he had to pester him all night and all day and all night again until the other boy gave in if that was what it took.

“Yeah, Dray?” Frey prompted him again now wide-awake, knowing there was something Draco was trying to get at. The other boy might be years behind him in mental maturity but he was still a pureblooded heir. And a highly intelligent one at that. The blonde would’ve drawn his own
conclusions from whatever he’d seen and now was searching for answers to confirm or deny his ideas.

“He…deferred to you.” The word was barely uttered, more of a breath than a whisper. “You were like a completely different person. Strong,” though the other boy was always strong. “And commanding. A real Lord. But there was more. He respected you. He deferred to you. To a twelve-year-old boy. I don’t…” Draco sighed. “I don’t know what to think anymore.”

Frey thought quickly. He truly did appreciate Draco and all he’s done for him. More he saw him as a true friend and maybe even more once their maturity levels aren’t so far apart. Right now he can’t even entertain the idea of Draco as more than a friend. But when he’s older...

Lucius Malfoy is quite the attractive wizard.

He wanted to keep Draco close to him, for as long as he’s permitted to have him. In time he’ll freeze into his immortality and have to leave. Maybe even sooner than that depending on events. One thing was certain though, Frey will leave the wizarding world.

And unfortunately, that meant Dray, and Neville, and everyone else along with it.

But until then...

Until then, there was no reason not to enjoy Draco and his other friends and their company and do what he needs to do to keep them.

Megalomaniac spirits of Dark Lords and manipulative Light Lords aside.

“I have…” How to word this…? “Valuable connections. Your father knows that and wants to keep me onside so he listens to me more than he would another person my age, even another Young Lord. Plus as my proxy he has to defer to me in some things when it comes to my seats. He doesn’t have a choice unless he wants to face the scandal that having them taken away has inflicted on Dumbledore and his pawn.”

Draco’s response was barely more than a whisper, as if he was afraid to pry any deeper. As if he was afraid of what he might find if he kept digging but resolved to do it anyway.

“It’s more than that.” Draco squeezed his eyes closed. “I don’t know what exactly. But there’s more than that. It’s you. There’s something different about you when you’re around him.”

Frey flipped over in the bed, facing Draco’s rigid form. With delicate, careful hands he pulled the boy around and coaxed him into opening his eyes. Leaving one hand soothingly resting upon a downy cheek Frey stared deep into his best friend’s silver eyes.

“He knows a secret about me.” He said simply. “One I’m not allowed to share with you just yet. But someday I will and you’ll understand why your father treats me the way he does and why I seem different when I’m around him.”

Draco searched Harry’s jewel-green eyes, looking for any signs of lies.

“You’ll tell me?” He asked to confirm. He could wait. If Harry promised that he’d know when the time was right, he could wait to find out more. As long as he promised to stop pretending around him. “And you’ll stop pretending around me?”

“I will tell you.” Frey nodded with a little smile. As if the blonde would let him get away with not fessing up at some point. “And I still have to act like a kid around others, you know that right?”
“I know.” Draco smirked. He’s known about Harry’s need to present a false-front ever since that first train ride last year. He just didn’t realize at the time how far the acting really went. It didn’t feel good to know that some of how his friend was around him was a front for others as well as him. “But not when we’re alone. You’ll act like you, no matter how weird it might seem to me, when we’re alone.”

Frey let go of the other’s face and squeezed his pajama-clad shoulder once in reassurance before agreeing to his terms.

“Agreed.”

Draco smiled brilliantly, turning once more to face out the windows. “Agreed.” He snuggled down into the pillows. “G’night Harry.”

Frey sighed, he would never get used to that name. “Night, Dray.”

…
Nine

A/N: Yes I know Remus really is a half-blood but I went with Pureblood for this story. I think it’ll work better as the story progresses and gives him that little prestige boost that he’ll need for holding the seats for Frey.

As far as Slash goes, I’ve already addressed this once and no amount of begging or flames is going to change it. Frey is going to have several relationships, some of them with other males. No matter how serious the relationships appear none of them are his ultimate match. That won’t be addressed until the sequels and the various spin-offs I have planned for A/U-type sequels that are kind of “What if Frey did so-and-so…” stories. Not the official sequels but still fun to read and write.

Now on with Year 2…

Lokison

Chapter Nine

With a smile and a flick of his wand, Prefect Cedric Diggory enlarged the compartment that had become home to an impromptu birthday party for Harry Potter. Most of them were upset when they found out before the end of the last school term that Harry would be unreachable until the last week of August due to his living situation. As a result, everyone had held onto their birthday gifts for the now-second-year, deciding as a group to have a little celebration of their own.

Different parties had brought different things, with most of them heavily raiding the snack-cart for candy.

Cedric himself had provided the butterbeer along with Padma Patil and some of the others pitching in galleons.

Frey grinned and laughed along with his friends when the Weasley Twins presented him with a magical trick cake that exploded into glitter and confetti when he blew out the candle – it being one of the tamer gags they’d played…ever – and thanked everyone for their various gifts.

Most of the study group had pitched together for gift vouchers to shops in Diagon Alley. The Ravenclaws giving either Scrivenscafts or Flourish and Blotts vouchers, the Hufflepuffs and Gryffindors Fortescue’s Ice Cream Parlor or Quality Quidditch Supplies, and the Slytherins to various apothecaries or Twilfit & Tatting. A rare exception was Cedric who gave him a wand-polishing kit, having noticed that “Harry’s” wand tended to get progressively more damaged throughout the year.

Naturally the Twins couldn’t help but make a few crude “wand-polishing” jokes buoyed by Draco’s scowls and Blaise and Theo’s cackles.

For themselves the Twins gave him a few of their prototype tricks and gags, things that they’d only tried themselves and not yet unleashed on the Hogwarts populace – a rare honor.

Blaise and Theo had each gifted him with rare books from their family collections, neither of which he was surprised to see that he owned, making the gift doubly precious. Neville had likewise given him a tome, only his was on rare and extinct flora both magical and mundane. Some of which Frey was pretty sure his Far had access to on Asgard.

If it wouldn’t completely blow his cover he would’ve given Neville one of those “extinct” plants as
his own birthday gift. However he’d had to settle for a large packet of mundane seeds from all over the world that Grover had collected. Neville was rather thrilled as many of them he’d never encountered before.

Draco of course had to top all the other gifts, presenting him with a gorgeous Golden Eagle that had been caught wild and trained for post. One of the largest avians, and being a magical cousin to the mundane raptor, Ajax would be able to carry post between Frey’s home and England. Apparently Draco wasn’t okay with not being able to contact him during breaks if he went home.

His own belated gift to the blonde was as well received as his Yule present had been, the blonde having clung to him for an hour earlier in his visit when he opened the beribboned box that contained an Opaleye cloak to match his boots.

“Happy Birthday To Harry!” The singing – more like shouting in bad rhythm – rang through the enclosed space. “Happy Birthday To You!”

Laughing, Frey thanked everyone for their presents, sinking into the role of “Harry Potter” under Draco’s knowing silver gaze as the red steam engine sped on towards the Scottish Highlands.

…

The first week passed quickly and in a blur, as it had the year before, and Frey was no closer to either figuring out the loyalties of one Professor Snape nor to discovering the location of the Chamber of Secrets.

Though he was close to losing his normally-steady temper.

He didn’t always have control of it, both of his birth parents and his adoptive father were known for their tempers – and the consequences of rousing it.

But one thing all his guardians agreed upon was that controlling his temper – a thing which could very well be his Fatal Flaw – was vital to his surviving to reach immortality. In this Chiron, Heidi, Lord Thanatos, and the other trainers all were united. Even though his Far disagreed, having been drawn to Lily’s infamous temper alongside her beauty, wit, and power.

His trainers hadn’t prepared him for this.

“Mr. Potter!” The pink-and-glitter wearing hack of a DADA Professor called out, flashing his famous smile. “Come up and help me demonstrate!”

Gilderoy Lockhart was one of the most imbecilic people he’d ever met.

And that included Draco’s minions and the entire contents of the Ares and Aphrodite cabins.

At least the former two had brawn backing them up and the latter some sense.

Lockhart had neither and as far as all the boys could see was an utter failure. Not that they were stupid enough to say so around the gaggles of twitter-pated girls that swooned whenever the irritating creature walked by. No one wanted a repeat of what Lavender Brown had done to Ronald Weasley inflicted upon themselves.

The male half of Hogwarts was irritated.

Not suicidal.
Finally conceding with a sigh, Frey climbed onerously to his feet and strode towards the front of the class. It was only their third lesson with the idiot and following the disastrous first lesson with the Pixies – nasty little beasties sometimes – Lockhart had stuck with acting out ridiculous portions of his many, many books. Usually with Frey as a “helper”.

Even his allies among the Slytherin and Gryffindor houses were snickering – including Draco and Neville the prats – over Frey getting called up to the front yet again.

“Excellent, excellent.” Lockhart beamed as Frey took his usual place standing in the center of the teacher’s platform. “Now.” And the fraud – had to be – began to explain. “When that ghoul jumped out at me.”

Frey took his as his cue to mockingly growl with a roll of his eyes.

The male half of the class snickered while the female half alternately frowned at “Harry” or sighed as Lockhart flexed his non-existent muscles.

“…I” The idiot was still talking. “Grabbed him ‘round the neck and said…”

Quickly making the leap toward what the moron was about to do, manhandle him to the floor, Frey gave an almost unnoticeable wink towards his three Slytherins where they were stationed towards the back of the classroom and planted his feet.

Lockhart reached out and put – or tried to anyway – Frey in a headlock.

A headlock that was used to toss said idiot over Frey’s shoulders and onto the floor in front of him, the wind thoroughly knocked from him.

“Professor!” Frey said with mock-worry, echoed by gasps from all the girls. The boys were too busy laughing under their breaths to notice, though Draco, Blaise, and Theo were all paying rapt attention to his playacting. “I’m so, so sorry. You must not know your own strength.” He finished innocently, reaching down to give the bumbling fool and hand up.

“Quite…” Lockhart wheezed, barely hiding a flinch when the previously-serene boy gave the hand he’d used to haul him back to his feet a painful clench accompanied by a scorching glare. “Quite so, Mr. Potter. P-please take your seat.”

With a barely-hidden smirk, Frey did just that, satisfied that the birdbrain would call on some other unfortunate soul for the next “demonstration” of Lockhart’s supposed skills.

…


“Did he really flip Lockhart onto the ground?” Cedric asked, being two years ahead of them – and in Hufflepuff – he wasn’t present for the event that was taking the school by storm.

They were at their normal set of tables – if a little bit smaller in number most of the girls not wanting to spend time around Frey after he winded their idol – in the library where Draco set to recounting the tale with much emphasis on the befuddled look on Lockhart’s face as he went flying over “Harry’s” shoulders.

“With ease.” Blaise answered with a nod after following Draco’s tale with a little smirk. “Strange since you’re only a second-year, Harry.”
Frey rolled his eyes. “I’m also only a couple inches shorter than Lockhart. It wasn’t that hard.”

“But much slighter.” Theo eyed him up analytically. “I know from seeing you run on the weekends that you’ve got some muscle but Lockhart must still outweigh you by several stone.”

The others fell into discussing momentum and force, Cedric and the other older boys drawn into the debate between Blaise and Theo with Draco occasionally butting in to champion “Harry.” Frey just sighed and continued on with his Transfiguration homework. It wasn’t hard due to his personal studies and his Far’s manic ideas of preparation but it was tedious having to pretend to reference and crosscheck facts in the books surrounding him like the others.

A not-often-heard voice piped up.

“I’m not surprised.” Neville said with quiet authority. Though not as shy as he once was, the “quiet” Gryffindor rarely said much in public, saving his thoughts and observations for when he, Draco, and “Harry” were alone.

“What do you mean, Nev?” Frey asked, head cocked to one side in a wordless gesture of curiosity. While Neville rarely gave his opinion in public, he did Frey tended to pay attention to it, the shy brunette often having an incisive viewpoint.

“I’m not surprised you were able to toss Lockhart.” Neville clarified with a shrug as the others all turned to look at him. After several moments of staring he sighed and set down his quill to explain. “You knock me and Draco around all the time in duels. Yeah, with magic but also with swords or just horsing around. You’re a lot stronger than you look and you know how to use that strength. I’m not surprised you knocked Lockhart on his arse.”

Finished with his mini-speech, Neville tucked back into his Potions essay, studiously ignoring the others. He’d said his piece and he was done.

Knowing that they’d not get anything more from the other boy, the rest of the group went back to studying, leaving Draco and Frey eyeing both each other and Neville.

It seemed Draco wasn’t the only one who’d started to notice things out-of-place. Perhaps it was time to bring his friends more fully into the fold. After he started them on Occlumency.

Frey had zero intention of losing his secrets to one of Dumbledore’s legilimency scans.

September ended and October began with little fanfare. Frey had successfully dodged Draco’s attempts at getting him to try out for Quidditch, though why he was so insistent when they’d be competing against each other he would never know.

Lockhart had taken Frey’s wordless – though no less effective – warning to heart, staying as far from the godling as possible after being unceremoniously dumped on his arse.

He did however decide to host a dueling club and shanghai Professor Snape into helping…much to pretty much everyone’s surprise.

Frey stood towards the front of the platform Lockhart had set up in one of the cavernous abandoned classrooms on the second floor. Neville and Draco flanked him with Blaise and Theo, the latter of which complaining about Frey’s height, standing behind them.

Rolling his eyes, Frey reached back and hauled the shorter Theo – the shortest of their group besides
Draco who’d pouted for days after seeing his fellow Slytherin topping him by an inch – to stand in front of him, resting his elbows on the shorter boy’s shoulders and his chin on the top of his head.

“There.” He said with mocking cheeriness. “All better.”

Theo growled and batted at him, Frey standing straight with a laugh, joined by most of their friends. Except Draco who echoed Theo’s growl with a scowl.

Harry had been almost embracing Theo.

That would not do.

Before the blonde’s burgeoning jealousy could explode, Lockhart drew their attention as he sprang with studied grace on to the platform, Professor Snape gliding silently onto the opposing side.

“Welcome, welcome!” Gilderoy sang out over the gathered masses of students.

Frey tuned him out as he examined the enigma of Severus Snape once more. There had been an almost unnoticeable softening in the man this year – at least towards Frey. Draco had pouted for days when his godfather hadn’t been able to make it to Malfoy Manor because of a stock of rare potions ingredients being at auction in Marrakesh, foiling Frey’s plans of studying the man in a more “natural” setting.

“…3!”

At the shout from Lockhart, Frey focused back on the duel. The blonde ponce fumbled whatever spell he was trying – Frey thought it might be the Disarming Charm but wasn’t certain.

Professor Snape’s on the other hand knocked the idiot off the platform and into the wall, an unpleasant but pleased smirk on his dour face.

The entire population of Hogwarts’ male students snickered and laughed while the girls gasped or cried out in worry. Lockhart stumbled to his feet and stuttered his way through his attempt at covering up his poor performance.

“W-well. That was very good Severus.” The man fumbled around, glancing to and fro frantically. “Ah!”

Frey winced when the periwinkle blue eyes lit on him.

“Mr. Potter, I believe we’ll start with the Boy-Who-Lived!” Lockhart stated grandly, with a sweep of his arm. “And can I have… Very good, Ms. Granger!”

His study group rolled their eyes in unison as Frey grumbled under his breath. Of course the Ravenclaw would jump at the chance to duel him. If she actually managed to win it would validate the poor grace she’s always shown at having him and his friends besting her marks. Never mind that when it came to pure power, he had her bested hands down, as did many of his friends.

Ms. Granger was an intelligent witch of some power.

She wasn’t a match for a godling.

Few were outside of the ranks of divinity and even some gods would have problems depending on their province. The Dark and Shadows and Trickery when combined were a formidable combination.
Even without knowing what he is, he’d proved himself as the most powerful wizard in his year if not in the school altogether.

She really didn’t stand a chance.

“Good luck, Granger.” Draco shouted with glee as she and Frey climbed onto the platform. “You’re going to need it!”

Granger just scowled fiercely at the laughing students, which was most of them. Hermione hadn’t managed to endear herself to her fellow students with her know-it-all attitude and ungracious behavior. Her right hand clutched at her wand, enraged by their mockery.

“Remember,” Lockhart cautioned as they stared across the dueling platform, Granger visibly maddened while Frey was patently blasé. “This is a friendly duel, disarming spells and minor charms and jinxes only.”

Granger sneered. “That’s all I’ll need. Ready, Potter?”

Frey bowed as they were prompted by Lockhart. “Ladies first, Ms. Granger.” He said politely with a sweeping wave of his arms.

“Expelliarmas!” Granger shouted with a flick of her wand. The beam of light shot well passed Frey’s shoulder as he spun to the side, turning his shoulder towards her and minimizing her target area.

Deciding to make a point, Frey smirked. With a silent swish and a flick of his ironwood wand, he levitated her by her wand.

Behind him Snape choked back a snicker as the gathered students all broke down in giggles at the sight of the girl floating in the air and desperately grasping her wand.

Shrieking, Granger lost her grip and began to fall the now six-feet back to the platform. Frey gave another swish and flick, catching her before she could fall and lowered her to the ground then Summoned her wand with a quiet: “Accio.”

Applauding politely, Professor Snape moved to stand between the two of them as Granger was helped to her feet by a stunned Lockhart.

“Winner.” Snape pronounced without the need for a Sonorous, the students instantly quieting and sobering at the sight of him. “From Gryffindor House, Mr. Harry Potter.”

The applause was uproarious as Frey bowed then presented Ms. Granger with her wand.

Swiping it from his hand with a hiss, she huffed. “He cheated.” She objected. “He used a fourth-year charm to summon my wand.”

Severus bowed his head, rolling his eyes when they were shielded from the watching crowd. “No, Ms. Granger. Lord Potter did not cheat and accusing him of such could be grounds for an actual duel not one of these children’s games. Ten points from Ravenclaw for poor-sportsmanship and another ten for defaming the honor of a Lord.”

An unruly murmur had broken out in the mass of students, especially among the Slytherins and Gryffindors over the Know-It-All’s accusations. Many of the high society and noble children knew that he’d claimed the Potter seats, having heard the gossip from their parents. Such an accusation was an offense on his honor and that of his House. If he’d been so inclined, he could’ve fought an
honor duel over it – claiming a forfeit up to and including her life for the slight as she was considered a commoner.

Especially as a neutral third-party – in this case Snape – recognized the slight.

“Lord Potter,” The Professor continued. “Will your honor be satisfied with the penalty already levied against Ms. Granger or do you insist on a duel?”

Frey thought quickly, there were many forfeits he could claim if he beat her again in a proper duel – one where he wouldn’t be restricted to schoolyard rules of spellwork and conduct. But in the end, he’d gain more by being gracious in his victory than he would be causing her further humiliation.

“Your punishment is sufficient.” Frey said with an agreeing nod. “However I believe Ms. Granger should attend a rudimentary Wizarding etiquette course…perhaps with her Head of House?”

“Very well.” Severus nodded sharply then turned to the red-faced muggleborn. “Ms. Granger you shall also have weekly detentions with Professor Flitwick until such time as he believes you are fully informed and aware of the etiquette of the Wizarding world.”

Fuming Hermione flounced off the platform and out of the room while most of the school watched and snickered or gossiped over her massive faux pas.

Rejoining his friends they talked quietly, Frey observing Professor Snape, as they paired off the years to practice the Disarming Charm or basic dueling etiquette.

Joking and laughing with Draco who’d been paired with him thanks to Professor Snape, they tossed spells back and forth. Frey found himself dancing uncontrollably at one point and Draco sprouted green and silver feathers in his hair at another. With so little room to move due to the large amount of students, Frey wasn’t able to dodge the way he preferred.

They passed an enjoyable hour this way until they were dismissed for Lunch in the Great Hall.

…

Later that night Frey was wandering the corridors, another growth-spurt having him up and out of bed.

Finding himself over towards the Ravenclaw Tower, Frey’s overactive senses went off when he heard a quiet whimper.

Too low for a normal person to hear, it drew him towards an out-of-the-way door at the far end of the corridor. Bracing himself, he summoned his sword. If it was a monster or some other beasty roaming and hiding the halls, a sword was a better weapon for a godling than a wand – if more conspicuous.

Throwing the door wide, he light what appeared to be a closet with a wandless *Lumos* only to draw up short and send away his sword at the sight that met his disbelieving gaze. Rather than a monster or beast, lying curled up without pillow, blanket, or even a jacket or shoes was a tiny figure of a girl. Platinum blonde hair – nearly as pale as Draco’s – haloed around her head and surprised – and frightened – eyes the color of bluebells stared up at him.

“What are you doing here?” Frey asked what had to be a first-year. He’d become used to most of the students the previous year, and slightly recalled the pale blonde girl from her Sorting. Shrugging out of his inner wool cloak – not the Hallow – he crouched and wrapped her in its warmth. “You’re freezing.”
Rubbing her arms briskly under the wool of his cloak, he tried to warm her as she watched him from farseeing eyes.

“I’m Luna Lovegood.” She said simply, her voice hardly more than a whisper. “The other girls in Ravenclaw think I’m odd. Sometimes things go missing from my trunk and sometimes the door won’t open for me.”

“That’s awful.” Frey said in a growl. “They’re bullying you, you need to tell one of the Professors.”

“Why?” Luna asked baffled. “They’re only playing, they don’t mean anything by it.”

Frey looked her dead in the eyes. “They’re not playing, Luna.” His voice was gentle but firm. “They are bullying you and you need to report them or they’ll never stop. You could’ve frozen out here all night.”

“That wasn’t all of them.” She protested feebly. “Just Hermione. She was mad because you beat her again and now she’s lost points and has detention.”

“Even worse.” Frey said, helping her to her feet. “Now that one’s done it they’ll all do it unless something is done.”

Luna just stared over her shoulder as he helped her towards the Tower. She knew he was right, knew that the others weren’t just playing when they called her Looney. She was strange to them and people, especially young girls, weren’t kind when it came to others being strange or different from themselves.

Reaching the door to Ravenclaw Tower, Frey let out a little pulse of power forcing the statue to move away from the door.

Head turning with a sharp crack, Luna faced him with suddenly piercing eyes.

Meeting the Seeress’s stare calmly, Frey gave a short bow and waved her into the stairs leading to her common room.

“I will be reporting this encounter to my Head of House.” He said, ignoring her now knowing eyes that were startling in their clarity when she wasn’t lost in her own mind or in her visions. “Feel free to keep the cloak until your own is located, I can be found in the Library most evenings.”

“Very well.” Luna said with stiff formality. Even at eleven she wasn’t foolish enough to play games with a godling. Her mother had taught her better than that before her passing. Descendants of the Moire have an innate sense of who can be moved – and who were better left alone. The First Born of Loki and Chosen of Thanatos is not a half-blood to trifle with even if he wasn’t a godling which his power most assuredly marked him as. “Do as you will, Frey Haraldr Lokison.”

Coming up from his bow he gave her a solemn nod then turned on his heel and disappearing underneath his Hallow.

…

By Samhain Luna was a regular member of their study group of friends and friendly acquaintances. Professor Flitwick was quickly put a stop to the bullying with a heavy spate of detentions and point-losses that pretty much guaranteed Ravenclaw for last place in the House Cup unless they pulled off a minor miracle. The girls in her own year slowly warmed to her without the pressure of the older girls falling on them and while they themselves never forgave the dippy blonde for their detentions and in some cases letters home, they at least kept their animosity to themselves.
The Ravenclaw’s personal blend of sage wisdom and head-in-the-clouds attitude slotted in well with Frey’s core group of friends, bringing in some much-needed femininity to the group of boys.

He invited her to join himself as well as Neville, Draco, and the other new additions of Cedric, Theo, and Blaise for their All Hallows Rites.

To his great surprise he found from watching her closely that Luna worshipped the Moire who were the Greek fates as he’d pegged her as Celt or Norse. Blaise’s family Patron turned out to be Venus, the Roman version of Aphrodite while Theo’s was Lugh the Celtic lord of Light and one of the main gods of that pantheon. Cedric was another he’d been right about though not completely. From his readings he understood the Diggory family Patron to be Bellatona, the Roman goddess of War.

Instead, Cedric gave homage to the Morrigan. The Morrigan was one of the most feared of the War gods and goddesses – and with good reason. She was just as likely to smite a follower as she was a foe, being highly tempestuous and tricky.

Not exactly the Patron of good little wizards and witches.

November First or All Saint’s Day brought good news on owl’s wings: the goblins had succeeded in gathering enough information for Frey to go ahead with his request to reopen his godfather’s case – and actually be able to force the Ministry and Wizengamot to do so.

Without the affidavits and evidence Ironhide had been able to secure he had solid proof that not only had the Wizengamot and the Ministry not followed protocol by giving Sirius – then an Heir of an Ancient and Noble House – a hearing before a Lord’s Tribunal, required for all criminal cases involving a Lord or Heir and how so many had been able to skate around the charges levied during the aftermath of the War against Voldemort, but they hadn’t even given him a trial at all.

Something Frey was already well aware of that would have the wizarding public up in arms… especially with the man’s godson being the Boy-Who-Lived.

Frey immediately wrote back for Ironhide to forward the information to the Ministry and the Wizengamot with another set sent to Lord Malfoy. Lucius was already aware both from Frey and Draco speaking to him that he’d put the goblins to the task and was merely waiting for word from Frey to begin whispering in the Minister’s ear.

Having a hard-nosed politician who wasn’t above bribery did come in handy on occasion. Frey was a big believer in utilizing all of the tools at hand and when dealing with dirty politics, having a dirty politician bound in service to his Far was good to have in his back pocket.

They’d also located Remus Lupin in Tibet of all places and were in the process of contacting him. All-in-all things were going swimmingly…which was usually the cue for all hell to break lose.

Which it did, right before Yule.

…”Mr. Potter.” Minerva McGonagall’s starched Scottish tones rang through the Gryffindor common room where Frey and Neville were working on their Herbology homework and discussing the location of Neville’s pet toad Trevor who seemed to spend most of his life lost.

Turning slightly in his chair Frey faced his formidable Head-of-House.

“Yes, Professor?” He asked politely, setting down his quill.
“Headmaster Dumbledore would like to see you in his office.” She said briskly. Though she couldn’t for the life of her fathom why. “At once.”

“Yes, Professor.” Nodding he gathered up his things and handed them to Neville who promised to look after them for him until he returned.

Thanking his friend, Frey stood and went to join the patiently waiting tartan-clad woman by the entrance.

“Who knows?” Neville joked in his quiet way. “Maybe you’ll find Trevor along the way. Unless he’s disappeared down a drain and into the plumbing system…again.”

“Maybe I will, Nev.” Frey said with a laugh at the thought of the amphian escaping through the sewage system and making a home out in the Black Lake. “Maybe I will…”

He trailed off, an idea sparking.

How would an ancient basilisk travel unseen throughout the school in order to petrify and/or kill muggleborn students from the subterrean Chamber?

If you were a serpent and capable of maneuvering through pipes.

The only question remained…which of the innumerable bathrooms, water closets, and even kitchens and water fountains concealed an entrance into the underground lair.

A problem for another time as he was rapidly approaching the gargoyle-sentry posted at the stairs to the Headmaster’s office and suite.

One problematic relic at a time. Facing off with Dumbledore seemed to be the problem du jour for the evening, the other ancient problem would have to wait for another day.

“Twizzlers.” McGonagall said and the statue moved aside, revealing the circular stair up to Dumbledore’s chambers. “There you are, Mr. Potter. I’m sure you’ll be able to find your way back afterwards?”

“Of course Professor.” He said with a gallant bow. “No need to make a lady such as yourself wait upon me.”

Giving him a faint smile and a wistful nod, she left him to his business. James and Sirius were two of her all-time favorite students and both had a similarly charming roguishness to them. Some days it was as if young Harry was the ghost of them striding through the halls…though with more grace than either of them ever managed.

Frey turned and stepped on the first stair, riding it up to the top with no surprise. The elevator effect of the stair was well-documented…if you knew where to look besides having a Far who’d helped build the place.

Salazar was one of his favored followers of the time and Loki had enjoyed dipping his hand into the creation of the Castle’s sentience, a bit of spellwork far beyond even that of the Founders.

Enchanting a hat to sort students based on a set of criteria was one thing. Creating a nearly-sentient being out of pure magic was something else entirely, requiring a deft hand and divine touch. Even now Hogwarts tended to remember who helped form her – and helped Frey conceal his steps and power where possible as a result.
“Ah, Harry my boy.” Dumbledore beamed at the lean form of the growing wizard with his twinkling eyes. A piece of parchment was held in one hand, no doubt the reason for the unusual summons. “Please take a seat. Lemon drop?”

Refusing the candy with little fanfare, Frey took the offered seat, waiting patiently for the Headmaster to come around to the purpose of his visit.

Which after a few minutes of mind-numbing pleasantries, he finally did.

“I was reviewing the stay-over list for the coming holiday and noticed that you had failed to make arrangements to stay in the castle this Christmas.” Dumbledore’s eyes twinkled up at him as he peered over the top of his glasses. “As I thought it was an oversight I was going to add your name to the list but felt I should confirm with you first.”

“Headmaster Dumbledore.” Frey answered him with hard eyes and stiff formality, borrowing Draco’s Prince-to-Peon tone. “As you well know you should at least refer to me as Mr. Potter if not Lord Potter as you’ve never been giving leave to address me so informally. Secondly as I have not arranged to stay at the castle over break, my plans are therefore none of your business.”

Standing after delivering this firm set-down, Frey moved towards the door conversation finished as far as he was concerned.

A belief Dumbledore appeared not to share.

“I am your Headmaster, young man.” The Professor said with wounded affability. “As long as you attend this school, you are my concern.”

“I beg to differ.” Frey met his gaze head-on. “As my Headmaster, only my behavior within these walls and my grades are your concern. Everything else is the concern of my guardians, of which you are not.”

Albus’s genial gaze hardened perceptively at the young man’s persistence. He knew, he just knew that he was going to spend the break with the Malfoys, a Dark family if there ever was one. The damage that friendship could’ve already done was incalculable on the Boy-Who-Lived. If only Ronald hadn’t managed to so thoroughly offend the young Savior.

The hero of the Wizarding World had to be Light. There was no other option…for the greater good.

He held little hope of Mr. Longbottom’s ability to counteract young Malfoy’s influence on the Young Lord Potter.

He needed to find another way.

Fortunately, a recent accusation lodged against the Wizengamot may have given him the “in” he needed into the boy-hero’s life.

Sirius Black and his partner Remus Lupin had always been strong supporters of the Light, no matter their inherent magical leanings.

Breaking the silence Frey strode from the office, calling: “If that’ll be all, Professor?” Over his shoulder without giving the older wizard time to answer or call him back.

…

“Ho, Brother!” Thor called out boisterously as he caught sight of the slighter form of Loki leaning
elegantly over the seeing pool the Asgardians were using to watch the goings-on of the young Seidr Harry Potter.

It wasn’t an odd sight, Loki often took interest in the doings of the magical Midgardians especially with this young one being the son of one of his own followers.

He was often alone in his vigil now that much of the betting had tapered off with the young Potter Lord spending more time dredging through schoolwork and political machinations than battling monsters.

Though Thor and Loki had made a tidy sum betting on the outcome of the minotaur fight at the beginning of the summer season on Midgard.

“What occurs with the Young Seidr?”

Loki held back a growl. If it wasn’t for this thrice-damned seeing pool he would be able to actually spend time with his son and help him through his trials instead of making do with snatched minutes in dreams here and there. As it was Dumbledore was lucky he was Favored by one of the many Fates or he’d be meeting the sharp side of his blade sooner rather than later.

“Yule on Midgard approaches.” Loki said before the pause became telling. “The young one prepares to spend the holiday with his pale-haired friend.”

Thor nodded approvingly. “A budding warrior has need of stout companions, though methinks perhaps his pale-haired companion has less-than-wholesome thoughts about our young warrior-to-be.”

The dark-haired god withheld a snort. That was one way of putting it. If he hadn’t already discussed the problems his mental aging presented towards his more social activities he would be worried for his son’s virtue with the way young Draco carried on.

Although something told him that after meeting the elder Malfoy, Frey might simply be waiting for the blonde to grow up.

An unpleasant thought when paired with his son’s inevitable disappearance from the Wizarding world.

Nothing could come from affairs with mortals but heartache, as Loki well knows.

…

Yule at Malfoy Manor was very different from spending it haunting Hogwarts Castle or at Camp Half-Blood.

He’d spent the first several days of break splitting his time between being in conference with Lucius and relaxing and doing homework with Draco. The Lady Malfoy had escorted both boys into Diagon Alley to finish any leftover shopping, giving Frey a chance to use the certificates he’d been gifted for his birthday along with ensuring that he had robes appropriate for the ball on the night of Christmas Eve.

Usually referred to – incorrectly – as the Malfoy Yule Ball, it was a celebration of Winter itself.

The Malfoys – led by the Lord – and their young guest were joined by Severus Snape for their private Yule celebrations on the longest night of December 21st.
Ostensibly out of respect, both Frey and Severus gave offerings to Loki as the Patron of the House of Malfoy while Narcissa gave to Hades in addition. Frey and Severus were also allowed a few minutes of privacy to finish their private rites, though that didn’t stop Frey from discovering that Severus’s Patron remained Thanatos and that he does still give him reverence – an issue Loki and Chiron were uncertain about.

Severus still needed to be vetted but he was looking more and more like a possible ally.

Rather than make a show of having his gift appear in the flames of the Yule log, this year Loki transported it directly onto Frey’s bed in his guest room. The young godling was ecstatic over the portraits of his Far along with his Uncle and grandparents. However it dinged his conscience as he’d yet to approach his divine parent about his own parentage surprise he’d discovered thanks to the goblins.

It just wasn’t something he could bring up in casual conversation.

“By the way Far, you’re adopted.”

Yeah, Frey didn’t see that going well.

…

Mingling among the guests at the Malfoy’s Winter Ball, Frey restrained the urge to fidget in the silk and heavy brocaded satin formal robes Draco had insisted he wear.

Frey was no stranger to dressing up, not with being raised mainly by Thanatos’s Harvestmaidens until he was old enough to begin training with Chiron. Looking through the early pictures of him they’d taken for his Far and Grim, he looked more like a human dress-up doll than a child. And heavy clothes was also nothing new.

He just about lived in his armor at Camp Half-Blood.

No, his discomfort was more about who was around than it was what he was wearing.

Former Death-Eaters and Death-Eater sympathizers outnumbered neutral parties two-to-one.

Spotting a lime-green bowler, Frey set down the sparkling wine he’d been sipping on and headed for the unfortunately-dressed Minister of Magic.

Sirius’s trial had yet to be scheduled, blockaded by Ministry bureaucracy.

That simply would not do.

And what better chance to swing things his way would he get than cornering the Minister at a party?

Snagging Lucius from his spot watching over the party beside a shadowed arch, Frey steered him towards the Minister.

“I need an introduction.” He pitched his voice low, keeping it from being heard by the crowd filling the glittering ballroom.

Lucius looked up with a darting glance then gave him an unobtrusive nod. He’d tried to move the trial of his wife’s cousin along but something was stalling it – something more than Fudge’s usual incompetence. It stank of Dumbledore’s meddling causing the ineffectual Minister to dig in his heels.
“The pink creature trailing him is Dolores Umbridge.” He prepped his Lord’s Heir quickly as they glided through the crush that parted like rippling silk before the powerful pair. “A reprehensible woman with little tact of low breeding. But vicious and bears watching.”

“How is your Lord’s Heir?”

“Pureblood but weak. No title or fortune to speak of, glorified Secretary.”

Frey tapped a finger against his Host’s arm in signal that he’d heard and understood the briefing.

“Minister Cornelius Fudge,” Lucius said smoothly. “Allow me to introduce you to the Young Lord Harry Potter. Harry, this is Minister of Magic Fudge.”

With one move, Lucius established his familiarity with the Boy-Who-Lived and snubbed the irritating Umbridge, who as a commoner wasn’t someone Frey would need an introduction to with his higher station.

“Lord Potter.” Fudge was visibly shaken, clearly not prepared for the introduction. “Pleasure to meet you at last. Dumbledore tends to keep you all to himself.”

Frey arched a brow, “Good to meet you Minister. Although I don’t quite know what you mean?”

Lucius smoothly took a step back, separating Umbridge and maneuvering Frey and the Minister so they had a little more privacy.

“Why,” Fudge blustered. “The Ministry had requested meetings with you and well-child visits with no response for years. And it has been understood that Dumbledore placed you with your relatives.”

With a put-upon sigh and slight shake of his head, Frey had the Minster’s utmost attention as he realized that “Harry Potter” wasn’t Dumbledore’s creature, validating what Lucius had been saying for the last several months.

“The records regarding my placement and guardians are sealed.” Frey said conspiratorially. “But I can say that Headmaster Dumbledore has zero authority over myself outside of his position within Hogwarts.”

Fudge’s eyebrows shot towards his hairline. This was news indeed. The general wizarding population as well as the Ministry were all under the impression that Dumbledore had the Boy-Who-Lived in hand – and in his pocket. That he was powerless over the boy-hero except for being his Headmaster was news indeed.

“That is interesting to hear, my boy.”

Frey inwardly winced over the often-used phrase. Why everyone insisted on calling him “my boy” when he topped the Minister by at least an inch and a Lord in his own right was beyond him. That didn’t stop him from taking the opening the Minister granted him.

“I received interesting news myself just before break.” He kept his voice conversational. “That the trial for my godfather has been delayed, again, and with no idea when it will take place.”

“Well,” Fudge started sweating. The Potter Lord hadn’t sounded happy. He’d assumed that as Black was accused of being responsible for his parents’ deaths that he would be pleased by the hearing being stalled. Even though everyone around him save Dolores had told him otherwise. “That’s not a matter for a young man such as yourself, Harry, to concern themselves with.”
“I beg to differ.” Frey’s voice went from pleasant to hard-edged in a split-second. “The Lord of the House of Black *rots* in Azkaban after being denied a trial before the Wizengamot, let alone a *proper* hearing before a Lord’s Tribunal. Such matters are the concern of every titled witch and wizard in Britain.” His tone went sibilantly soft. “Could you imagine the uproar among the nobles, let alone the average *voting* witch and wizard when they find out that the Ministry shunted a Lord away… without a trial let alone actual *evidence*?”

“I’d be out of Office the next morning.” Fudge whispered, visions of a mob of irate citizens descending upon the Ministry dancing through his head.

“No, no.” The godling turned soothing in his burgeoning triumph. His godfather would be out of that hell-hole and receiving treatment at St. Mungo’s before a week was out. “You’re not at fault. Not in the least. You are simply rectifying the mistakes of the former Minister Bagnold and her witch-hunting administration that tossed an *innocent* noble into the worst place on Earth – all because of his Name.”

Pulled from his horrifying day-dreams, Minister Fudge studying the calm and benevolent face of the young Lord he was facing.

No, in no world was *this* Dumbledore’s creature. No one could be a pure bastion of Light and the perfect Gryffindor – as Lord Potter was often touted – and come up with that twist of a knife that not only gave him reason to accede to the other’s wishes but also allowed him to come out smelling like a rose-bedecked knight of old in search of justice.

Forgetting himself for a brief moment he joked:

“Are you sure you’re a Gryffindor?”

The young Lord simply smiled an enigmatic smile and gracefully returned to the side of the Malfoy Heir, allowing his jibe to go unanswered.

…

Frey was right.

By the first of the year Sirius Black had been removed from Azkaban and was ensconced in a private room in St. Mungo’s, recuperating before facing a Lord’s Tribunal.

Along with diagnostic spells, restorative and nutrient potions, and plenty of chocolate came the ability to send and receive owls as he met with the lawyer his godson sent and corresponded with Harry.

Sirius still couldn’t quite believe that this all wasn’t some sort of Dementor-induced hallucination. All the food he could manage, health care, owls with Harry. Harry remembered him. *Harry* had insisted he receive a trial if his new solicitor was to be believed. It all seemed like too much good-fortune after his time in prison.

Then he felt he was warm and not chilled to the bone and truly believed he’d been freed, albeit temporarily until his Tribunal.

And wasn’t that a strange turn of fate?

Never would Sirius Black have ever thought he’d see trial, let alone a proper Tribunal.

Whoever had been raising Harry has certainly taught him well.
He only hoped that after all this time there was still room in Prongslet’s life for his Uncle Padfoot.

Only time would tell and he wasn’t allowed visitors other than Solicitor Bones. If nothing else, that alone was reason enough for him to cooperate in his own defense. Any lingering guilt his part in James and Lily’s deaths had been worn away by his time with the Dementors of Azkaban.

Now it was time for him to take up his mantle and help his godson become the man and Lord he was meant to be.

“Hey Pads.” Soft brown eyes glinted golden-amber as a shabbily-clad figure shadowed the doorway.

“Moony.” Sirius breathed at the sight of his mate. Missing Moony had been a throbbing ache all throughout his sojourn in Azkaban, more than even being gone from his pup’s life. Missing a child that was like his own son was one thing, missing his mate was a whole different level of hurt.

Remus stared with pained eyes at the emaciated form on the hospital bed.

It was luxurious to be sure, all the room’s accoutrements would be in the private wing of St. Mungo’s, and the security was tight. Remus himself was only able to visit due to his status as Sirius’s bonded mate.

A status that held regardless of their almost twelve-year separation during Siri’s incarceration.

“I’m sorry.” He sobbed, collapsing against the side bedrail. “I’m so sorry.”

…
Chapter Ten

It was good to be back at Hogwarts.

After a “holiday” spent mostly wrangling politicians including Lucius and tending to his estates via his solicitor, going back to only having to worry about mind-numbingly boring schoolwork was a relief. He’s been keeping to his Far’s study schedule and was now well-into Apprenticeship level in both theory and practical even without having his Far there in the flesh to help him. The Room of Requirement really could provide just about anything someone needed – including dummies programmed to help with spellwork.

Draco was excellent company as usual, keeping him from lapsing into a studying-haze in the Malfoy Library, hauling him out to their covered Quidditch pitch or convincing him to pick up a longsword and have a mock-duel.

Even so, being around their other friends like Neville, Blaise, Theo, and Luna was a welcome diversion from the occasionally-obsessive blonde.

The only cloud hovering on the horizon – well one of several with Frey still not finding the entrance to the Chamber nor having cornered Severus – was his inability to visit with his godfather Sirius until he was released from St. Mungo’s and tried.

He was pleased to finally have received a communication from Remus, who in addition to writing about himself and Sirius’s current condition had agreed to take up the seats on the Hogwarts and Durmstrang Boards.

His werewolf-godfather had been found by the goblins – at no little expense – in Tibet. He’d barely arrived back upon English shores before being alerted by the front-page expose in the Prophet over Sirius’s upcoming Tribunal – and his new residence in St. Mungo’s. Apparently the wayward wolf had presented himself to his wronged-mate and then sent off a letter of acceptance and apology to Frey, including an effusive greeting from his dogfather.

At the moment however another problem had presented itself.

In the form of the aforementioned occasionally-obsessive blonde he’d befriended for a reason he couldn’t quite recall…at the moment.

“Out with it.” Draco demanded flatly, arms crossed and a fierce-scowl on his refined face. “You’ve been sequestered in the dustiest parts of the Hogwarts Library every spare moment since we got back from the Manor two weeks ago. And when you’re not you’re wandering the halls with the oddest look on your face.”

“Uh…”

The blonde gave an irritated hiss.

“Don’t try and brush me off.” He cut him off sharply. “If this was one of those things you can’t tell
me you’d just say so. Brushing me off means you could share you just haven’t.” His voice softened as he turned away, speaking over his shoulder as he prepared to walk off. “I thought I was your best-friend. I thought we were passed…this.”

Draco waved a hand and moved slowly down the shadowed corridor where he’d finally pinned Frey down. The godling let his head fall back against the harsh stone wall with a “thunk” and gave a sigh. Calling after his friend, because damn it to Hel if he wasn’t right, Frey said:

“Stop, Drey.” He shoved off the wall was the blonde halted and half-turned back towards him, cocking his head slightly to listen. “Just stop.”

Frey ran one hand down his long braid, having gone with his more “warrior-esque” – according to Draco – hairstyle that day. Sighing he shrugged then gave the other boy a half-grin.

“You’re right.” He admitted. “This is one of those things I could share and haven’t. I’m sorry for that. But I didn’t want to worry you.”

“I’m already worried, Harry.” Draco said softly as he spun and glided to his side, resting one hand on the much-taller boy’s shoulder. “How could I not be with you acting so strangely? Meetings with my father are one thing. Acting like a spaced-out bookworm on a mission is another. Even if you’re a bookworm most of the time anyway.” The blonde smirked as he finished, giving the shoulder under his hand a squeeze before letting go.

Rolling his eyes, Frey shoved Draco playfully before leading him over to an alcove that he promptly warded for privacy, including against eavesdropping spells.

“There’s a dangerous creature in the school.” He began seriously only to be interrupted.

“I know Granger’s rabid.” Draco snarked. “I’ve just been waiting for her to snap your hand off at the wrist one of these days when you beat her marks again.”

Tsking, Frey hushed him.

“I’m serious, Drey.” He folded his arms across his chest and leaned back against the wall. It wasn’t the roomiest alcove he could’ve picked, that was for sure.

“So am I, Har.” He held up a hand when it looked like his best-friend had reached the end of his rope with his antics. “I’ll stop, I’ll stop.” He promised.

“Not Granger.” Frey huffed. “I’m talking about an actual deadly monster.” As in the kind that it was his duty to kill – or in this case put out of it’s misery. There was no cure for Selena’s madness. The Elixir would work but it would take more than the six human-sized doses he had and he didn’t want to contemplate the bounty Thanatos would require to cough up more of it.

Death gods and War gods were the worst when it came to making bets and bargaining deals. For all he knew his Patron would require a thousand years of service or a dozen virgin sacrifices. Thanatos might be nice to him but that didn’t make him a benevolent god by any means.

Impartial – mostly.

Benevolent?

Not even close.

Draco swallowed spastically.
“Like a Troll dangerous or like a Cerberus dangerous?” Draco asked trying to get a handle on his friend’s definition of dangerous. He distinctly remembered Harry brushing off the Cerberus as an inconvenience while the Troll was an actual challenge for his companion. As if any XXXX-rated dangerous creature was a mere *inconvenience*.

But that was Harry for you.

Things like that made him think he didn’t have that hard of a time convincing the Sorting Hat to put him in with the idiotically-courageous Gryffindors.

Harry often had more hair than sense when it came to things others might consider foolhardy or even life-threatening.

“Worse than a Troll.” Frey had to admit. Honestly, when it came to *dangerous* not much topped a Basilisk save an actual Drakon. Even Dragons weren’t as inherently deadly as a Basilisk was and the giant snakes could out-do a gorgon or a minotaur any day of the week.

“What in Merlin’s name could be *worse* than a Troll?” Draco asked incredulously. If Harry was being *this* circumspect then it was no wonder he’d been devoting so much time to his research. If the creature could make the king-of-heroics cautious it must be at the top of the danger-scale for monsters.

“A Basilisk.” Frey all but whispered, flinching at the shriek that came from his best-friend and cursing his enhanced-hearing.

Sensitive ears *were not* an inheritance you wanted to have when you had a pre-pubescent Draco Malfoy shrieking in an enclosed space. Frey was just glad that he hadn’t ruptured an eardrum… Honestly, there were probably dogs miles away that heard that shriek.

“A bloody-Basilisk?! You’re saying that there’s a Morgana-be-damned Basilisk slithering around Hogwarts somehow? And you’re trying to locate it? What in Merlin’s name is *wrong* with you Harry?” Draco tossed up his hands dramatically before charging off. “I’m going to tell Uncle Sev. Like you *should’ve done* when you found out that the King of Serpents was making itself right at home in a *school* full of *children*.”

“Draco!” Frey ran up behind the lithe figure as he stormed off towards the dungeons. Draco had originally found him in a little-used corridor on the first floor between the dungeons stairs and one of the exterior load-bearing walls.

His thought was that he’d mostly likely find the out-spouts or openings into the pipes that lead down to the bowels of the castle, the only place the Chamber of Secrets could logically be located.

Especially with Salazar Slytherin claiming the dungeons for his House.

Cutting around his friend he stopped and threw up one hand. “Wait!”

Propping his clenched fists on his hips, quicksilver eyes glared up at the obstruction. Harry was big enough now – and fast enough as he well knew from their duels – that getting around him would be an exercise in futility. If there was one thing he’d learned from his father’s former servitude to the Dark Lord it was to avoid wasting effort in an unchangeable situation.

With a sigh Frey lowered his hand and bowed his head, peeking at Draco through his eyelashes.

“I think it’s time we have that talk.”
“You mean…?” Draco perked up. Harry had been all-but-silent on the subject of his split-behavior when around the Lord Malfoy. That he was finally opening up to him was worth a slight delay in alerting his godfather about the deadly creature in the basement.

“Yes.” Frey sighed again before grabbing one of Draco’s smoothly elegant hands in his own work-and-training roughened palm.

He tugged lightly as Draco resisted, mostly just to be perverse, before he gave in with an eye roll and allowed the stronger boy to haul him willy-nilly through the castle. Draco didn’t know where they were going but he was more than happy to follow.

As long as Harry held his hand.

…

Pacing thrice before the hidden door in the seventh floor corridor, Frey silently debated with himself over just how much he was going to tell Draco. Hearing his friend gasp as the door was revealed Frey gave him a half-grin and motioned him inside, feeling the little tingle in his mind that told him only his Far was watching them. Rarely does a day go by where the godling curses the seeing-pool that kept his Far from coming down on his own.

Yes, Loki could watch him but so could every other person inside the Asgardian royal palace.

Not exactly safe if he wanted to have a chat with his Far and still remain breathing. Odin didn’t have a great track record what with sentencing his half-sister to being the goddess of the Grave and forcing her to live in Helheim round-the-clock.

Frey would rather take his chances with the Greek part of his adopted heritage.

At least Zeus was an equal-opportunity smiter.

Odin is just a dick.

“Not that this room isn’t amazing,” it was and Draco was going to torture Harry endlessly over keeping it a secret, but that was an evil plot for later. “But I believe you had something to tell me.”

The Slytherin had taken advantage of his companion’s distraction to make himself comfortable in one of the arm chairs Frey had asked the room for. Currently looking like a simple but comfortable sitting room, it only had a pair of chairs sitting before a fireplace, a low table, and a rug on the floor. Not exactly flaunting the room’s capabilities but they didn’t really need anything else either.

“How good are your Occlumency shields, Dray?” Frey asked point-blank. His friend’s answer would dictate just how much Frey could trust him with. Dumbledore couldn’t be allowed to know quite a bit of things surrounding Frey, especially now that he was being seriously questioned over his part in throwing Sirius away.

It was already a foregone conclusion that he would lose his place in the Wizengamot which would cost him the Supreme Mugwump position on the ICW as well.

By the end of the Summer Frey would bet galleons to knuts that the only position of power that would remain with the Headmaster was his Headmastership.

He couldn’t be happier, the more he finds out about the old goat the less forgiving he became over the future he tried to sacrifice him to. Sacrifice being the key phrase.
“Almost perfect.” Draco shrugged. “Most pureblooded Heir are taught to Occlude as soon as they’re old enough to meditate. Dumbledore’s a known Legilimense and none of the Olde Houses are going to except such an information leak as having an untrained-heir. Neville’s probably trained as well even though he’s only technically Heir while his father is still alive and is nominally considered the Lord already.”

*Interesting.* Frey thought surprised. The little nuances of Wizarding society never failed to either entertain or educate him. While Nev and Dray were both smart and getting more and more confident in themselves, he wouldn’t have thought either had the discipline for Occlumency.

“What I’m going to tell you is strictly between us, Dray.” Frey said deadly serious. “You can’t talk about it to anyone. Not your Father, not your Uncle Sev or Nev, or Theo, or Blaise. Just us.”

“Understood.” Draco nodded once, eyes sharp. He’d have to be careful around Uncle Sev though. He was an even more accomplished Legilimense than Dumbledore, perhaps the best there was. He had to be to survive playing both sides of the last war.

“Have you ever heard of a godling…?”

…

Weeks later Draco was still reeling.

*Harry.* His best friend. Was destined for divinity.

It was a shock to say the least.

Almost as shocking as hearing that no matter how much Harry, or Frey he supposed, cared about him and their other friends or his newly-found and almost-freed godfathers, that he would have to leave. Someday, and no one knew when, Frey would both freeze into his immortality and ascend into his divine domain.

And on that day he would have to leave his loved-ones on Earth and join his pantheon…or whatever gods did.

Especially if he had children.

That was the part that was really jumbling Draco up inside.

Frey would be able to play around on Earth and have fun and *whatever.*

But the second he had children – which his Lordships and the agreement between his parents *both* required – he would have to leave them.

Unless…

Draco shook the thought from his head.

Nothing good could come from that thought.

One thing Frey had made *very* clear was that he wasn’t nearly as young as he was supposed to be. That until Draco was older there wasn’t much point in pining over him because he simply couldn’t see him as a possible partner.
Frey wanted him to be happy.

He also wanted to be able to date as some point without having to worry about Draco poisoning his theoretical girlfriend or boyfriend as the case might be.

Coming to a decision, Draco stood up from the study table they were all gathered around and hauled Frey from his chair and into one of the more hidden alcoves in the Library. Everyone watched the pair in unconcealed-amusement as the haughty blonde towed the much-larger and patently-indulgent brunette away. Frey was glad that Draco had finally made up his mind.

The Malfoy heir had listened calmly, asking pertinent questions here-and-there. He only started to lose his cool when he read between the lines, figuring out what Frey’s status actually meant. When he realized that he was going to lose his friend someday.

Pushing Frey into the alcove, Draco took a deep breath and looked up into patient green eyes.

“Fifteen.” He said resolutely.

Frey arched a brow.

“Malfoys hit a magical growth spurt early.” He explained calmly. “My powers start to unlock at thirteen with everyone else but at fourteen I’ll get a physical one where I’ll be close to my finished physical maturity. All firstborn Malfoy heirs go through it. At fifteen I’ll look and seem old enough for you to date.”

“Fifteen.” Frey nodded solemnly. “And what if you change your mind beforehand?”

“Then no harm done.” Draco shrugged his twelve-year-old shoulders. “That gives both of us three years to date,” and if Frey was right about what his guardian had planned do other things, “other people. To figure out if the inevitable heartbreak that’ll come with loving you is worth it.”

The godling bit back a scathing reply to that, his Loki-given pride wounded a bit over a mortal thinking he wasn’t worth loving. He knew that wasn’t what Draco was implying. That wasn’t it at all.

But telling a twelve-year-old boy that’s been infatuated with you for the better part of two years that no matter how much he wants to be with you that someday you’ll leave no matter what wasn’t the easiest thing for Draco to come to terms with.

Honestly, Frey was surprised he was being so calm about it.

“Fifteen.” Frey nodded. “And no judgement over me dating other people? No trying to poison Cedric’s pumpkin juice or making my fictional girlfriend break out in hives if she wants to hold my hand?”

“Cedric’s pumpkin juice.” Draco narrowed his eyes.

“Theoretical question.” Frey quickly covered, mentally revising his plan to openly date anyone from their circle of mutual friends. Maybe he’d just stick to people from Camp Half-Blood now that he knew Draco wouldn’t get his feelings crushed or try to hex them long-distance.

“Then theoretically.” Draco said with exquisite sarcasm. “No. And same goes.” He sighed after a long moment, conceding that he’d need to at least pretend to date someone else if he wanted Frey to take him seriously when the time came.
“Ok then.” Frey said breathing out, relieved. Eyeing his pretty blonde companion for a moment he made a decision of his own.

Swooping down, he captured the sulky rosebud mouth in a gentle but commanding kiss. It was chaste, but still mind-blowing for Frey’s friend.

Releasing him, Frey stroked one hand down Draco’s silky hair and gave him another kiss, this one no more than a peck before stepping away.

“Just because we have to be mature about this.” Frey said with pure devilment dancing in his Avada-green eyes. “Doesn’t mean I was going to let someone else steal your first kiss from me. Or mine from you.”

And with that earth-shattering pronouncement, the godling left the bedazzled blonde to recover in peace as he went and rejoined their friends, brushing off their concern over the missing-Draco with aplomb.

…

With his worry over the Draco-situation alleviated by the other boy’s surprising but heartening decision – and flying high over making his move and gifting his first kiss to someone worthy of having it – Frey dove into the Severus situation headfirst while he continued his search for the entrance to the Chamber of Secrets.

Waiting until his next Friday potions class – ironically the 13th of March – as Potions was the last class on Fridays being a double-period, Frey restrained himself from showing his impatience as the combination of Slytherins and Gryffindors filed out of the basement classroom. Waving off Draco and the others who made to wait for him, he approached the desk at the front of the class as the door shut behind his friends.

“Yes, Mr. Potter?” Severus’s voice was as dry as the Sahara, not even looking up from marking the parchments that had been turned in at the beginning of class on the differences between various preparations of Valerian Root.

As whisper brushed through Frey’s mind, one that he’d been hearing less and less as he got older. Ask him. It breathed. Ask him about your mother.

“What do you know about my mother?” Frey followed the voice’s advice as it’d never steered him wrong before. “You did know her,” he own voice gentled as shocked black eyes met his own steady gaze. “Didn’t you?”

It wasn’t exactly how he’d planned to get the Potion Master’s attention but it seemed to be effective none-the-less.

“Detention, Potter.” Severus choked out. This wasn’t a conversation he was going to have where anyone could listen in. “With me, tonight, eight-o’clock.”

Sighing, Frey nodded, turning to leave the classroom, knowing nothing he said right now would make a difference.

“And Mr. Potter?” The velvet tones reached him as he went to open the door. “One point to Gryffindor. For bravery.”

A bright grin split his face as he glanced back over his shoulder at the still-watching man before
leaving him to his thoughts.

It was the first time he’d ever heard of Severus Snape giving points to Gryffindor.

…

Frey peered cautiously around the edge of the door leading into the Professor’s study, only to jump in shock when the stern man barked out one of his names.

“Get in here, Potter!”

“Sir?” He asked tentatively when he spotted the tea service sitting on the coffee table and his dreaded Professor already holding a cup with another cup setting set out before the open side chair across from the lightly scowling man.

“Sit.” Severus motioned with one elegant hand. With a flick of the elder Wizard’s wand he set the tea service to fixing a cup for the boy, arching a brow when the sugar tongs and cream hovered above the steaming beverage.

“Cream and a tablespoon of honey.” Frey answered the silent question as he gingerly sat and took the now-hovering cup. “Thank you, Professor.”

“Hn.” Severus hummed, his face blank. “You asked me about your mother.” He took a long sip of tea as the boy visibly restrained himself from fidgeting.

“My guardian,” one of them anyway, Thanatos knowing quite a bit about Lily’s relationship with his follower. “Told me you were friends.”

Frey actually knew a lot about Lily. Loki had regaled him with tales of both his mother and his adoptive father and their friends. However the silver-tongued god hadn’t known Lily Evans before she started dating his acolyte so he couldn’t fill in anything from before she was seventeen. He simply didn’t know. And what the Lord of Death knew Thanatos was rarely inclined to share.

“Your guardian.” Now that was a cause for some concern. Petunia of course knew Severus and of his friendship with her sister but as far as he’d been informed, young Potter didn’t live with his Aunt. Very few others would have that information who also had contact with the boy outside of Lucius and the Headmaster, neither of which were the boy’s guardians.

Questions within questions with the troublesome child.

“Yes,” Severus answered finally, setting down his empty cup and pouring himself another. “We were friends, Lily and I.”

Frey cocked his head. He’d never heard the Professor’s voice like that, quiet…almost reverent.

The man continued.

“We met when we were children, long before her letter came. I lived down the street from them for a while, your grandfather had taken a temporary position in Cokeworth managing the shut-down of one of the mills. Afterwards they all moved back to Surrey and he returned to his position in the mill’s parent company.”

“What were their names?” Frey asked quietly. Since his maternal grandparents weren’t magical they weren’t included in any of his genealogy paperwork from Gringotts or on the family tapestries.
“Francis Harrison Evans and Viola Marie Evans nee Rutherford.” Severus gave what was almost a smile. “They were good, kind people. Viola was a shirrtail relative to a Lord and had the grace and gentility to go with it. I can’t even fathom what went wrong with Petunia.”

Frey chuckled under his breath, eyes sparkling. From what his Far told him quite a bit went wrong with the now Mrs. Dursley. And even more after she treated her sister so poorly.

No one did vindictive like the God of Mischief.

“One day I saw a little girl, about my age, with bright red hair playing with her blonde sister in the park. She seemed to fly off the swings and then float to the ground. I knew at once she was magical. Then she made a flower bloom out of season in the palm of her hand. Petunia yelled and told her to stop it and ran away, making your mother have tears in her eyes. She was the most beautiful thing I ever saw.” Severus pulled himself from his recollection, paying attention to his enraptured audience. He continued briskly. “I told her what she was, all I knew about the magical world. We were best-friends ever since.”

“What happened?”

Severus grimaced. “I was foolish. Your mother tried to defend me against the bullying antics of your father and his pack of misfits in front of the entire school. She hurt my pride and I…” He sighed, setting down the teacup and pushing it away. “I lashed out. I tried to apologize later but Lily could hold a grudge. We were young and fools. It wasn’t until you were born that she ever sought me out again.”

Frey kept his voice low and gentle, almost awed by the amount of emotion the indomitable Professor was allowing him to bear witness to. “I never knew that. That you were able to make up before she…was gone.”

The barest ghost of a smile crossed the stern face and onyx eyes warmed. “She forgave me. Despite all the poor choices I’d made in between, she still forgave me. Trusted me enough regardless to make me swear to protect you,-vowing on my Patron.”

Ebony eyebrows shot towards Frey’s hairline. Now that was something Thanatos had kept close to his chest. The god hadn’t even made a peep about an oath during all the times he and Chiron had debated about the various people he’d come into contact with at Hogwarts.

“Thanatos.” Frey breathed.

“Yes,” Severus smirked enjoying the irony. “Your father’s family has long honored the Lord of Death, even their words were in homage to Him. My mother’s family was sworn to Him at their founding.”

They sat in silence for several long moments before Severus made an observation.

“You don’t strike me as needing or wanting a trip down memory lane, Mr. Potter. Why are you really here?”

“What do you know about the Chamber of Secrets?”

…

Hearing the story from the Slytherin Head of House gave Frey an interesting perspective. Lucius knew from being told by Voldemort that the Chamber existed but other than him, most people as well as most of the books he’s toiled through dismissed the Chamber as a myth. A myth that had
been alive and well and **deadly** more than fifty years prior.

Having met the gentle giant who was the Hogwarts groundskeeper, Frey didn’t find it unlikely that he’d had a dangerous animal as a pet. What did strain credulity for the godling was that he let it loose to “cleanse” the school. Hagrid set off his monster-dar though only in the slightest sense and was clearly larger than normal, making Frey peg him as a half-breed of the giant kind.

Not someone who would benefit from the “cleansing” the Heir of Slytherin espoused in the forties.

What was interesting was that the Prefect who turned in Hagrid and pointed the finger at his acromantula was none other than Tom Marvolo Riddle – as known as the Dark Lord Voldemort.

He could’ve smacked himself when he found that tidbit in the school annals. His Far was going to have a field day with Frey having almost two years to research Voldemort’s school days before actually doing it. It’d simply slipped his mind.

Thanatos told him years ago about Voldemort’s heritage and his background. Frey just never made the jump to researching Voldemort: The Early Years. It was a rookie hero mistake and one he was going to take massive ribbing over.

Frey had to wait until the next morning to talk to the gentle giant and confirm what the massive man knew about Riddle – and found a previously untapped source of information.

It was plainly biased considering the budding Dark Lord got Hagrid suspended but the half-giant had a plethora of anecdotes and insights into the boy who became a monster.

And speaking of monsters, he was highly disturbed over Hagrid releasing his “friend” Aragog into the Forbidden Forest. That there was now a veritable hive of acromantula in a “forbidden” place so close to a school full of children who routinely took turns daring each other to venture farther and farther in gave him chills. He would have to see about putting the fear of, well, him into the bloodthirsty things before they started snacking on First Years.

But that was a problem for another day.

What was pertinent **today** was the location of the murdered girl – a second floor bathroom now haunted by her ghost – one “Moaning” Myrtle.

Finally, **finally** Frey had a solid lead on the thrice-damned Chamber.

He was starting to think that the poor creature trapped within would have to suffer her madness forever – or until he talked his Far into revealing where the entrance was. His stubborn father knew, he’d helped build the damned castle. He just wasn’t saying, no matter how much Frey complained when Loki visited him in his dreams.

…

“Which sword should I take?” Frey muttered to himself as he peered into his weapons compartment of his trunk. He was tucked away in the Room of Requirement, trying to come up with a workable plan.

Chiron had drummed that thoroughly into his head at least after what Heidi is still calling the “Hydra Catastrophe.”

The Harvestmaiden ripped several layers off of him with her sharp tongue when he returned to Camp and told her of his first official slaying.
“None.” A voice lashed out from behind him. “As I distinctly told you that you were not to even attempt slaying the Basilisk.”

Frey peeked ever-so-slowly over his shoulder, immediately spying one of his Far’s doubles. He could tell it wasn’t the god, Loki was excellent at obscuring his aura signature but nothing could hide his Far from his own progeny. A tingle dinged at the corner of his mind, confirming his suspicion.

Loki was still watching him from Asgard, keeping an eye on him through the Pool.

But he’d taken a calculated risk by sending his double down to talk to his son. The power it would cost his father to send one trans-dimensionally was massive. Loki would be recovering from this for months.

It was worth it to the god, the cost mattering little if he could dissuade his sometimes-impetuous son from his current course. Or at least convince him to alter it if he won’t abandon it altogether. Even taking one of his little friends would be better than facing a bloody basilisk on his own.

Knowing how his Far’s doubles work, though he wasn’t powerful enough to duplicate the magical feat, he faced it down. Far could both hear and see through his doubles, something that was very disorienting at first and one of the major stumbling blocks preventing Frey from succeeding in making his own. What kept them from being true clones was that his Far didn’t feel any damage done to his double images, they simply disappeared when injured.

“Yes, you told me not to search for it or engage it.” Frey acknowledged with a solemn nod. “But I can no more do that than you could allow me to put myself in danger without being prepared to the best of my ability.”

Loki – and his double – sighed and rubbed a hand over his eyes.

“Can you really tell me that you don’t believe I can face this poor creature – and come out alive if not victorious?” Frey asked seriously. “If you can, I’ll wait. I’ll let Selena remain trapped and in pain until you think I can handle freeing her from her pain. Tell the truth, Far.”

Spring-green eyes clashed with their slightly-deeper twins.

“I cannot say that you my son are unprepared.” Loki admitted after what seemed like a lifetime to his anxious First Born Son and Heir. Frey let out a relieved breath and gave a smile as his Far continued. “You are one of the most well-prepared heroes Chiron has ever mentored. While physically you still have far to go, mentally you are of age and therefore I find myself unable to prevent you from making your own decisions, no matter how much my father’s heart cries out for me to do so.”

The double looked away, mirroring Loki’s sudden awareness as the sounds of footsteps reached his sharp ears. He’d have to finish his discussion with his child and say goodbye. Post haste.

“I must go.” Loki blew out a breath and stroked his double’s hand down Frey’s favored braid, tucking lightly at the leather band that held it in place and gaining himself a mock-glare. “Be careful my son. And if you have any sympathy for your poor father, take someone with you into the belly of the beast. Even your little blonde friend would be better than nothing.”

The Malfoy or Longbottom Heirs would be able to use their familial portkeys to take themselves and a passenger to safety if nothing else.

One of the privileges of being pureblood Scions afforded to the two boys.
“Fare thee well, Far.” Frey hugged the double lightly. “I’ll take all precautions. This isn’t about glory, this isn’t a monster. It’s a wounded animal in need of mercy. I’m not about to cause her more agony in the process of releasing her than I absolutely have to.”

“That’s all I ask, my son.” The double began to shimmer and dissipate. “Be well, and use one of your goblin-forged blades.”

Frey grinned at the now-smirking double and gave it a mocking salute before turning back to the trunk and studying it with a canny eye.

Now what weapons did he have that wouldn’t cause too much curiosity in the Potions Master.

After all, Professor Snape was sworn to his protection.

Who then, would be better to guard his flank?

Taking out a pair of goblin-forged gladiuses Frey grinned in anticipation of what the dour man’s reaction would be to his plans.

If being witness to one of his adventures didn’t put a few gray hairs in that inky mane of the “dungeon bat” nothing would.

…

It was approaching May before Frey was able to convince his Professor to join him in his self-appointed quest.

What finally tipped the scales was the possibility of gathering rare potion ingredients if Frey was successful. Well, that and being able to see the legendary Chamber of Secrets which rumor said hosted Slytherin’s own study. The wealth of knowledge such a place might contain was enough to make the Potioneer salivate.

Over a month was spent with the young godling first proving to the elder man that A) He wasn’t joking. B) He was a Parselmouth (though whether that was from his Far or from the temporary latching of Voldemort’s soul onto his own they still weren’t sure). And C) That the Chamber really did exist and yes, he really was going down into it.

Severus would’ve preferred simply keeping the boy under lock and key until the end of the term however lacking a reason to keep the infuriating child in detention and then finding out that the Headmaster had given him his father’s Cloak of all asinine things, he had to choose between following him down or leaving him to his fate.

The latter of which being in direction contradiction of his vow, with the insufferable little brat knew.

Bloody Potters.

Swooping along the halls – though in dragon-hide leather trousers and long-sleeved shirt with a sword at his hip rather than his normal teaching robes – Severus followed the young man towards the second-floor bathroom. Dressed in matching leather but with a curious cuff around his bicep and goblin-forged bracers on his shins and lower arms, Potter led the way. Their plan was simple. The boy would lead them down into the tunnels under the school where Severus would through up a simple mirroring shield which would – hopefully – protect them from the creature’s deadly gaze when they found it. Then, together, they would cast binding hexes and finally slay the creature when it was immobilized.
Personally, Severus rather thought it wouldn’t be quite that easy but one never knew.

Potter Senior after all was often accused of having bloody *Felix Felicis* running through his veins, a property the younger might’ve inherited if his being taken in by Severus’s own patron and away from Petunia after surviving the Killing Curse was any measure of luck.

Frey turned to his Professor, plans already percolating in his mind for how to keep the civilian – for to the godling that was what the man was – safe once they found Selena.

For all that Professor Snape was known for being bloody intimidating and if his mock-duel with Lockhart was any indicator a rather powerful Wizard, he wasn’t a half-blood trained for war and the heroic trails.

Chiron wasn’t known for cutting corners.

The centaur and trainer of heroes wasn’t about to take it easy on Frey just because he didn’t have to face the trails to win his immortality.

If anything the trainer was harder on him and expected more from him. To some it would seem unfair. Frey didn’t see it that way.

He was more powerful, stronger, more durable, just, well, more than a normal half-blood. Even those from the most powerful of divine origins. Only another godling or an actual god could approach the same innate talents that Frey had at his disposal. Chiron correspondingly expected more from him.

A wise decision and an excellent precaution in case he was exposed before freezing into his immortality.

If Odin or one of Loki’s enemies discovered him while he was still mortal and therefor *breakable* he would need every iota of power, durability, and training at his fingertips to survive.

Looking at it that way, a basilisk wasn’t that big of a deal when one of the few things he feared was his own adoptive Grandfather.

Family dinners must be a riot when you have to constantly fear what the King of Asgard might do to you or your children if you didn’t fall in line.

Finding the right sink, Frey gave the Professor a small smile before hissing out: “§Open§”

Rolling his eyes, Severus gestured the brat forward mockingly.

Frey was highly tempted to make the stoic man go down the massive slide but decided against it. He didn’t want to know how many pieces the Potions Master would attempt to cut him into when on the way back he finds out that he could’ve turned it into stairs.

§“Stairs”§

They took the long climb in silence, each lost in his own plans for when they reach their destination. Frey, using the time to expand on his plan to sideline his shadow as much as possible without getting either the dark wizard or his Far on his case while Severus was thinking over the opposite, highly tempted to knock out his charge. A viable plan if his instincts weren’t screaming that it would be a mistake.

And any mistake when facing a basilisk was likely to be deadly.
Severus moved as if to push past his young guide only to be waved back as the Potter Lord cast a spell that had several small orbs of soft light surrounding them and circling above their heads.

“We still have a bit to go.” He said, ignoring the accusing look that shot his way when the older man realized he’d been down in the tunnels exploring without him for safety. “The Chamber is directly below the Slytherin Common Room, we’re under the Dorms at the moment.”

That said, he began casting reinforcing and endurant charms at the walls and the rough stone ceiling over their heads, the Slytherin Head quickly following his example. Ever since Frey found his way into the tunnels and noticed where he was in relation to the school overhead he’d taken it upon himself to start cleaning away the bones and muck and lend his magic to supporting the school. His Far and the Founders planned for the school to rely on the ambient magic of the staff and students to maintain the spellwork but with less and less magical children being born every year, any help Frey and others could supply allowed Lady Hogwarts to focus on the more frequented parts of the school. Since he’d begun his work in the warren of tunnels that made up the foundation, many of the castle’s inhabitants had commented on the visibly brighter halls and warmer rooms as the castle was able to focus more on the comfort of her guests and less on simply keeping herself stable.

If Frey had his way – which with a Seat on the Board was actually possible – he’d make it a requirement of the staff and students to actively donate magic to the Lady’s upkeep. Leeching the ambient magic was all well and good when she housed several thousand students and a hundred staff but it didn’t cut it when there were only a couple hundred students and about a dozen staff. Hogwarts needed help and she needed it badly if she was going to survive the dearth of students caused by several wars.

His Far told him that somewhere in Slytherin’s Chamber laid a passageway that would take him to the Heart Stone of the Castle. The magical epicenter that powered Hogwarts and also served to cleanse it of hexes, curses, and negative energy. According to Loki it needed cleaning and recharging between every ten to fifty years depending on the damage done by the residents of the castle.

Something told Frey it hadn’t been done in much, much longer. A thought his Far agreed with based on what he’d felt the one time he actually came to the school in person in the last century. Which took place almost twenty years before during the height of the Marauders’ reign of terror.

Reaching a large ornately carved marble section of the wall, Frey came to a stop with Severus at his side as the consummate Slytherin took in the serpent statues and the bright white marble with silver and emerald inlays. Frowning he noted the various squiggles and misshapen lines filling in the top section of the archway. Seeing where the man was focused Frey clued him in.


“I didn’t know parselmouths had a written language.” Severus admitted lowly, taking in the script with new eyes and starting to see a pattern once his companion narrated it for him.

“No one does.” Frey noted with a shrug. “Unless they’re parselmouths themselves. We’re known for being a secretive bunch, after all.”

Severus snorted derisively. That was an understatement of epic portions.

Moving into position, Frey waited for the elder wizard to cast the mirroring shield before giving the command for the archway to \texttt{Open}. He hadn’t ventured beyond the archway, knowing full well that he’d get skinned six ways to Sunday if any \textit{one} of the adults in his life who gave a damn (which
had turned into quite the list recently) found out about it. And with that Seeing Pool his Far was attached to like a conjoined twin there was no way for him to not get found out.

“I haven’t been farther than this.” He told his chaperone. Sending the orbiting lights into the room, he quickly spotted the torches. Grabbing hold of Severus by the back of his dragonhide shirt he stopped him. “Let me try something.”

Switching to parseltongue he ran through several commands.

“§On. Wake. Light.§” At the last the torches spread throughout the cavernous area sprang to life, allowing Frey to cancel his orbs and showcasing the stark-white underground Chamber in all its glory. Moving inside the room with care, neither so much as flinched when the massive archway closed behind them. All the better to contain the basilisk.

Frey let out an impressed whistle as his professor glanced around with appraising eyes, grimacing at the rather ugly statue taking up a large corner of the room. Catching the look out of the corner of his eye, Frey studied the statue carefully for several long moments before snorting. Irritated at the disrespect to one of the Founders – no matter how unattractive – Severus opened his mouth to unleash a no-doubt scathing reprimand when his young protégé rapidly explained himself.

“Salazar Slytherin didn’t look like that.” He held up his hands in a peaceful gesture. “I have it on good authority that he was lean and aristocratic if a little bit rawboned. Not,” here he grimaced. “Stunted and monkey-ish. That is more likely a representation of one of his heirs than the actual man.”

“Hn.” His sense of propriety appeased, Severus continued his exacting exam of the Chamber before blowing out a breath. “There’s nothing here.”

“I wouldn’t be so sure about that.” Frey answered back absently, his utter focus on several places on the various walls and pillars as well as the monstrous statue.

Seeing as his parseltongue guide — and ticket out of the Chamber — was distracted, Severus focused on using various cleaning and reinforcement spells on the floor, ceiling, pillars, and walls as his young companion paced between various points, making complex patterns with his wand and hissing lowly under his breath.

Nearly an hour passed as the two focused on their self-appointed tasks when Frey motioned for the Professor to join him at the very center of the room.

“I’ve worked it out.” He explained with a sigh. “There’s no way to tell which of the dozens of passageways that open off the Chamber contains the tunnel to the basilisk’s nesting area. There were two options.”

“Continue.”

“One, which I’ve already discarded.” Frey waved off the Professor’s attempt to protest. “Was to open each archway, secret hatch, and hidden doorway one at a time. It would’ve taken hours we can’t afford to be missing.” Severus grudgingly agreed though he wasn’t pleased at best by the budding nuisance taking the choice without discussing it first.

“And the other?”

“Opening them all at once.” The godling nibbled his lips as he flinched from the sudden glare directed at him. “Some of them haven’t been open since they were closed when the Founders died — or in the case of Slytherin left — so we don’t have to worry about them. From what I can tell the most
likely points are within that statue and the section of wall directly perpendicular to it. They’ve both been accessed much more recently. I’ve rigged it so that once they all open, once someone or in this case *something* passes through they’ll all close again. I can open them using the same spells after we’ve taken care of Selena and have time to explore.”

“At least you’re not a total dunderhead.”

Frey grinned. “I try.”

Unsheathing his sword, he cracked his neck as his Professor readied his wand. “Ready?” He asked. Severus gave a small flick of his wand in agreement as he took up a dueler’s stance facing the area Potter indicated.

With a broad slash of his ironwood wand, Frey gave the override phrase that he’d spent the last hour decoding – in parseltongue of course.

“§The last foe that shall be defeated is Death.§”

Apparently Slytherin was from one of the two elder brothers of his own ancestor Ignotus. Their Words were only two choices different but they made the meanings as night and day. It was amusing to Frey. Especially considering that Dumbledore habitually used the Words of the elder two brothers when talking about death and the afterlife.

With a hiss of air and a groan from long-sealed compartments springing open, Severus and Frey watched as the Chamber turned from a single large room of no real function into the center of a hive of hidden secrets and forgotten tunnels.

The first hiss of air was quickly followed by another, coming from the now-open mouth of the statue. A hiss that Severus recognized and Frey could translate.

“She’s coming.” He said quietly. “And she knows we’re not her master.”

“Of course it does.” Severus snarked once again raising the mirrored shield. “Because otherwise this would be easy.”

Frey gave the sarcastic man a slightly manic grin, tossing him a pair of mirrored aviator sunglasses as he put both wand and sword away with a flick. Before his chaperone could make a peep over him going off-script, he was already changing into his animagus form that had been returned to him along with the bulk of his powers when his Far undid Dumbledore's bindings. Now a sleek-black predator of the highest caliber – and uncertain temperament – the jaguar animagus bounded away after calling on that hint of power Thanatos gifted him and thickening and elongating the shadows.

“What are you doing you idiot boy?” Severus demanded only to be answered inside his Occlumency barriers to his ever-lasting shock.

“Keeping up my end of the bargain.” Frey whispered, pushing his human voice inside the man’s mind. “You focus on keeping yourself alive and un-petrified. Leave the rest to me.”

Cursing foolhardy Gryffindors and glory-seeking idiots under his breath, Severus snatched up the muggle sunglasses and forced them over his eyes, crouching down under his shield and tucking it closer to his body. Making the shield smaller also made it stronger, hopefully strong enough to take several hits from an ancient Queen Basilisk. Thinking rapidly the Defense Master cast several silencing and disillusionment spells – both towards himself and the hidden form of the great cat in the shadows.
At least now the creature wouldn’t simply be able to see them and strike. It would have to rely solely on its sense of smell/taste that serpents have to seek out its prey. Them.

“§Invaders. Intruders. In Master’s sacred place.§” Frey let the disjointed hissing slide through his mind, reminding him of when he first discovered this “gift” when he faced the Hydra. Being nine and having to hear how a monster wants you for lunch wasn’t the most pleasant of ways to be initiated into slaying.

No, not. At. All.

“§Rip them. Pierce them bite them eat them. All. Master’s Orders. Must obey Master’s Heir.§”

As the slithering grew closer and the hissing louder Frey didn’t feel any adrenaline. There was no rush of combat, no excitement over testing his mettle. No. All there was, was grief. Grief that it fell to him to free what was no doubt a glorious familiar at one time from the bonds of madness her original person subjected her to by forcing her to remain in the school and serve his line – even after his own death.

For that alone he was glad that Salazar had been punished by Thanatos with time in Tartarus. The wizard deserved it for what his selfishness wrought over the years. For the lives lost because of his “orders.”

Frey didn’t even bother trying to speak to her. He could already tell from her aura as Selena began exiting the statue that she was too far gone. There was nothing left but her Master’s orders and the binding placed on her by Voldemort anymore.

The beautiful creature she once was, was no more.

He hissed/growled in the odd way of a jaguar showing its displeasure. He would enjoy hunting down Tom for this. It was just one more in a legion of sins the madman had yet to pay for.

“§So hungry.§” Now the hiss was more like a whimper as the furious snake curled around the pillar closest to the statue, still blind to the predator that was above her crouching just above the exit from the statue’s mouth. “§Alone ssssoo long.§”

Heart breaking but resolute, Frey leapt down onto the massive head of the snake, digging in with the large retractable claws on his forepaws. The big cat, known as the largest feline in the Americas as well as one of the fiercest and most dangerous hunters in the world, hit its mark: dead center on the Queen’s deadly gaze.

Selena made a hissing cry of pain as her eyes, her lovely yellow eyes, were ripped and torn by the mangy pest of a cat she can now smell-taste.

Her main weapon gone, she was by no means harmless.

Rather the Queen was that much more dangerous and enraged by being so perfunctorily blinded.

“She’s blinded, Professor!” Frey shouted in Severus’s mind. “Bind her! Now!”

Flinging off the glasses and the mirror shield, the expert dueler stared in mute awe at the sight of the black cat being flung from the head of the basilisk as the Queen gave a violent lashing shake. Shouting out every binding, freezing, and immobilizing hex, curse, and charm he knew Severus cursed as most simply bounced off of her magically resistant hide or missed altogether as she darted and struck at the agile cat that was bounding from shadow to shadow, barely ahead of her venomous strike.
Eyeing the ceiling high above him, Severus went with a last-ditch effort as he watched in horror as the foot-long fangs snapped mere inches from his charge’s hind-quarters.

“*Levicorpus!*”

Neither a Light nor Dark spell of his own invention, it latched onto the sixty foot snake and pinned her tail to a stationary point in the center of the ceiling and truncated the amount of movement she could use in her attempts to catch her animagus prey.

However, at sixty feet long – and a snake – Selena wasn’t even close to immobilized simply using her long heavily muscled body to dart this way and that after the Potter Lord.

Severus cursed. The damned child kept moving too much. He knew that *sectumsempra* would pierce that hide. Nothing seemed to be able to stop it outside of an actual barrier of metal or stone. But he couldn’t take the chance of injuring the brat in the process.

While Severus was busy bemoaning his ineffectiveness, Frey was hunkering down for a final strike when it happened.

Like train-wreck in slow motion, Frey made his leap for the bleeding claw-marks on Selena’s face. At the last possible moment the ancient Queen jerked her head, having learned the cat’s predictable pattern of movement from their minutes of chase. With a resounding *snap!* Her jaws closed heavily over the black cat, sealing their fates.

“No!” Severus cried out in despair. Lily’s son. Lily’s son, was all he could think. He stood there helpless as Lily’s son was savaged by the sigil of his own House.

Sinking to his knees, head buried in his hands as his wand fell uselessly to the ground, Severus mourned the child that had only begun to reach his true potential.

That the dour man had just started to care for in his own right.

Lost in his grief, the Professor could be forgiven for failing to notice that the great snake had started go limp and melt bonelessly to the cold stone ground.

Muffled hissing reached his ears and his head jerked up, his hand instantly finding the wand at his feet. For a long moment, he’d forgotten about the threat to his life altogether, too absorbed in his failure to think of his own survival. Onyx eyes blinked in confusion as the great snake simply laid on the ground at his feet.

Except for the head which seemed to move with a life of it’s own.

Desperately hoping that it wasn’t an illusion, Severus gave a wordless flick of his wand and two ropes sprang out, each circling one half of the Queen’s jaw and prying them apart, anchoring around separate pillars.

There, surrounded on all sides by foot-long fangs and with a shield protecting him from the venom dripping down from the sword that pierced the Queen’s mouth, was Potter. Alive and seemingly unharmed.

Smiling wearily, Frey released his grip on the Potter Sword. A replica of the Sword of Gryffindor and with many of the same enchantments, it only came to a true Lord or Heir of the House was in need. And about to be eaten by a basilisk apparently qualified.

Tugging the idiotic child out of his precarious position, Severus looked him over before locking him
into a breath-stealing embrace.

“You stupi...d Gryffindor fool!” His voice was too choked to really be considered shouting. “Trying to best a basilisk with fang and claw. Of all the ridiculous plots! Do you have any idea what Lily would’ve done to me when I died if I let you get eaten by a basilisk! Not to mention our Patron…”

Severus having a full head of steam continued to babble out recriminations as he smothered the life from his charge before switching to inspecting every inch of him for so much as a scratch. Basilisk venom was one of the most corrosive fluids on the planet and even a drop would mean death. The child had certainly been exposed to enough of it.

After letting his Professor expel his bile over his stunt, Frey smoothly broke into his tirade.

“You should collect your venom, Professor.” He reminded him innocently. Between all his guardians and his Far he’d be hearing about this for centuries as it was. There was no reason for him to have to listen to anymore of his Professor’s recriminations. After all, he’s still alive and the poor creature was out of her misery. In the end that’s all that mattered. “I think I pierced her main gland.”

Severus harrumphed over the clear redirection but conceded, conjuring several crystal jars that would hold against the venom until he could move it into the specially prepared containers he had up in his rooms. With a complex wave of his wand he siphoned up all of the expelled venom that had gushed from the wound around the sword into one jar and then summoned the untainted venom into several others, moving exactly from spot to spot inside the massive mouth where he knew the glands and reservoirs were located. While he worked, the Potter Lord moved over the snake as a whole.

Frey cast several spells taught to him by the Potions Master specifically for this purpose. Some removed about-to-be-shed scales from her body, another siphoned up the blood split when he pierced her eyes. One to collect the remaining ocular tissues, eyelids – both sets – and ocular fluid. More to remove the tender – and vulnerable – tissues in her mouth. And a last that removed her fangs, roots and all.

When both were finished that had millions in basilisk parts – and that was only the easily harvested pieces.

Having already agreed regarding the rest of the creature, Severus turned away as Frey discretely cast a silencing charm around the man as he sent the crates of parts up to his now tightly-warded private stores in his home in Price Manor. He wasn’t taking any chances with something going “missing”. Especially with the Gryffindor Demons making liberal use of the school’s potion supply closets.

Speaking in Old Norse – just in case his professor decided to eavesdrop, the man was a spy after all – Frey dedicated the rest of the remains to his Far, though he called him Loki for the benefit of his audience and referenced him as “His father’s Patron”. A necessary though irritating precaution.

Apparently the betting picked up again surrounding him once Frandal, one of the Warriors Three, figured out what he was searching for in the ancient castle. Faced with his brother and a group of their fellow Asgardians, Loki had no choice but to confirm the suspicions of the basilisk in the basement. It was known that the God of Magic had had a hand in helping the Midgardian Seidrs found the school.

It chafed at Frey that he would once again have to hide his nature from the watching immortals. And that another birthday would have to be celebrated without his Far. Nosy, bored bastards costing him time with his father.

The corpse disappeared in a cloud of gold, silver, and green dust as Loki made a show of it for the
Professor’s sake, leaving in its wake a small package in His colors.

Frey crouched down, picking it up then looked up towards where he felt the rift between words and bowed in wordless thanks over the spoil.

Unwrapping it as his professor watched with his ever-calculating gaze, Frey revealed a pair of engraved basilisk-bone daggers with matching sheaths made of the Queen’s hide.

“A godly gift.” Severus commented lowly, clasping one long-fingered hand on a still-growing shoulder. “Come, too much longer and we’ll both be missed. Exploring the catacombs can wait for another day.”

Nodding silently, Frey buckled the sheaths in place at the small of his back and then caught up to the lean form waiting before the closed-door. Shaking his head, he tugged his Professor over to one of the now-hidden doorways that had remained closed for centuries. Speaking the simple pass phrase that had been revealed thanks to the override, it opened showing a winding stairway.

Severus arched a brow as torches sprang to life in the formerly-hidden corridor.

“It should lead to an alcove in the Slytherin Head of House suite.” Frey explained with a shrug. “According to the writing on the door. The hidden entries up in the school will still be hidden but down here…”

“They have instructions.” Severus rolled his eyes with a sigh. “You will make a map in English of where these corridors lead, Potter.”

“Yes, Professor.” Frey answered with mock-meekness, his brain busy with a new plot.

A map…

He remembered a story his Far told him about the Marauders and a Map.

A devilish smirk crossed his face as he took one last look around the Chamber before following the Professor up into the school.

He wondered where that Map had gotten too…”
Chapter Eleven

“That’s done it.” Frey collapsed back into one of the Potion’s Master’s armchairs in the Slytherin Head of House Suite. “Between the two of us powering the Heart Stones, Hogwarts should be able to finish cleansing the castle of extraneous spells, hexes, and curses and maybe have some power left to work on repairs to the castle, grounds, and wards.”

“Hn.” Severus nodded shortly, nearly magically exhausted from the last several weeks he had spent splitting his time between end-of-year exams, classes, grading, patrols, brewing, planning experiments with his new wealth of basilisk parts, and assisting Potter in both mapping the Chamber and empowering the Heart Stones.

The dour man had been originally shocked beyond measure when the Potter Heir had come to him seeking information about his late best-friend – and the boy’s mother – Lily. Shock merely compounded in the weeks that followed whereby the irritating spawn of his best-friend and her infinitely-more-irritating husband had informed him of the monster in the basement. Let alone the toll the child’s fool-hardy tackling of the beast had caused.

Severus’s word however was his bond.

He followed the stubborn creature into the bowels of the castle and helped him dispatch the mad Queen Basilisk, netting himself quite a cache of spoils in turn.

Then the other shoe dropped.

He’d been boggled originally when Potter turned extremely-closed-mouthed over where one of the passages led. Confusion that quickly trebled when he linked the Gryffindor’s continued cleaning and maintenance charms in the dungeons with the renewal the rest of the castle seemed to be undergoing – a renewal that had come up time after time in staff meetings with little knowledge being given or gained as to the cause of it.

Even Dumbledore was confounded.

But a simple questioning of the child as to when he started his vendetta against dust and decay within the very foundations of the school led the quick-silver mind of a Potions Master towards the right supposition.

The simple (or not-so-simple in a few cases) spells of a Second-Year were enough to empower the castle.
How much more could be done if Severus once more lent Potter his aid and wand?

That was when the secretive twelve-year-old told him exactly where the mysterious corridor led.

The Heart Stones of Hogwarts.

A Ward Chamber without compare containing the ancient gemstone monoliths that gave the castle her power and near-sentience.

Sentience that Potter was convinced would grow if aided by the ritual cleansing of the Stones.

A cleansing that they spent the last weeks slowly feeding more and more of their personal magic stores.

Severus sighed and reached for the firewhiskey.

He was getting too old for this.

Between the Weasley demons and Harry himself, the Potions Master swore he saw a grey hair in the mirror the other morning.

At this rate he’d have a snowy head to match Lucius’s platinum locks by the time his charge graduated.

The menace.

“Are you going to be attending the trial, sir?” Frey asked politely. He knew the Malfoy’s would be for political reasons if nothing else. Narcissa is Sirius’s first-cousin after all. It would look highly suspicious between their relationship with Frey and the connections between Frey, the Malfoys, and Sirius if they failed to attend.

Everyone at this point knows that “Harry Potter’s” best-friends are Draco Malfoy and Neville Longbottom – a fact which baffles as many as while the Potters had a history of being neutral, the Longbottoms were very much a Light family – as Light as the Malfoys were Dark.

Despite this, Neville and Draco somehow managed to forge a friendship of their own apart from their shared friendship with Frey.

Severus scoffed at the question.

“And watch the mutt leave the Wizengamot a free man?” He sneered. “I’d rather be used for Potions ingredients. Nonetheless, I am a Lord and as such required to be present on the council of Lords' Justice.”

Frey laughed. He’d expect nothing else from the severe wizard. He might have made peace with having a congenial relationship with “Potter’s spawn” as he still sometimes referred to Frey but he highly doubted Severus and Sirius would ever be friends. Especially considering what Severus had told him about the rather lethal nature of Sirius’s final prank on the Professor when they were young wizards at Hogwarts.

Nothing like being nearly fed to a werewolf to give someone a lasting disdain of Sirius Black.

“In that case.” Frey stood and offered the man his hand in parting. “This will likely be the last time I see you in private before next school year.” The train left the following morn. “Have a grand summer, Professor.”
Severus shook hands with the son of his former rival, a small but genuine smile brightening his taciturn face.

“And yourself, Mr. Potter.” Severus murmured. “Do try and keep out of trouble won’t you?” He asked with more than a hint of exasperation. “My heart isn’t the best and I fear too many more of your antics and it will give up the ghost entirely.”

“No promises.” Frey tossed back over his shoulder with a cheeky grin. “But I’ll try.”

“Be gone, bratling.”

…

Frey had one last task to complete – well two really but since the second wasn’t until he was on the train he wasn’t counting it – before he left the school in the morning.

He’d finally had enough.

It was time for that damned ghost to go.

Cuthbert Binns had been a boring – but thorough – teacher when he was alive.

However it was apparent to anyone who was paying attention that his meticulous nature that had led to his thoroughness in teaching History of Magic had disappeared along with his mortal coil.

Frey had better things to do with his time three periods each week than listen to a dead professor drone on and on and on about the Goblin Wars. A topic that he’d been lecturing on – according to his source Thanatos – when he died at his desk. Rather than move on the then-deceased Professor had simply risen from his corpse and continued to lecture – much to the disbelief and utter horror of his students.

The mind-healers required after that little incident in the fifties had to have been astronomical.

To Frey’s mind the truly horrifying part of the story was where the Headmaster – one Albus Dumbledore – kept the damned spirit on rather than hiring an actual living Professor.

A situation that had led to nearly half-a-century’s worth of students failing to gain any real appreciation of magical history – a state of affairs neither Frey nor his Far Loki were happy with. Thanatos didn’t really care one way or another as Binns was destined for the Fields of Asphodel in the first place. Remaining behind rather than moving on in this case wasn’t an attempt to flee from punishment so the Lord of Death didn’t have much to say about the situation – though he found Frey’s whining in turns entertaining or annoying.

The young godling had partially solved his problem by setting a quill to record Binns’ lectures while he read his History text or working on the lessons his Far had set him – or working ahead in his various Hogwarts classes.

But that no longer was a satisfactory state of affairs.

Which led to the reason he was now entering the History classroom under the cover of his Cloak.

Thanatos had given him a hint as to where to look for the ghost’s spirit anchor – an object somewhat similar to a horcrux though miles different in actual usage.

A spirit anchor was simply whatever kept a ghost from moving on from the earthly plane. There was
no sacrifices or ritual murder required. And most importantly it didn’t make it possible for the soul to be reborn in a new body.

Spirit anchors could be anything.

Most were the bodies themselves – a main reason the wizarding world tended to favor cremation over internment.

What a mess *that* would be if every witch or wizard with a modicum of power remained as a ghost. They might as well kiss the Secrecy Act goodbye.

Binns was the same – cremated and then his ashes interred and protected by his family’s funeral rites. Leading Thanatos to point Frey in the direction of the man’s – now ghost’s – classroom. Considering how the late professor was spending his afterlife it was a simple matter to conclude whatever his anchor was it was in his classroom – somewhere.

And his desk was a likely place to start searching for the thrice-damned-thing.

If Frey could find Moldy-Voldy’s Horcruxes – as shown by his destruction of the diary – then a simple spirit anchor *should* be a snap.

In theory.

A theory helped along in leaps and bounds by his ever-growing powers.

As with all half-bloods and godlings of some power, Frey had continued to experience power surges and spikes since the onset of the first one had him shooting up to five-foot-eight in a matter of days. None were quite as extreme as the first – *yet*, his thirteenth birthday was supposed to be a doozy – but his control and grasp of the powers he’d inherited from his adoptive sire had grown exponentially with every surge and spike. Thanatos certainly hadn’t held back when he’d handed out blessings on Frey’s Naming Day.

Closing his eyes, Frey took a deep breath and centered himself, reaching out with tendrils of the Death magics Thanatos had given him.

They glanced over the desk itself and the chair that remained pushed in from when the examiners had left with Binns’ body. None of the papers or books in haphazard stacks warranted more than a brush of his powers.

Then he felt it just *there*.

Opening eyes still glowing the eerie green of the killing curse – a side effect of using his Death powers – Frey reached out a plucked up an innocuous ink bottle in darkest black.

“Found you.” He chuckled to himself, darkly.

It looked like the Headmaster was going to have to hire *two* professors for next year, Lockhart having finally been run off by the unrelenting harassment of Frey and the Weasley twins the week before exams.

A state of affairs that *might* succeed in keeping the aging puppet-master from looking *too* deeply into Frey’s residence and behavior over the summer holidays.

But somehow Frey doubted it.
Hope, however, springs eternal.

…

After a bit of skullduggery on the train – and the successful completion of his last task before summer – Frey met up with a nearly-teary Heidi on the platform.

The Harvestmaiden was in quite the state after not seeing him for another year and seeing for herself the growth – both magical and physical – her young charge had experienced during the school year.

Her little lordling was almost grown.

He would be a man by the standards of his true sire’s people by the end of summer if the plan’s she’d been made aware of were carried out.

Part of her was happy, her service on this plan for her Lord was nearly finished and she could then return to the Halls of her Lord.

The rest of her mourned.

A Harvestmaiden rarely interacted with the world of the living. Her charge of the little lordling and the charge her Sister and Brother Harvestmaiden and Harvestman had been given aside. The only time they interacted with the living was when they “harvested” their souls for preparation of the final battle. Ragnarok. The End of All things, etc.

Barring a fatal accident before he “froze” into his immortality…Heidi would never again have cause to be around her little lordling once he left for school in the coming fall.

It was a time of sadness. Her surrogate child was soon to leave her care.

But also, a time of rejoicing. She’d completed her task. Frey was everything a young Lord and Prince could be. She was as proud of him as she would be a child of her own blood.

She would miss him.

For the moment, however, he was yet hers to watch over, and watch him she would. She knew that look in his eyes. Her little Lord was planning devilment.

“Whatever it is the answer is no.” Heidi cut off the coming question as they walked into their suite at the London Hilton.

She wasn’t about to stay in what passed for lodging in the Wizarding World and returning to the Camp only to come right back for her charge’s godfather’s trial made no sense at all.

“But Heidi…” His voice was pleading. “You didn’t even hear what I was going to ask.”

“No need.” She replied drily, casting him a knowing glance. “I know my charge quite well, thank you. Whatever mischief you’ve planned can wait. Unleash it on the Hermes campers. The little blighters probably have it coming. Not on the goblins or wizards or whoever you’ve targeted. They might just fight back and I’ve no desire to explain to my Lord why his charge is missing a limb or has suddenly started spouting limericks.”

“Fine.” Frey crossed him arms, nearly pouting. It was only a hair-color-changing charm…on the entry to Gringotts…

“Fine.” She mocked back, rolling her eyes. “Now tell me all about your year. How did things go
with your Professors…?”

…

*The Trial of Sirius Orion Black*

Remus was antsy. He’d arrived at St. Mungo’s and had sat faithfully beside his mate and lover, helping clear away the worst of the damage caused by Siri’s incarceration.

And lost to rot amongst the Dementors.

The wolf in him was *pissed* to say the least. Moony had never believed that his mate would betray their pack like everyone claimed. And was *furious* over what had happened to their cub in his absence.

He’d begged Dumbledore to let him take Harry away. Plead...
“Very well.” The Dowager nodded her head once, sharply. “According to the records – or lack thereof.” Her tone was scathing. “You have never been made to answer the charges levied against you. To that end this assemblage requires you to either submit to Veritaserum or levy a guilty plea.”

“Not. Guilty. I’ll take the Serum.”

Augusta nodded to the waiting Potioneer – not Lord Prince. No one wanted to strain that man by asking him to help free the bane of his existence. Nor did they entirely trust him not to take the opportunity granted him and poison the poor bastard.

The Courtroom was nearly silent as the three drops were administered and the test questions asked. The Potioneer nodded at Augusta to continue her questioning.

“Sirius Black, did you or did you not, reveal the Fidelis-protected location of Lord James Potter and his family?”

“I Did Not.”

Gasps sounded through the Courtroom, quills scribbling furiously as they tried to record every second of the trial.

“Were you their Secret Keeper?”

“No.”

“Who was, if you know?”

“Peter Pettigrew.”

A new round of muttering picked up in the room and the assemblage before the Dowager held up one imperious hand to silence them.

“Did you kill Peter Pettigrew?”

“No. Wanted to.” Sirius grated out.

“Why?”

With that open-ended question Sirius was finally able to tell his tale under the influence of the Serum.

“Dumbledore told James and Lily Harry was in danger. Offered his home in Godric’s Hollow for a safehouse. We trusted him, why wouldn’t we? James wanted me for the Secret Keeper. Too easy, I said. Everyone knew we were cousins – close as brothers – closer even. I was too obvious. Decided on Peter instead. Mousy git. None would suspect. Dumbledore cast the Fidelis, forgot where I was…until Peter told me.”

If the previous gasps were loud the ones after Sirius stated under Veritaserum that Dumbledore – the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot - knew that Sirius Black didn’t betray the Potters were deafening. Undeterred Sirius carried on.

“Knew something was wrong. Felt it. Family blood, family bond. James was in trouble. Then nothing. Harry was in trouble, danger, afraid. Apparated to the Hollow, found the wreckage of the house. Found James dead. Lily dead. Blood magic. Could sense it, smell it. Harry alive. Harry crying. Picked him up.” Sirius was almost in a trace as the Serum forced the story from him.

“Don’t cry Harry-pup. Don’t cry. Padfoot’s here. Roar of my old motorcycle, let Hagrid borrow

By the time he stopped there wasn’t a noise to be heard in the courtroom besides his panting breath.

“Administer the antidote.” Dowager Longbottom ordered harshly. “Auror Sirius Orion Black, you are hereby cleared of all charges and freed from Azkaban with your record expunged. You are awarded one million galleons for each of the eleven and half years you spent in Azkaban Prison and will be reinstated to active duty upon your request and approval from both a Healer and a Mind Healer. Auror Moody?”

The war-scarred Master Auror stomped forward, blue eye whirling wildly in its socket.

“Bring me Albus Dumbledore.” She snarled.

In the wake of the uproar caused by Dowager Longbottom’s words, Remus and Sirius – after sharing a long embrace and ignoring the flashing of lights from magical cameras recording them – walked calmly over to where Frey stood with his guardian Heidi.

They’d corresponded – well, it was mostly Remus – with the blonde woman and her employers Chiron Trainter and a Thanatos Grimm ever since Sirius had been moved from Azkaban to St. Mungo’s and Remus returned from his sojourn to his mate’s side – and the forgiveness of his arms.

Like it – or most definitely not – their pup/cub’s guardianship had been turned over to Trainter and Grimm though that wasn’t knowledge most possessed. In fact Remus would wager that he and Siri were the only people in the Wizarding World who knew exactly who had gained guardianship over their godson. There was nothing to be done about it – especially as Harry was clearly well-taken-care-of.

Now if someone like Petunia had gotten custody of their youngest packmate Moony and Pads wouldn’t have hesitated to carry him off somewhere and fight tooth-and-claw for guardianship of him.

Thankfully both Heidi and her employers had been more than wonderful in filling them in on Harry’s education and what he’d been like as a child, even going so far as to send along some pictures and home videos – fascinating bit of muggle technology that – for them to get to know him better before they met him for the first time.

Sirius had pressed for Harry to come and visit them while he was at the hospital before his trial but Dumbledore had insisted that he didn’t need the distraction right before exams. Nevermind that they’d both been staying at the hospital – or their newly reopened apartment in the case of Remus – since January. There had been plenty of time for Harry to come and visit – even during the Eostera break when he’d once more been at a friend’s house this time Longbottom Grange.

Dumbledore had squashed them all.

But, oh now now. Sirius was a free man – and according to the solicitor Harry’d hired on his behalf Lord Black of all things. And Albus was in hot water with the Wizengamot and soon the public at large.

There wasn’t a damned thing he could do to keep them away from the only child of their pack.
Not anymore.

“Harry-pup.” Sirius’s eyes sparkled suspiciously as they came to a stop before the tall pair waiting on them. Heidi was every-inch the determined lady they’d expected but Harry? Oh, he was so tall. Taller than Prongs had been at his age, that was for sure. Strong too. Very much the young Lord.

Not the junior Marauder Sirius would have raise him as but…

Still their Harry nonetheless.

At least his nose wasn’t up in the air like Cousin Narcissa’s spawn.

“Hello Padfoot.” Frey smiled gently at the stress-and-grief worn wizard who was starting to regain his strength from his long imprisonment. “You’ve been missed.” He commented flicking his eyes at the amber-eyed were on Siri’s left. “Very much so.”

With a gasping sob, Sirius reached out and pulled his wayward pup into a strong hug, nearly sobbing into his silk-and-leather clad shoulder.

“Missed you too, Bambi.” The Black lord finally said after a long moment, lifting his head without an inch of shame for his very-public outburst. “Gods above, did I miss you too.”

…

Frey and Heidi spent another week in London before returning to Camp, evenly split between meetings with his solicitor, the goblins, and his newly-returned “uncles”. There was a lot of work to be done still on his estate and while Sirius would have happily coopted his godson for the whole of the summer break, he understood that his Harry-pup had things to do elsewhere. A slight twinge that was assuaged by reassurances that his godson would be more-than-happy to spend most of August with his dog-father rather than at Malfoy Manor with Draco – as long as Sirius allowed him to visit his friends.

The animagus quickly agreed and a time and place for picking up his pup was set.

Chiron was not happy with Frey’s version of the basilisk hunt, a fact he had no problem showing through the truly massive amount of work and lessons he dumped onto Frey’s head upon his return to Camp.

For his part Frey sucked it up and dealt with it knowing it could always be worse – his Far could have the opportunity to come down and punish him himself rather than having to make due with scoldings during Frey’s dreams and punishment-via-proxy.

Times like this Loki being so damned creative was damned inconvenient for his son and Heir.

While for the most part his heavy workload was due to his recklessness in the Chamber it also had another aim – distraction.

Distraction from a very-real rite-of-passage Frey was rapidly approaching.

Modern societies would frown upon it but that made no difference to the – honestly – antique guardians the godling possessed. And Asgard had an important one for Heirs to the Throne.

A form of…training.

Not of magics or weapons or diplomatic skill – though depending on the Prince it could also be those
– but of carnality.

Specifically…training Princes not to be controlled by their more…base impulses.

A training that even some of the Olde Houses in the Wizarding World practiced though none would ever admit to it.

Sex – and everything surrounded it – could be as dangerous a weapon as a bared blade and as deadly an enticement as Amortentia. It was unthinkable therefore for Odin to allow his sons – by blood or adoption – to ever be controlled by it. Hence the tradition of having them trained in it by a trusted person or person(s) depending on the Prince’s proclivities.

In other words…

Frey was going to lose his v-card…and to what amounted to as a pair of professional seducers.

He wasn’t exactly thrilled when Thanatos had told him of the plans during his Yule visit.

Most young men got a bicycle or something equally innocuous for their thirteenth birthdays. Frey was getting a month (via his time manipulation gift Chiron employed for his training) with a pair of selected seducers. If his guardians have their way he wasn’t even going to have a say in who he laid with for the first time.

A situation that chafed mightily at the independent godling.

And which led to his current situation – bitching to his best-friends at Camp Half-Blood.

Luke was looking at him like he was crazy while Silena was being silently supportive. Pretty much par for the course for the pair of half-bloods.

“Let me get this straight.” Luke said with heavy sarcasm. “Your dad – and we’ll be revisiting that at another time – is basically giving you the green light to screw around with a pair of potentially-gorgeous courtesans – male and female – and learn all you can about sex from them. And you have a problem with this why?”

“Luke.” Silena hissed, frowning. “The person you trust with your first time is a big deal. I certainly wouldn’t want my mother,” Aphrodite, “picking them for me. I don’t blame you at all for being, well, out-of-sorts about it, Frey.” She smiled at the younger half-blood. “I would throw a massive fit if anyone tried to do that to me.”

“Thanks, Silena.” Frey heaved a sigh. “And Luke it’s not that I have a problem with the tradition. I just wish I was able to choose who. You know?”

“Yeah.” Luke had to admit the losing-it-to-a-stranger-thing sucked. “That’s just sucky.”

…

Two nights before his birthday found Frey wandering near the Sound, his feet leaving shallow prints in the sand.

The day he was to start his training was near at hand, it being slated for the first of August. He – and whoever his trainers were – would enter the time-displacement field on his cabin then. And after a month in the field they would leave it – and the last bits of his bodily innocence – behind.

Even though he mentally and emotionally was much older than thirteen – he estimated more around
his late teens at this point – and even physically he didn’t look his real age anymore, at times he still was just a kid.

And the kid in him wasn’t sure he was ready for this very *definite* step into adulthood.

Loki and Thanatos had already set in motion plans for his birthday, including his Rites that would mark him firmly as a mature Asgardian.

This was just another part of that.

Why then was he having so much trouble accepting *this* instead of say, the tattoo he’d get to Mark him as an adult in his father’s culture?

He wasn’t sure but it sure was fucking with his sleep-schedule.

The young godling was so wrapped up in his thoughts and worries over his coming rites of passage that he didn’t notice the approaching pair.

“Frey.” Silena called out to him softly, making the tall boy whip around and face the frankly-beautiful young woman.

Silena and Luke were both fifteen, between two years and a year-and-a-half older than their younger friend. And they’d made a decision between them. One that they *hoped* would ease his mind.

They both held out a hand in a wordless gesture.

“Don’t worry,” Luke smiled gently as understanding washed over his sparring-partner’s handsome face. “We’ve both done this before.”

“Though not together.” Silena laughed lightly.

Luke rolled his eyes at her.

“We’ll take care of you.” The daughter of Aphrodite promised. “On my mother, I swear it.”

Frey blushed bright red before tentatively taking the offered hands, the older teens tucking him between them, Silena resting her golden head against his strong shoulder and Luke wrapping an arm around his lean waist.

“Are you sure?” Frey asked one last time, glancing at each of their beautiful faces as they stood in the shadows of his cabin. “I mean…”

“You’re hot, Frey.” Luke said bluntly, tugging the younger man inside and over towards where he knew his bed was. “Trust me. This isn’t going to be a hardship.”

Silena said nothing choosing instead to simply tug his head down to hers in a passionate kiss, releasing him only when it was needed for air.

“We want this.” She reassured him. “We want *you*.”

“We wouldn’t be here if we didn’t.” Luke smirked. “Well *I* wouldn’t be anyway. Who knows about Silena…”

“Hey,” she protested only to be silenced when Luke’s nimble hands – more used to stealing and mischief than stripping someone of their clothes – quickly stole Frey’s t-shirt, pulling him down onto the bed and into a heated kiss in the process.
Frey was a little unsure – it was only his second ever kiss after all – but he caught on with the same aptitude he tended to show most things. It was hot and messy and wonderful. Wonderful enough that the two boys only remembered their third when she made a needy moan at the panty-soaking sight before her.

Luke gave one of his quicksilver grins, darting over to give her a tongue-twining kiss of her own while the two trouble-makers, of a similar mind as they usually were, set to removing clothes both their own and their female companion’s.

With a flick of his fingers and a smirk, Frey had them naked and a contraceptive charm cast. It wouldn’t due for there to be a Mini-Frey running around for Hermes or Aphrodite to have his head over.

Or for Odin to smite down for merely existing.

“Handy.” Was all Luke had to say as he bore Frey back onto the sheets beside Silena, making a study of their contrasting forms against the gleaming silk.

*Beautiful.*

And quite the prizes for a son of Hermes to capture – if only for one night.

…

Later after many many spells had been used by Frey and his companions lay beside him cuddling up next to him in the large bed, he smiled idly in the dark.

Now that it was over he wasn’t nearly so concerned with his coming training.

Rather, he was looking forward to it.

After all…Frey is his father’s son.
Twelve: Rites of Passage Uncensored

Chapter Summary

Uncensored Version of Chapter Twelve: Rites of Passage

Lokison

Author’s Note: Reminder – for all that Frey is technically turning thirteen with the time-displacement he’s been subjected to he’s really more like late teens. This chapter also contains several censored portions for the chapter posted on fanfiction.net.

Chapter Twelve:

Rite of Passage

Two days after spending a rather excellent night with Silena and Luke, Frey stood warily in the center of a concealed and cloaked – by Thanatos nonetheless – ritual ring of old growth trees hidden deep within the forest surrounding Camp Half-Blood. Technically they were half-inside and half-outside the Camp’s wards, giving Frey the needed freedom to go through his rites of passage. Stepping towards the alter set up for this very reason he lit the ritual bonfire with a flick of his wrist and bowed his head, waiting.

…

In Asgard, the group surrounding the viewing pool groaned in dismay.

As soon as the young Seidr had lit the ritual fire their view into the ritual space had fogged over before blacking out completely. One particular blonde head searched for an inky-black mane, finally spotting his target striding away, Thor called out.

“Brother!” The god of Thunder bellowed. “What mischief is this?”

The other gathered gods murmured in agreement. If any of them had an answer for their sight being blocked it would be Loki – better him than the Enchantress anyway. Loki was simply mischievous. Amora was foul and reveled in enslaving men of all races.

“No mischief of mine, I assure you brother.” Loki called back with a smirk. “Lord Thanatos is simply safeguarding his charge’s privacy. As I warned you all might happen on this day. Rites of Passage are an auspicious event.”

“Aye.” Thor agreed ruefully. The Trickster had warned them. “Will you spar with me then as the young earthen mage is unavailable for entertainment at the moment?”

Loki restrained his desire to sneer. As if his son and Heir was merely good for entertainment – no matter how genial the comment was it still rankled mightily. He declined gracefully, stating a desire to visit the Libraries – a guarantee that neither his brother nor his cronies would come seeking him out – before slipping down through the hidden paths of the Bifrost.

He had a son to visit and support on this most auspicious day.
Frey lifted his head at last when he felt the familiar, comforting, presence of his father wrap around him. Loki had managed to slip away from the palace after all. His Far had promised to try but couldn’t vouchsafe his presence due to the nature of his fellow Asgardians.

His brother Thor in particular could be rather dogged in his seeking out of his brother for company. Striding over to his son with pride shining clearly in his green eyes, Loki swept him up in a warm embrace.

“My little prince.” Loki murmured into ebony locks woven into an intricate warrior’s braid. “Nearly a man.”

His son wrapped his leanly muscled arms around his wiry frame, returning the hug measure for measure. It had been far too long since they’d been able to see one another in the flesh rather than using dreams or one of Loki’s doubles.

“I’m still your son, Far.” Frey responded, holding back his own emotions. He couldn’t afford to loosen his grasp on them, not with the ritual to come. It was meant to tax a young man’s control, strength, and resolve. A true test of whether a child was ready to become a man and warrior of Asgard. “I always will be. Nothing could ever change that.” And nothing ever would.

Loki gave his son one last squeeze before holding him out at arms’ length and taking in the changes in Frey for himself. His canny eye noted the increased height and muscle mass, an increase that would likely grow following the ceremony and the influx of power to come with it. Frey was already one of, if not the, tallest boy in his age group both at Camp Half-Blood where such growth was common and at Hogwarts were is was not. Not until closer to magical maturity at age sixteen anyway.

It was another “tell” of his child’s less-than-standard heritage.

But his skin was clear and a golden-cream with none of the unfortunate spots mortal teenagers dealt with and his gaze was bright with strength and health.

Frey was as ready as he ever would be for the challenge of his Rite of Passage.

With a nod, Loki turned and waited for his son to take up his position before the alter with its candles, herbs, and crystals, hands braced on the edge and back strong and straight.

Thanatos melted out from within the shadows, having completed the necessary cloaking spells to keep both Asgard and anyone else from peeking.

Neither god was in the mood for the inevitable backlash if the wrong deity or simply curious creature spied on Frey’s Rites.

The gods exchanged nods and set to work, picking up the specially-prepared needles and inks, already imbued with their magical blessing and mixed by Frey’s own hands. It was a simple Rite but a profoundly painful one: tattooing the Marks of Frey’s Patrons and lineage upon him as they called up his magics. Frey’s innate and gifted magics then mixed and churned within him, preparing to break free from the natural block his core had at birth until his body was capable of containing it naturally.

It burned, hot and sharp beneath the surface of his skin, making each prick of the needles upon his broad back and muscled arms feeling like liquid fire pouring through his veins. And through it all
Frey remained silent and stoic, undergoing the Rites with the strength demanded of a warrior of his Father’s people.

To the timeless gods it was a mere matter of moments before their work was finished and the intricate designs – Loki’s of the World Tree from shoulder to hip and Thanatos’s runic arm bands around his bicep and the cap of his shoulders – standing stark against his pale skin.

For their living canvass it seemed to last forever.

Then, just as Loki was going to command his son and Heir to stand as a man and warrior of Asgard, a bolt of black light struck the strong figure throwing both gods back onto the ground and surrounding the form of their charge.

…

Loki was the first to regain his feet, fear for his beloved child taking precedence over the daze caused by the power flux.

Part of him absently thought that it was a good thing his brother didn’t have that level of power behind his strikes or else he would walk around in a permanent fog for hours whenever Thor convinced him to spar.

“Frey!” He called out, seeing his son’s tall form hunched over the alter which had only a fine layer of ash to show where the candles, herbs, and crystals once stood.

For his part Frey pushed himself upright onto wobbly feet, shaking his head.

He’d never in his life taken a blast like that, not even when he was helping Zeus save his daughter Thalia in the form of a tree. It made the hits he’s taken from monsters over the last several years feel as if they were nothing more than little love taps. What in the name of Frigga was that?

A moment later he had his answer as he turned to face his Far only to have the Silver-Tongued god gasp and point.

There, just over his heart in icy blue, was the royal sigil of Laufey, King of Jotunheim.

Looking down at his Marked chest he glanced up at his still-stunned father and sucked in a deep breath.

“Far.” He said, walking over and hesitantly placing one hand on a lean shoulder. “I have something I need to tell you…”

…

Thanatos watched in concern as his young charge conjured a pair of high-backed chairs and tankards of mead for himself and his father. The Greek Avatar of Death would take his leave but it was only his presence and his power that was blocking them from being seen by the many inquisitive creatures of the realms. Nonetheless he was happy to be present for this particular conversation between god and godling.

Loki’s temper was rather infamous, even among their elder brethren of the Greek pantheon.

No one, not even the most vindictive of deities, would want that temper to overflow onto the Silvertongue’s son and Heir.
So Thanatos made himself a seat of shadows and settled back to wait and see if his intervention was
needed with the patience only a god of Death possessed.

... 

Frey drained his mead and gave a sigh, holding in an internal wince at the look he was getting from
his Far.

He knew Loki would never take it well.

However, he had hoped for a smoother introduction into his Far’s thus-far undiscovered – by Loki –
heritage.

Learning you were half-Frost Giant because your birth father decided to Mark and Claim your child
wasn’t the best revelation of that well-kept Asgardian secret Loki could’ve had. And to be honest…
Frey had been putting off this conversation. A fact that isn’t going to make Loki accept the truth any
easier.

Especially when his son has been “putting it off” for a solid year.

Oh yeah, his Far was going to be pissed.

At the moment he was merely calm and somewhat confused.

A state of affairs that was most definitely not going to survive the night.

After a long moment of watching his father sip calmly and with a parent’s irritating patience Frey
decided to go with the “bandage method” of acquainting the god with their rather – even for a god –
unconventional heritage.

“I’m a quarter-Jotun.” Was what actually came out of his mouth instead of the well-rehearsed speech
he’d come up with over the last year.

“Hmm.” Loki replied, skepticism clear in his tone as he eyed his child. Well. Frey is rather large for
his age. Even for an Asgardian. “I don’t remember Lily having any creature blood beyond Seidr. Is
it a remnant from James’s blood adoption?”

Frey cleared his throat, quite determined to look anywhere but at Loki.

“I had to do an Inheritance test with the goblins last summer.” He finally admitted, warily locking
gazes with his Far. “It’s not my adoption that’s the issue, Far. It’s yours.”

The God of Mischief’s eyes widened visibly, an unconscious tell of his shock and surprise as he
vanished the tankards both in his son’s hand and his own as he leaned forward.

“Tell me.” He demanded regally.

His son proceeded to do just that.

“According to my Inheritance test I am a Prince and Heir of Asgard but by adoption.” Frey kept his
tone dry and matter-of-fact, his own emotions locked away for the time being. His father was likely
to get emotional enough for a dozen gods, no need to add his own issues with the situation to the
mix. “What was clear however was that I was also a Prince and Heir of Jotunheim by Birthright.
The information was concealed from everyone but myself and the goblins. Everyone I tried to show
the results of the testing showed the same confusion. They couldn’t read anything about either
Asgard or Jotunheim. All they could see was my earthly heritage, nothing else.”

Frey wandlessly and wordlessly apparated the scroll he’d kept well-hidden in own of his trunks in his cabin and gave it over to his father.

Green eyes hazed with a morass of thoughts and confusion tracked over the words on the scroll. Frey could tell just from how active they were and how far down the scroll they were able to read that whatever magic of Odin’s or Frigga’s or the Norn’s that had worked to conceal the truth from Loki for so long wasn’t working. In this at least the combination of goblin magic, blood magic, and the massive amount of pure power Loki had as an Avatar of Magic and god of Chaos overcame the fog cast around Loki’s beginnings.

“Laufey.” Loki set aside everything else – including his own newly rediscovered issues with his adoptive father – to focus on the problem at hand. His words were nearly breathless, as if they’d been pulled from him by force. “Laufey knows.”

“He does.” Frey agreed with a small nod, a thumb brushing over the Mark on his pectoral. “He must have known this whole time.”

“Then the question becomes.” Loki locked eyes with his precious child. “Am I truly the beloved younger son – adopted or not – of Odin? Or am I surety of good behavior?” He sneered the last few words. “And either way what does Laufey want with my son?”

...After an hour or so spent discussing the situation, Thanatos had no choice but to interrupt, sending the currently tempestuous god back to Asgard. Even his power couldn’t block the Sight of the Norns and Fates much longer. And those meddling wenches were the last deities anyone wanted mixing into Frey’s affairs. Especially as far as his birth father was concerned.

When Frey turned to step into the shadows and return to the relative safety of his cabin – his Rite of Passage well completed – Thanatos spoke.

“Your presents will be on your bed when you arrive, little princeling.” Thanatos said then smirked. “And I will arrive tomorrow night with your new… tutors.”

Frey restrained the desire to groan at that.

In the tumultuous events following his Rite, his training had slipped his mind completely.

Muttering under his breath, Frey stepped into the shadows and disappeared, allowing Thanatos to finally tear down the wards he’d placed to keep wandering eyes from seeing what came of Frey’s Rite.

...The godling smiled as he looked down at the pile of unwrapped presents on his bed, having banished the wrapping paper to the low-burning fire in the brazier that laid near to the ground in the main common area of the cabin.

Draco had sent him a thick tome that dripped age and power. Frey could clearly see both his friend and his father Lucius’s handy-work in the present. Draco would’ve wanted to give him something special – which the tome clearly was – while Lucius would have insisted on honoring Frey’s heritage. Important since his father was also the Malfoy Patron.
Blaise and Theo together with a couple of the not-too-annoying Slytherin girls in their study group had sent him a joint gift of the newest Defense texts by one R.J. Lupin. Frey smiled to himself. He wasn’t going to enlighten them that they’d given him a set of books by his godfather. It was the thought that counted after all. They had no way of knowing that he had access to the writer himself – as well as unabridged versions of these very texts.

Speaking of, Remus had also sent him a book but one much more personal – his adoptive father James’s personal Transfiguration and Defense journal.

Sirius broke the trend – as Frey had thought he might – with the newest and fastest broom on the market called a Firebolt. Frey was in turns excited and wary of the gift. He still wasn’t quite certain whether Zeus or Thor would smite him for flying. It wasn’t likely at this point with his adoptive-uncle being so heavily involved in watching him – and winning bets over the outcomes of his fights – and Zeus owing him. But it was still better to be safe than sorry.

His friends from Camp Half-Blood had stacked up their gifts on the empty table beside his doorway – the farthest anyone could venture inside without him. Heidi the treasure had moved them onto the bed with the others.

Annabeth gave him a woven bracelet she’d clearly made herself while Luke and Silena went in together on a cellphone. Apparently they were tired of not being able to actually talk to him during the school year. He’d have to see if he could harden it against the circuits and battery overloading at the magic-rich Hogwarts. There was an assortment of candy and tokens from others who knew him but not as well as his closest friends.

Neville had somehow managed to send him a potted magical lily for his rooms. How that boy was able to make hybrids of mundane and magical plants he would never know. According to the letter sent along with the glowing-white flower it served as a dreamcatcher of sorts.

Amazing what he could do with flora, honestly.

Thantaos’s gift was two of his sworn to conduct Frey’s training. The less said about that the better.

The last package he opened was also his favorite.

Loki had sent him a full-set of basilisk-hide armor, charmed with everything the god could think of that wouldn’t hinder his son in battle. A last-minute note was attached to the tunic:

I made these before your Rite. The resizing charms will only work once before locking the leather into place. You might want to wait until you stop growing, my son.

It gave Frey a little chuckle. Loki had made them for the size he was before his Rite, not expecting him to grow that much during it. Which would have allowed him to wear the leathers for years before truly needing to replace them or activate the resizing charms.

Now they wouldn’t hit at all without the charms.

An excellent gift…that he wouldn’t be able to use until he was closer to his finished physique.

Stupid Jotun heritage. He glared down at the feet that had seemingly double in size over the last couple hours. Frey had always felt comfortable being bigger than the rest of his contemporaries but with his grandfather’s marking he felt…gangly.

Not okay.
Sending all the gifts to sort themselves out in his room and on the shelves and walls with a wave of his hand, Frey rubbed the spot over his heart where the Mark felt distinctly cool to the touch.

He wasn’t sure *what* Laufey wanted or planned to gain by marking him but he was extremely wary. Little good came from having the favor of the Frost King.

Groaning, Frey scrubbed his hands over his eyes and threw himself face-down on his bed. He needed to get some sleep.

Tomorrow was the start of a very long day.

... 

The next night after sending off thank-yous and spending the day hanging out with his friends enjoying the massive cake Heidi and the harpies had made, Frey found himself pacing anxiously in his cabin in what for him was very plain attire: a soft cotton sleeveless tunic and drawstring pants, *not* unlike the clothes he’d worn several nights before when Luke and Silena came to him.

This night was different from *that* night in just about every way possible.

Only his Far’s assurance that he fogs the Seeing Pools whenever something *intimate* was afoot kept Frey from being a complete nervous wreck. It was pretty much the only time Loki was able to get away with blocking the Pool – with Frigga’s blessing. The Asgardian Queen had very stern rules about what was appropriate to look in on – and what was *not*.

So at least he wouldn’t have an audience for what he was certain was destined to be an awkward encounter – to say the least.

While his nerves *have* subsided due to his experiences with Luke and Silena they were in no way vanquished entirely. And in some ways having those experiences in the first place had created a whole new set of worries. There were simply some parts of that night he’d enjoyed much, *much* more than others.

And he still wasn’t sure how he felt about that.

Before he could work himself up into a frenzy, Thanatos melted from the shadows and gave him a searching look before turning towards where he sensed the Pool intersecting with the earthen plane, nodding once. He waited for several seconds until he felt the watching eyes dissipate then turned towards his charge. It was times like this where he distinctly remembers that for all the meddling, time-twisting, and early maturation of his mind and powers the godling has gone through at the end of the day he was still a *very* young being compared to himself or even his young (in god terms) Father.

“I believe you have something you wish to tell me, my young one.” Thanatos’s soothing rumble of a voice instantly eased some of the tension Frey was carrying in the set of his shoulders.

The godling ran one hand through his long black hair, glancing nervously at the shadowy figure waiting patiently. Turning to face him fully he took a breath. He’d had his suspicions *before* he lost his virginity to Luke and Silena but now it was confirmed. And he needed to tell *someone* – even if that someone is an ageless Avatar of Death.

“I don’t think I – well – *like* females.” He said slowly in fits and starts. “Not, *not* like most guys do. I mean,” he started to pick up steam shrugging helplessly with a lost look on his face. “When I was *with* Silena I enjoyed it. But she’s a daughter of Aphrodite, a dead man would’ve enjoyed it. But...
she’s like a one-in-a-thousand girl…” He slumped. “I don’t think I’m explaining this right.”

“I think you’ve explained it very well actually.” Thanatos said drily, concealing his desire to roll his eyes. Teenagers. “You like females – well enough. And maybe one percent of the time you’ll actively desire one. But you like males better and would prefer to be with one – intimately.”

“Yeah.” Frey sighed as he felt another weight lift off his shoulders, relaxing. “That’s pretty much it. Silena was great, and understanding, and it felt good. But Luke…” He trailed off, unable to describe how awesome it was with his male best-friend.

Although that might just be a “Luke” thing if the dazed expression he’s seen on some of the other campers’ faces after a “walk” with the mischievous half-blood mean anything.

He smirked to himself. He’d have to…test…his theory.

Thoroughly.

Somehow he didn’t think Luke would mind a little more…experimentation.

“Then the changes I’ve made in the last few days to your trainers were appropriate after all.” Thanatos could barely hold in a smirk as his charge squeaked at the implication. His private time while hidden from Asgard by his father hadn’t been as intimate as he knew Frey would have preferred. But it was with reason and not simply prurient. Mainly to ensure Thanatos had selected the right people from the volunteers among his Harvestmen and Maidens to educate his charge.

A prudent bit of voyeurism as it’d turned out. Frey’s preference for his male friend’s attentions had been painfully obvious to anyone who knew what they were looking for. Or to a daughter of Aphrodite who could sense such things and was extremely understanding of the situation.

Silena was quickly becoming one half-blood he wasn’t looking forward to Reaping when the time came.

A trio of shadows broke off from behind the Harvest Lord and stepped forward, revealing who Thanatos had brought along.

“While you do not crave attentions of the female persuasion.” Thanatos offered a hand to the dainty and elegant Harvestmaiden who rather than Heidi’s leather armor was wrapped in a silken kimono and pulled her forward to meet Frey. “Aniki will help you understand women. And as a former geisha, she’s trained in all the arts you may need in your life.”

The newly-introduced Aniki gave him an elegant nod of her head as she studied him from head to toe with discerning brown eyes.

“He will do well.” Her accented English chimed in her bell-like voice. “One such as him would have made a fortune in my former House.”

The newly-introduced Aniki gave him an elegant nod of her head as she studied him from head to toe with discerning brown eyes.

“He will do well.” Her accented English chimed in her bell-like voice. “One such as him would have made a fortune in my former House.”

One of the other shadows chuckled at that, gaining a fierce look from the formerly harmless-appearing woman.

“Hector.” Thanatos gave the larger of the two remaining shadows a chiding glance, the shadow parted giving way to a dark-haired man with classical handsomeness and a warrior’s body standing beside a leaner – and shorter – blonde with a sunny smile to match his bright hair and blue eyes. “And Alexios will be your other trainers.”

Frey stared at the larger of the two men, a knowing tingle in the back of his mind. He knew that
face…somehow. He shrugged it off. It would come to him.

Thanatos eyed the grouping. This had the potential to go extremely well or epically bad. Though only time would tell.

What with leaving a Trojan and a Greek with only a teenaged godling and a Japanese geisha-cum-assassin for supervision.

Nah.

It would be fine.

And with that in mind, Thanatos took his leave, departing as abruptly as he’d arrived.

...

The quartet remaining in Frey’s cabin exchanged glances for several moments before their steadily-increasing aura of awkwardness was given a timely interrupted.

“Bah.” Heidi took in the situation at a glance as she stepped into the cabin and rolled her eyes. With a flick of her hand she had a low table and floor mats set with a traditional tea setting Aniki would be most familiar with arrayed in the center of the room. “Sit and talk. I’m leaving for the Big House and Chiron will be here to set up the time-displacement field around the cabin.”

“Yes, Heidi.” Came the chorus of responses from her charge and fellow members of the Harvest Lord’s court.

Waving her hand she strode elegantly from the cabin, leaving them in relative peace.

Initial tension broken, Frey as the host waved Alexios and Hector towards the low table, giving Aniki a gentlemanly hand – as had been drummed into him by his tuition with Heidi and the daughters of Aphrodite.

“First.” Aniki spoke in her charming lilt once she’d served the tea with all the grace she possessed as a former geisha. “I believe it would suit this rather unique situation to etch out something of a schedule. While large parts of the next weeks will be mostly pleasure.” She cast an arch look at the three men. “There is also skills to be taught and gained in turn.”

“Quite.” Frey agreed with a fiercely-controlled voice, studiously refusing to turn his head and so much as glance at the two stunning specimens of maleness his guardian had selected. They were both just so damned distracting each in their own way. “The purpose of this tradition is to make certain that no matter what circumstances I find myself in over my long life, that I am never placed at a disadvantage. Even one due to my own personal proclivities.”

Aniki flicked that last phase away with a dove-white hand.

“You’ll not be the first man I’ve…encountered…to prefer his own gender.” She said with uncharacteristic bluntness. “Whether the men in question knew it themselves or not at the time.” Alexios had to swallow a snort at that, nearly choking on his tea. “Someone such as myself simply knows where her partner’s true desires lie. A trait I’m going to do my best to teach you, young lord.”

“I thank you, my lady.” Frey nodded regally, hands resting lightly on his thighs. “For all you will teach me.”

She smiled obliquely. “Mmm.” Was all the acknowledgement of this thanks she gave. It wasn’t
exactly a hardship to teach a semblance of her arts to a young godling as handsome and eager as her Lord’s charge. “You’ll do well, I’m sure. I’ll monopolize your mornings and afternoons.” She decided with a sip of her tea. “With Alexios and Hector assisting me as needed. Most of what you’ll learn from me are things I learned during my lifetime: grace, elegance, even seduction. There are those who used to say that a geisha’s most dangerous weapon wasn’t her body or face but her ability to entice with no more than a glance. That is what I believe you will benefit the most from learning with me. I will mostly leave your other training to the evenings and nights with Alexios and Hector.”

Hector gave the young godling a dangerous smile.

“It will be our pleasure.” He purred in his silken voice.

“Not just yours.” Frey flicked back with a kitten-eyed glance from under his lashes. “I’m sure.”

Alexios laughed out loud at the rejoinder as Hector’s eyes all but burned at the lithe Lord. Aniki smiled to herself, murmuring:

“Oh, yes.” She chuckled. “I don’t think he’ll have any troubles learning what I have to teach, though Hector and Alexios are particularly skilled in the ways warriors can seduce one another through strength of arms – a specialty of our Greek friend, I believe.”

Alexios merely smirked in response to the arch look the Harvestmaiden cast him as they all felt the time-displacement wards snap into place.

“The nights,” Hector purred, fire glinting in his dark eyes as they rose, the massive Trojan prowling around Frey’s leanly muscled form like a hungry jungle cat circling prey. “Belong to me.”

With that the most aggressive of Frey’s tutors fist one hand in his long black and yanked him up onto his toes and into a searing claiming of a kiss.

Aniki arched a brow at the display and swallowed a chuckle, making herself scarce by entering one of the new guest rooms Thanatos had provided and slapping a hand on the sigil that would raise the silencing charms. She could do without becoming a voyeur this evening, thank you very much.

Releasing his grip on Frey, Hector traded a glance with Alexios, motioning his long-time lover over towards the silk-and-fur draped bed. Giving the young man in his arms a wicked smirk, the ancient warrior scooped him up into his arms and bore him over as his partner quickly shucked his garments. Wordlessly he passed their charge over, trusting Alexios to keep the now visibly-nervous youngling calm while Hector stripped himself.

Frey watched with wide eyes as Hector revealed what seemed like acres of gleaming golden skin. As servants of the Harvest Lord, both Hector and Alexios – as well as Aniki and even Heidi – were frozen in the same physical state as they were when they died in battle. The only difference being that their often vicious wounds were now silvery scars on otherwise – in their case – flawless bodies. Hector. Now there was a name with serious age. The Crown Prince of Troy who was killed by Achilles after accidently killing the Myrmidon warrior’s cousin. Who was incidentally now going by the name Alexios according to Heidi’s gossip sessions about her “siblings” or fellow servants of the Harvest Lord.

Hector was bloody gorgeous in an all-male way: miles and miles of rippling muscles from long days learning to fight and later fighting with sword and spear and shield. Dark chocolatey hair, a nice
sprinkling of body hair without having an icky heavy-pelt. And those dark eyes…he shivered.

Rich brown eyes that *burned* when they lit upon Frey.

Alexios was beautiful. All golden skin, lean muscles, and golden hair. Even his eyes were a lighter brown than Hector’s. He could see where the rumors about his relationship with Achilles – false according to Heidi – came from.

He could *also* see how all that rage between the two opposing warriors had turned into another kind of heat after Thanatos had stolen both into his service.

A body moved to the side of him as a mouth attached itself to his neck and suckled, Frey let out a small whimper into the mouth that was attacking his own, a strong tongue mapping out the inside of his mouth.

His mouth was released as Alexios moved to nibble along his neck, making him moan lightly at the new sensation, a moan stolen by Hector his mouth was taken once more by the Trojan who had quickly shed himself of his garments and joined his lover and charge upon the bed.

Alexios tore his mouth from Frey’s neck and let out a deep growling moan as Frey squirmed as he was pinned between the two larger bodies. One day the youngling would likely even outstrip Hector for size but at the moment he was still lithe enough to capture, a fact that inflamed both of the ancients.

Frey’s mouth was claimed with Alexios’s tongue and he rocked more firmly on the blonde’s lap as a coiling pressure built up in his gut, aroused at being dressed while his soon-to-be-lovers were naked.

Hector grinned lecherously at him, noticing the reaction, and moved to take over the inside of his mouth again as he gave Alexios a wordless signal and two sets of hands moved in unison. Hector taking the top and Alexios the bottom as they touched, stroked, and teased every inch of their “captive” before moving with ruthless efficacy to strip him bare.

Alexios gave Hector a look as Frey’s next gasp was more anxious than aroused. The larger warrior backed off for a moment, allowing his lover to gently clasp Frey’s soft cheeks in this hands, stroking lightly.

“How much experience do you have, lovely?” The Greek asked in a gentle purr.

Frey restrained the need to blush and looked up into golden-whisky eyes, soft with understanding. Alexios’s arousal – as fierce as his counterpart’s – was banked…for the moment.

“Not a lot.” He admitted, nibbling at his bottom lip.

The older men held in growls at the innocently-inviting gesture.

“Just a little.” He continued. “With Luke and Silena a couple nights ago.”

“A little?” Alexios arched a brow in a wordless demand before sighing and vocalizing what he meant. He had a feeling that on some occasions getting information from his charge was going to be like pulling teeth. “How little?” He clarified his question.

“Kissing and petting.” Frey’s face was bright red, his willpower not enough against his embarrassment. He knew he was going to have to talk about this kind of thing, especially with them, but doing it while all three of them were naked and *hard* was a different story altogether.
Penetration?” Alexios pried.

Frey blew out a breath and nodded. “With Silena and then Luke with me.” He finally bit the bullet and explained.

“But not you with Luke?” Hector stroked one hand down Frey’s quivering back in a gentle, calming gesture.

The young man shook his head, eyes wide.

“And oral?”


“Mmm.” The older men shared a wordless conversation as they kept stroking him, gentling him not unlike they would a nervous filly.

“How far do you want to go tonight, Frey?” Alexios asked against his lips, ducking down to give him a soft kiss. “We have plenty of time. We’ll take it at your pace.”

“All the way.” Frey replied breathlessly, arms coming up to twine around his broad shoulders as Hector pressed against his back, the bigger man’s arousal like a heated iron bar against the taught curve of his buttocks.

Alexios didn’t ask him if he was sure, didn’t advise him that maybe waiting would be better, instead he just nodded his head and went right back to pleasuring Frey, questions answered satisfactorily – for the moment.

Kisses and small nips to his belly as Alexios pushed him back onto the now-reclining Hector had Frey writhing and wriggling on the Trojan’s lap, making small noises that were devoured by Alexios.

Frey was hauled upwards and his neck whiplashed with the unexpected movement, but Alexios’s hands quickly cradled the back of his head as Hector pulled him to lean against his front.

Alexios nipped and suckled his way down Frey’s lean chest and cut abs while Hector alternated between deep, tongue-dueling kisses and nipping and suckling on the golden-ivory curve of the young man’s neck and collarbone, hands stroking and searching out sensitive points all along the long line of Frey’s body.

“Ah!” Frey nearly choked, eyes rolling back as a hot, wet, suction covered his burning-hot cock, hands finding and burying themselves in long golden hair as Alexios gave him a refresher on just how amazing a hot mouth on hotter length felt.

Hector nipped once more at his neck before growling something out in a language Frey was familiar with but for the life of him couldn’t understand while he had a beautiful blonde trying to suck his brain out through his cock. A large, broad hand palmed one downy cheek of his arse, squeezing lightly as he heard the sound of a lid being removed from a jar.

Frey jerked and was about to ask what the hell was going on when a smooth, lubricated finger pressed into his body. His head fell back with a breathy moan, he tried to move on that finger as it caressed his inner walls, but Hector’s arm wouldn’t move.
This. This was new.

And wonderful.

They’d all been in such a heated, hormonal rush that he hadn’t really enjoyed much of the prep last time. But this. Oh. Yeah. With Hector’s arm pinning him in place and one of his fingers working his inner walls while Alexios showed him what deep-throating was, Frey was getting a whole new appreciation for his sexual orientation.

Frey moved restlessly as one finger became two and he moved insistently to get those fingers deeper.

“Please.” He begged. Damn it to Hades but that felt good especially when he found that little walnut-sized gland.

“You need to be properly prepared.” Hector told him stiffly, his voice strained.

Another finger joined its brethren and Hector scissored them inside of him, stretching him as much as he could. Neither of them were small men. With a signal from Hector, Alexios lifted his head from pleasuring Frey, releasing his aching prick with a lewd “pop”. Crawling back up the bed, he gently lifted Frey off of Hector, fisting his hands in the now-tangled black locks and stealing his breath with a kiss.

Hector rose back to his knees and pressed up behind his lovers, sharing a kiss with Alexios as Frey watched with passion glazed eyes, not pausing for even a moment as he prepared the young body held with care between himself and his long-time lover.

Frey was jolted as his hips were gripped and he was pulled down on top of Hector’s hard shaft, the cock slipping inside of him slowly as his insides gripped at it tightly.

Hector clenched his teeth and cursed in his native language as he lowered Frey down until there wasn’t enough space between them to fit a wisp of silk. Frey turned and twisted, trying to get used to having Hector within him, but those swordsman’s hands wouldn’t leave his hips.

Alexios lightly bit at the hollow of his throat and Frey gasped, rocking in Hector’s lap, which caused Hector to let out a muffled shout of pleasure.

Hector lifted him slowly and carefully from his lap, before letting him slip back down, Frey cried out at the blissful sensation and placed his hands on Hector’s shoulders and experimentally moved himself down onto the large shaft. With Luke they’d stuck to having Frey kneel in front of him, also Luke had been too afraid of hurting his friend to let him move too much. Hector’s hands on his hips still controlled the majority of his movements, but Frey didn’t care as Hector finally found his prostate and stroked over it.

“Hector!” Frey moaned as he shifted his knees deeper into the mattress, arching up into Alexios’s body, finding the hot length of the Greek’s aroused cock with his own, making him buck up again at the duel sensations.

They set a fast and furious pace ready to bring their release as quickly as possible, unable to stand the gut clenching coiling much longer.

Frey released first helped on by Alexios, who was fisting his hard cock between his and Hector’s bodies. The alternating speed of Hector thrusting into him hard and fast and Alexios using firm, slow movements had Frey screaming his pleasure to the ceiling.

Hot seed flooded into his body and Frey let out a soft moan as Hector slowed down his movements
before stopping completely holding Frey to him with gentle pressure.

Before he could relax in Hector’s strong arms, he was passed off to another warm, muscled body, one that was still needing attention.

Alexios kissed him with wanton desire, Frey kissing him back, arching his body as a hand slid between his legs palmed his renewing erection. Two fingers were pressed into his stretched and leaking entrance and Frey gasped in pleasure and shock.

His body quivered as Alexios moved him to lay back, legs wrapped around the Greek’s trim hips as Alexios sank into his slicked passage. Frey had no control at all in this position as Hector held his hands down on the mattress and stole his breath with his kisses while Alexios pumped into him in a rapid pace, grazing his prostate almost constantly. The weight of Alexios’s body kept his lower half pinned while Hector occupied his hands and mouth.

He let out a keening moan as he wrapped his arms around Alexios’s shoulders and let himself be moved, there wasn’t much else he could do in this position except to feel and feel he did.

Frey couldn’t help but compare the feeling of Alexios being inside of him to Hector. Hector was thick and long but Alexios was longer, reaching new places inside of him, it made his blood thick and sultry as Alexios wrapped muscled arms around him to keep him in place as he started rolling his hips to move that cock inside of him.

Alexios’s thrusts started getting harder and deeper, rushed, and Frey knew now, after being with both Luke and Hector plus from his time with Silena, that the blonde was getting close to orgasm. Frey had a hazy thought tingle through him and clenched, bearing down on the prick moving inside him, earning him a primal growl. A callused hand wrapped around his cock and Frey looked into deep, lust filled dark eyes before a mouth claiming his had his full attention drawn back to Alexios.

Frey quivered and arched as the tightening sensation in his gut coiled tighter and tighter, he felt his body tense as he locked eyes with whisky-gold before his orgasm took him over.

“Alexios!” Frey managed to scream before his mouth was seized once again by the blonde, who gave out a muffled groan and emptied himself into Frey, his release joining Hector’s.

He wasn’t sure how much time passed before the feel of his bedmates stirring pulled him from his euphoric daze.

“Goin’ somewhere?” He asked groggily as he felt both of the bodies surrounding him start to shift out of the wide bed.

“Find our room.” Alexios rasped, rubbing one hand over mouth as he stared down at the debauched picture Frey made.

“Okay.” The godling decided after a long moment of debate. He wasn’t quite comfortable with the idea of actually sleeping with either warrior in his bed. Sex was one thing. Letting them sleep with him was a whole different issue. One he was glad neither of them seemed to want to push.

Groaning Frey started to move into a more comfortable position, but as pain speared through his lower body, he decided against it and lay back down in the soft warm bed

Yawning Frey snuggled into a fur and absently cleaned himself and the bed up with a wordless wave of his hand and flex of his power. All-in-all (and intimacy issues aside) it hadn’t been the worst introduction to a threesome he could’ve asked for.
The next morning after a long shower and a pair of potions – a Muscle-Relaxer and a Pain-Reliever – Frey found himself once more sitting on a low cushion at the Japanese-style table in his sitting room. Alexios was still sleeping while Hector had taken himself off to the training arena attached to the back of his home that had been included in the time-displacement field. Frey may have to spend a month inside a day enjoying training of a certain kind but he wasn’t allowed to let his other skills slack while he was incommunicado with the greater Camp.

Frey watched with avid eyes as Aniki began the intricate ceremony of preparing her tea.

“All things a geisha does,” her melodic voice whispered across the table. “Carries with it an innate grace and sensuality. Those like myself are selected and trained from early childhood in this. The greatest tool a geisha possesses isn’t her body but her mind – despite what our detractors might insist.” Aniki flicked her audience an amused glance from deep brown eyes as she poured steaming water into delicate porcelain. “Being able to seduce anyone means knowing what anyone might want – and then being able to both recognize the illusive signs they display and then be able to adjust yourself in an instant to their desires – spoken and unspoken.”

“How?” It was a breath of a question, Frey’s eyes wide.

Aniki chuckled.

“That is what I’m here to teach you – partly at least.” She offered him his cup. “Now…”

Alexios purred as he felt his charge climb between silken sheets and lay a gentle kiss on his shoulder blade.

“Enjoy your lessons?” His voice was gravelly and rough from the previous night’s activities.

“They were interesting.” Frey admitted. “But it’s a lot of information, teeny tiny things I’ve never noticed or paid attention to before. Aniki would make the most persnickety of people happy in her ability to spot a flaw or correct the angle of a wrist.”

The Greek chuckled and turned onto his back, hand flashing out lightning-quick to haul his young lover over and across his chest, locking him in place with a deep, tongue-twining kiss.

“And where’s our Trojan friend?” He murmured as he waited for an answer.

“Sparring.” Frey finally gathered his wits to gasp out. “He’s sparring with a couple of my enchanted dummies.”

A white-toothed grin flashed in the low afternoon light.

“Excellent.”

Frey and Aniki watched from the sidelines as steel flashed in the training arena. Frey’s gaze was both fascinated and hungry as Hector and Alexios dueled in what he had to admit Aniki had aptly
described a couple weeks before as a “warrior’s seduction.”

“It’s like a dance.” He leaned down and wrapped his arms around the petite former-geisha, whispering in her ears. “I saw my father…er…someone,” he corrected himself. Mentally he cursed. No matter how close he gets to his tutors, none of them know the truth of him. They can’t ever know. No one can not until the time was right. He was already on thin ice with Malfoy Junior and Senior. The tirade Loki had given him over trusting Draco with his secret still made his ears bleed when he thinks of it. “Dance a tango once with Heidi. This really reminds me of that.”

“Mmm.” Aniki hummed under her breath, relaxing her back against her pupil’s chest. They’d yet to spend any intimate time together but she’d found him to be rather affectionate nonetheless. And he’d taken to her lessons of simple touch to ensnare the senses of his target like a duck to water. “There’s parallels for certain. In the Western World, it was often considered a requirement for trained warriors of high station to be able to move with grace and touch a woman with respect on the dance floor. It was a matter of control: only an uncouth lout wouldn’t be able to control his strength and lead a dance with dignity and grace. Many of the ‘newer’ dances,” she flicked him a smile. “Like the tango take from that. They are very like a swordsman’s duello.”

“Only a duel between lovers or would-be lovers rather than armed combat.” Frey’s eyes glinted when he saw Alexios – who most would consider outmatched against Hector’s greater strength and reach – slither around the massive warrior, brushing his body with his own in a rapid-fire movement, bringing his sword to rest gently against his opponent’s throat as he pressed himself full-bodied against the larger man’s back.

“Surrender.” The Greek purred.

Hector turned his head and gave Alexios a burning kiss then made a formal swipe of his lowered sword in an appeasing salute.

“One of these days…” The thickly-accented voice of the former Crown-Prince of Troy threatened lightly. “I’m going to discover all your tricks.”

Alexios grinned back, winking at Frey as he released his partner and motioned for their charge to take his place. Alexios had spent the last week tutoring Frey in his rather unique method of seduction, it was time to see how much he’d learned.

“Well,” his voice was nearly perky. “You haven’t managed it in the last two thousand years, so I suppose I’ve got plenty of time to continue to spank you in dueling. Ready? Begin.”

…

Frey was dead nervous. This was the first night he was spending with Aniki instead of with some combination of Hector and/or Alexios. Since he was mostly attracted to guys – at least as far as he could discern – Aniki had mostly focused on what she’d laid out at the beginning: teaching him how seduce and ‘use his wiles’ as Alexios had jokingly put it.

But one thing had been made clear: mostly gay or not, he was going to have to learn how to pleasure a woman.

Hence the nervousness.

He didn’t think he’d done that bad with Silena but he wouldn’t call himself a stud either. Good times were had by all but there was definitely room for improvement.

"Would you mind if we started with a kiss?"
They were sitting on the edge of his bed, both wearing silk robes at Aniki’s assistance. Frey's head was spinning. She leaned towards him allowing her robe to open, and he could see the natural curve of those breasts, which he felt he already knew to some extent just from well, noticing in her normal kimono or silk tunic. But he managed to reply, "That would be good."

She moved close and his lips reached for hers. It was a moist kiss, a more than friendly kiss, but she had no difficulty in finding a pathway for her tongue, and within seconds their tongues were gently dueling, his arms coming up to wrap around her petite frame.

Frey was warmed from the kiss, but not overwhelmed like he was with his male partners. Cautiously he had placed his hands on Aniki's shoulders. Even with the cover of her robe, he could appreciate and thrill at the delicate curve of them.

The kiss, and those hands on her shoulders, had aroused further urges in Aniki. Maybe there was going to be something in this pursuit. Her body was already demanding more intimate touches from him. She really had waited too long, and Frey was simply too handsome. Young, inexperienced, it didn't matter.

“Touch me, Frey.”

Frey's trembling finger tips traced the elegant slope from nipple to the base of her throat. If the kiss had made him warm, then the sensation of her smooth rounded breast was burning. His erection heaved inside the robe. Emboldened he allowed his fingers to play their way around the whole curving surface. His whole being was slowly firing up.

Aniki was also simmering. She'd heard women say that they had little feeling when their breasts were touched. She’s never had such a problem. "The nipple, Frey. With that same touch. You have a wonderful touch."

Enjoying the thrill of it all, yet still uncertain, Frey reached out and tentatively ran his fingers over the hard small nipple. She gave a sharp intake of breath. "Sorry," he mumbled, jerking his hand away.

"No, no. That was perfect, Frey. Don't stop. Use your whole hand."

Allowing his whole hand to settle over her breast, he stroked over and around it, letting each finger trace over the nipple, which, he was sure, was hardening and growing.

"This can't be the first time you've touched a woman there," Aniki sighed huskily, knowing exactly what she wanted next. "Kiss it, Frey."

How would that feel? Blood pounded in Frey's head, doubly so in his cock. But her instruction was clear. "Take the nipple in your mouth, tongue it"

Frey lowered his head nervously, "Like this?" he asked, before putting his lips around the enlarged nipple. He’d played with Silena’s and his male partner’s nipples before but for some reason it was different with Aniki for all that it was more a learning experience than an act of passion. Perhaps because not only was she so very experienced but also he cared about her as a mentor beyond liking the way she looked.

"Tongue, Frey. Use your tongue."

Only too willing, Frey did just that, and couldn't believe the pleasure it gave him, but just as satisfying was realizing the pleasure it was giving her. He could sense the tremors running through her body. He found that he was sucking at that nipple without even thinking about it.
From time to time he heard her utter a little moan, of pleasure, he hoped.

It was indeed a moan of some considerable pleasure. Aniki was so engrossed in the erotic arousal of Frey's hands and mouth on her breasts, that she almost forgot that she should be instructing. And there was more to be gained, for both of them. She wondered what it might be like just to lie back and let him romp around her body. If he'd had more experience perhaps, but for now he needed guidance. "Don't stop what you're doing," she whispered, "but let one hand run the curve through breast waist and hip. Then back again."

Frey was eager enough to learn, but wondered whether this could be any more exciting than what he was doing.

Aniki could have allowed him to carry on in that fashion for a good while, but some things won't wait. "Down onto my thigh with that hand, onto the inside of my thigh. Oh, yes, like that. Back and forwards. Not too high."

Frey sucked in a desperate gulp of air. If he had enjoyed the smoothness of her skin before, what he was finding along her inner thigh was a silkiness that was beyond belief. His hand played along, back, along, back with deliberate gentility. Once the upward stroke went too far and there was that momentary thrill of her downy fuzz.

Aniki, in a lovely haze of warm delight, was very aware that her body jerked involuntarily when his fingers briefly, accidentally, touched her nether parts. It was time to move things on, "Now put that hand on my belly. Yes, with fingers spread, just strokes in a circle. Ooh, yes."

Frey knew that with his hand on her belly he would not be far from the ultimate touch. He knew too that his own body had responded with remarkable promptness. His erection was at least half mast, and rising. Without being told he allowed his circling hand to trace the edge of her tawny bush.

"Yes, yes, good, Frey. Go further, fingers play through the hair, but just there. This is a good way to tease your partner. Makes her think-" She gave a gasping pause, "-oh, that you're never going to reach your goal. The groove, Frey, down lower to where it starts."

Frey had been feeling that, as well as teasing the woman, this action was teasing him. But the groove? Yes, he had a vague notion of where she meant. Hadn't he briefly viewed it when she first lay back? Still licking at her breasts, his eyes gazed down across her flat belly, to watch his own fingers search. A very short search. Almost immediately he was touching what felt like closed lips, and just as quickly they weren't closed. He was able to move a finger, gingerly into a moistness, that was a pleasure in itself. His urge was to go on moving deeper.

His fingers were so nearly right, but she quickly advised him, "Keep your fingers there, Frey. Just rub between the lips gently, feel for the little pip—my clit." She was so aware of his fingers probing as instructed. And he found it! Fire rods seemed to stem out through her lower body. Gods, the thrill of it.

Frey rubbed, and his finger tip found what did feel like a pip, and Aniki's reaction told him he was on the mark. The so familiar ache in his scrotum as he realized he was at full pressure warned him to be careful. Then her wavering voice told him to move his mouth down there. Oh, oh, this was taking him towards a new stage. He'd pleased Alexios and Hector this way—often as he'd found he enjoyed the act. But how different would it be with Aniki? His mouth moving over her belly, stopped to allow his tongue to tickle at her tiny navel. On down. And the next tickling was her pubic hairs on his mouth. Tentatively he touched her spot with his tongue.

"Oooh-yes, -do it-give it -lick it-lick it hard." His tongue began working as though it had a life of its
own. Lapping at her little secret button. Her clit. It was no longer a pip, more like a smaller nipple. Back and forward with the tongue. Round and round. No taste, yet it was like supping on cream. All he was aware of was a scented musky aroma, and the ready moistness. Her creaminess increased, as her legs spread and Frey found himself licking and probing until his tongue was guzzling into that mysterious hole without him even wondering about what he was doing.

"Oh, yes, we're there, Frey." Care now, Aniki was telling herself. He'd only ever done this once before. "Roll your body between my thighs."

Between her raised thighs, he edged his body upwards, showered kisses on her breasts, and up to her lips where their tongues meshed briefly. Then she moved to reach down towards his hard cock. Her hand reached its target and instead of stroking, she gripped it firmly right at the hilt. She raised her hips to meet and welcome the purple head of what she was guiding to her vaginal opening.

Frey was tense as Aniki reached down for him, but somehow her grip was so purposeful that he had felt secure, and eager as she brought his purple end to the warm wetness of her. "Push gently, Frey." He did that, and he was in. "Stop." She said, without anxiety and she released her hold.

As her whole being screamed for the thrust of him, she was advising him to be still. "Just relax yourself there for—for—oh, a moment." Her need now was almost a pain, yet she had to instruct him so they would gain satisfaction. "Just try to breathe easy, Frey. Stay calm."

Breathe easy? When his loaded penis was already at the portals of that smoldering orifice that he had just finished licking out? When he could feel the delicious moisture of her, and the pulsing of her vaginal walls? The hungry pounding in his scrotum worried him.

This was night-and-day from being with Hector and Alexios. He had to be much more in control of himself for once thing. And he was afraid to actually hurt Aniki for another.

"You're doing well, Frey." But she knew she could wait no longer.

Just ahead of her instruction, Frey, sure that any threat of an early rush had gone, had slid his eager erection easily, through all her natural lubrication, right up to the hilt. So far that he was sure that he could feel the head push against some part of her deep inside. He didn't dare ask, what to do now. He was inside, deep, deep into that warm wetness and it was an amazing feeling. But now? He didn't need telling. His body knew by instinct way beyond any sexual knowledge. So he drew back and thrust again.

At his first long thrust Aniki had thought she would explode. Deep inside her that magnificent weapon was filling her, immense. When he withdrew and thrust a second time, waves of electricity fused through her body. Her vaginal walls pulsed with her every move. She was fast approaching that ecstatic moment that she had experienced on so few occasions as a geisha, focused more on the pleasure of her partner than herself.

Frey raised his face to kiss her but her head was rolling back and forwards as though out of control. So he concentrated on sucking and nibbling at her breasts. Doing that seemed to help his control. He had eased his hips back feeling his cock being adulated by her vibrating walls. Now he pushed it back as far as it would go.

"Now-again-back-faster." Her voice was strained, breathless almost desperate. Accordingly he swung his hips back and forward, and his rod worked like a piston inside her. He was doing it, actually doing it. It was better than he would have thought – being with a woman. The hotness of it, the wetness, the smells of perfume and feminine musk, almost overwhelmed him.
Aniki knew she was all but out of control, her breathing harsher, and her head tossing from side to side, her long hair flared across her face. "Ooh, it's there. Oh, yes, Frey." Her voice became a screech of near desperation.

A dam burst deep inside Frey's scrotum and the flood poured into his cock, as with one final plunge he heard his own voice yell something wild. And he was trying to push the head of his swollen member up into the depths of her belly.

At last they lay calmly nestled together. Much pleasure still lay in being against her flat, sweated belly as his cock slowly shrank out of her.

"It was good for you?"

"Good? Frey, for just a second time with a female you were quite remarkable."

Frey sighed in relief then again in hazy pleasure. He’d certainly enjoyed himself. Though it was a warm sort of enjoyment not the rushing inferno of heat and ecstasy he experienced with his male partners.

It was still fun.

And Aniki apparently had quite a few more things to teach him before the night was over.

…

Frey reclined against the headboard of his bed and sighed, their time under the displacement field was drawing to a close and there was still one thing he hadn’t tried yet – mostly due to his own insecurities and his partners’ preferences.

He’d yet to take either Alexios or Hector.

"Is there a question in that sigh or…" Alexios asked, propping himself up on one arm. He and Hector had been talking quietly in the afterglow of a vigorous session when Frey had sighed.

"Can I have you?" Frey blurted out.

Alexios tossed back his golden mane with a laugh. He’d wondered how long it would take his charge to make an overture. If he’d waited much longer he would have had to push him into it. Part of their duty here was to acclimate Frey to all kinds of pleasure.

Besides, the youngling definitely had the makings of a fantastic top if his reactions to getting head were any indications.

"I don’t know?" Alexios arched a brow. “Can you?"

Frey grinned and pulled Alexios into a passionate kiss, spurred on by hot dark eyes watching them as Hector took in the scene but made no move to join them.

Frey maneuvered Alexios onto his knees, he wanted to take the larger man in what had quickly become his own favorite position.

“Show me what you’ve learned from us, Frey.” Hector rumbled as he watched the lithe form hover over his lover.

Alexios turned his head and pulled Frey down into a kiss as they both went to their knees, then Alexios stretched out his arms and lowered his chest to the silken sheets, raising his hips up into
Frey’s hot length as he went.

Frey pulled himself back and slicked his not-inconsiderable cock up with his now-favored lubricant that smelt of vanilla and citrus then slipped himself carefully into Alexios.

“You’re sweet sometimes.” Alexios told him slightly breathlessly. “Hector just shoved himself in like I was nothing more than a hole to fuck while you take care when you don’t need to. I’m not going to be hurt Frey.”

“Hey.” Hector grumbled, lowering his brows. “You like it when I fucked you raw.”


Frey smiled and regained Alexios’s focus on himself with a biting kiss. “I’m not afraid.” He stated thrusting slowly. “I just want to remember this. And I want you to remember it too.”

“Frey, I’d remember this if you took me like a jackhammer. I think you’ll find you’re a hard one to forget.”

Alexios lowered his head back down into the cradle of his arms. Frey bit his lower lip and started a pattern of varying longer and deeper thrusts, watching as Alexios’s eyes closed.

“You’re right on my prostate.” He moaned, pushing his arse back up into Frey’s stroking cock.

Frey gained confidence and moved faster within Alexios, thrusting and gaining a firm rhythm, but a smack to his arse had him pushing in much harder than he had intended and Alexios let out a small yelp of shock mixed with a groan of pleasure.

Hector pushed into him and Frey groaned at the stretch, his body having closed up somewhat since their last round, even as Alexios clenched tightly around him as Frey was pushed further into his body.

“Hector!” Frey cried out, even as Alexios – in Hector’s words being a bossy bottom – fucked back onto Frey’s cock, sending Frey himself crashing back against Hector.

Hector let Alexios do most of the work for them. Frey by fighting against Alexios and trying to set his own rhythm ended up making everything hotter as Alexios tried to fuck himself on Frey, to his own pace, but Hector behind them was speeding and when Alexios bucked his hips up hard, Frey was pulling back out and it drove Alexios wild.

Alexios lifted and turned his head, biting lightly at the lean bicep bulging beside his head as Frey gave into Hector’s thrusts and lowered himself down further onto Alexios’s golden body.

Frey took that to mean he was doing something right and moved his other hand from Alexios’s hip to stroke him firmly, palming his balls and rolling them with deft fingers. Alexios’s hips bucked harshly with a growl slipping from Alexios’s throat as Hector picked up the pace behind Frey slamming the younger man’s cock into his lover’s prostate and making Alexios moan in the back of his throat.

Frey’s orgasm hit him first and Hector only seconds after, Alexios went when Frey tugged on his balls a couple more times and squeezed them gently in his palm.

“Best first-time, ever.” Frey announced to chuckled from his bedmates before cleaning them all off with a spell and burrowing down into the fluffy furs of the bed.
It was the last day of their enforced confinement with one another and Frey was laying in his grand silk-covered bed with Aniki at his side. They hadn’t spent much time intimate with each other, given Frey’s leanings, but she had taught him a thing or two about how to lay with a woman. But there was something picking, picking, picking at his mind and he couldn’t enjoy the warm afterglow of knowing he’d pleased his partner – no matter their gender.

“What is it, Frey?” Aniki looked up from where she was resting at his side, sensing with her well-developed skills that her bed partner wasn’t at rest. Normally she would almost take that as an affront to her skills but she knew that her charge wasn’t really one to enjoy the fairer sex. Though he was certainly capable of pleasing them.

“It’s…odd.” He finally decided, choosing each word with great care as he tried to give voice to the thoughts that have been plaguing him since before his tutors had even arrived; perhaps since he’d gifted his first kiss to Draco.

“Yes?” Aniki’s voice was as gentle and undemanding as ever. She’d quickly become more of a confidant and mentor than either of her male counterparts. Not that Hector and Alexios weren’t capable of taking on such a role, it was more that their interactions had almost all been based in carnality whereas her own with Frey were predicated on a teaching basis than a sexual one.

Though from what Alexios and Hector had told her during their conferences when their charge was working on his various other studies, he’d certainly taken to that purpose of his training with the same ease as he’d shown in her own of seduction and grace.

Frey turned to face her, wanting to watch her expressions carefully. One thing she’s helped refine in him was his ability to get a sense of what someone was thinking by reading the silent tells they give off. Draco fussed when he did it to him, Occlumency was no use after all when one wasn’t actually invading your mind.

“The reasoning behind this,” Frey waved his hand in an abstract motion. “Tradition, is to shore up weaknesses in an Heir that being untutored in carnal pursuits can cause.” And no King or Lord wanted their son to be considered less of a man for not having conquests under their belt.

“My Lord Thanatos explained as such.” Aniki nodded. “Some men of my original culture were known to send their sons to a certain geisha house for much the same reason. Even today I’ve heard tell of fathers paying a woman to,” she wrinkled her nose over the next phrase. “Break-in their sons. It is not much of a thing.”

And much more enjoyable than she’d expected it to be. Her charge had been a most apt and eager student. Not what she thought he’d be at all.

“Well…”

“Yes?”

“Why is it so different?” Frey frowned in consternation. “I expected it would be – the only others I’d been with weren’t that experienced either. But it’s more than that.”

“Try and describe it for me.” Aniki sat up, thinking. She had an inkling where this might be going – and honestly she hopes she’s right. If so then she can leave and return to her duties knowing that a message she’d been trying to covertly convey had been a success.

She truly hoped it had been.
Young Frey might find himself in a world of heartache otherwise.

In her opinion even if he’d taken nothing else away from these weeks but that it was time well-spent.

“With you,” he restrained a blush. “It’s – sex – it’s…nice. It feels good. It’s…” He was visibly searching for the right word.

“Pleasurable.” Aniki supplied after several long moments.

Frey gave her a quicksilver smile and a nod.

“Pleasurable. Warm and almost *comforting*. And with Silena it was more so. But with Hector and Alexios it’s…” He blew out a breath and rolled his eyes. “Like comparing a light bulb to the surface of the sun. And again with Luke, for all that I was a virgin and he’s hardly the experience of my tutors, it was even more intense.”

“Is there a question somewhere in there…?” Aniki asked indulgently, hiding a grin of success. He’d figured it out. At his relatively young years, her charge had discovered something that often takes years of exploration to conclude – some never do at all.

“Well, why?” His green eyes were clouded with puzzlement. “I can get why it’s different between when I’m with a guy or a girl. Not too hard to figure out that as much as I like female company it’s as different as being *content* versus truly *happy*. As far as my body goes, one just does it for me better than the other. But you versus Silena or Hector versus Luke…that one has me stumped.”

“Emotional connection.” She smiled. “That’s what’s throwing you off. You have a tentative one with me, much stronger bonds to your young friends, and almost none whatsoever to my male counterparts. Think of it this way: being intimate is the day to being *sexual’s* night. And it’ll affect your overall satisfaction from any one encounter.”

“So…” Frey leaned up against the headboard, sheets crinkled and pooling around his bare hips. “It’s like having a one-night-stand with a friend versus someone you picked up in a bar versus making love to your lover. Hector and Alexios get me hot and get me off,” he blushed at her knowing glance. “But we don’t exactly have in-depth discussions about anything…” Or any kind of discussion at all… “And while Silena is a great friend and companion and I had fun with her and Luke, I probably wouldn’t have been nearly as satisfied afterwards if it had been *just* her and not Luke too.”

Aniki nodded. “That’s a fair assessment I would say. From what I’ve gathered you’re only attracted to individual females – myself and your friend Silena being two among a very few you’ve noticed in that manner – and are mostly homosexual. But when it comes to *romanticism* and intimacy, you’re much more geared towards being equally drawn to both sexes.”

“Mind over matter?” Frey cracked a grin. “I can have sex with a woman if I really want to as part of a romantic relationship but it will never be as, well, *hot* as sex with a male – even a male I’ve no kind of connection to at all.”

“Mmm.” She nodded. “You’d make any female an excellent lover, Frey.” She smiled gently. “I’ve made sure of *that*. And a wonderful companion and considerate suitor. But in the long run you’d have a more fulfilling relationship with a male.”

Frey grinned at that. He knew that Aniki was only trying to keep him from wasting his time being content when he could be happy – he’s picked that up well enough during their lessons. But there was something about him she didn’t know. Aniki – and his other tutors – had no idea that he would
be immortal and ageless most likely within a decade from what Lord Thanatos could tell from his power levels. Thankfully while within the time field he hasn’t had any spikes – that would’ve been hard to explain. Half-bloods didn’t do that, not like he does anyway.

So to him spending a decade or two – when he’s older anyway – paying court to a female that catches his eye wouldn’t be wasting time at all.

The beauties of immortality.

…
Chapter 13 - Painted Black

Lokison

Author’s Note: Well here we are chapter thirteen. And as 13 is my favorite number I've worked hard on making third year pass as painlessly as possible.

This chapter starts the day after Frey’s thirteenth birthday and the end of his “training”. I hoped you enjoyed his tutors, they might pop up again but they might not. This chapter does not contain any censored material.

Chapter Thirteen: Painted Black

“Frey!” Silena hurried over to her friend’s side, searching his face with her crystal blue eyes. Luke had been right. His “training” as Frey called it had aged him. He carried himself with a confidence reinforcing his natural grace. But now there was a…sensuality that called out to her blood. The blood of a Love goddess. “How are you?”

Frey smiled down and wrapped her up in his arms, lifting her up off the ground in a strong hug. Setting her back down and giving her a smacking kiss on the cheek, Frey watched as Luke came over to their position beside the low-burning bonfire. Exchanging nods with his best friend, the godling looked down at an impatiently waiting Silena and answered her.

“I’m…good.” There really wasn’t much else to say.

“And your guests?” Luke teased arching a brow. Silena rolled her eyes and smacked him on the arm for the remark. Luke had been insatiably curious over who the mysterious “tutors” were that Frey’s Patron had selected for him were.

“Gone.” Frey gave a genial smile and wave as his name was called out by Annabeth and some others at the arena. “I’m wanted, guys. Talk later.”

Luke and Silena watched him walk away silently waiting for him to get out of range before turning and huddling together, whispering furiously.

“Do you think he’s okay?” Silena worried her bottom lip with her teeth, blue eyes concerned.

“Hey.” Luke lifted one callused hand and gently removed her lip from between pearly white teeth. “Don’t hurt yourself.” He lifted his head and studied Frey’s back for a long moment before turning back towards his companion. “You know,” he mused. “I really think he is. Okay that is. Good even. Whatever he did,” or was done to him. “During this training, I don’t think it harmed him in any way. I think it helped him, as it was meant to.”

Silena was unsurprised by the other teen’s assessment. Luke had always been more supportive of the whole situation than she was. Likely because of her mother’s blood. It rankled her as a daughter of Aphrodite that someone had their choice of partners taken away from them – even for a little while and for an ostensibly good purpose.

Luke watched her with knowing eyes.

“Leave it be, ‘Lena.” He cautioned her. “You know how he is about his heritage. And since he says it went fine and he’s “good” he won’t take kindly to any kind of post-training-intervention or attempts at a therapy session.”
That was…true. She sighed to herself. Many half-bloods tended to be prickly over their heritage, especially those that were unclaimed or from a lesser god or goddess who didn’t have their own cabin at Camp.

Frey was a different matter, hanging in a sort of limbo as far as his peers here were concerned. He had a Patron – and a Styx-damned scary one at that. But no divine parent or grandparent to explain his blood. He’d been raised at Camp – by a Harvestmaiden of all things – since he was a toddler. But now he went away to some secret boarding school only a handful of people at Camp actually knew of.

To the general population of Camp Half-Blood, Frey Haraldr – no known last name – was a question wrapped in a mystery and boxed in an enigma.

He was strong – stronger than any member of Hephaestus or Ares cabins.

Intelligent to shame the wisest Athena.

Mischievous to mock the Hermes and as beautiful as any of her own siblings.

He was a Camp staple, training many of the newer half-bloods even those older than himself.

Silena sighed as Luke gave her a kiss on the cheek and walked away to join the teen in question in sword practice with the Athena and Ares campers.

More than anyone, Silena worried for her friend.

She still remembered some of the things the more insightful of the Apollo campers used to say when he would come around – before Chiron and Thanatos had a talk with them anyway.

Frey was fate-touched.

She only hoped he could survive it.

And if she – and Luke – could give him some joy in the meantime, so be it.

…

It was a solemn day, two days later on August Third when Heidi stood watching as her charge packed his trunk and prepared to return to England to spend the rest of his summer with his godfathers and friends. She knew he was planning to do some more searching and researching for the quest her Lord had given him and it worried her. Voldemort might only be a spectre now but he was a vicious wizard when he was alive and she fretted over what traps he might have laid down over whatever it was her Lord had Frey looking for.

This was the last few moments her little lordling would be her charge.

He was a man as far as his people and her Lord were concerned.

He’d passed through the pain and hurt of his Rites and was marked as grown.

Her little lordling didn’t need her anymore.

Frey looked over with a bright smile – one that had always been reserved for her alone – and saw her discreetly knuckling away a tear.

Setting the last of his clothes away neatly in their compartment he set the locks and rose gracefully to
his feet, dusting his hands off on his linen trousers as he stood.

New York was miserable and locked in a heat wave as August had rolled in and even the wards surrounding Camp weren’t helping much beyond protecting the strawberry fields.

He moved to her side and cupped her face in his long-fingered hands, smoothing her now free-flowing silent tears away with his thumbs. For the first time in his memory, he was looking down at a woman and warrior who had always seemed bigger than life to him.

Frey gave her his special smile, not telling her not to cry or other platitudes, and wrapped her up in loving arms burgeoning with young muscles.

Laying his cheek on top of her golden head, he sang lightly in his smooth tenor that was in the midst of lowering – though wasn’t cracking at the moment.

It was the lullaby – the same his mother had sang to him – that Thanatos had told Heidi of and that she’d used every night for years until he stopped having nightmares.

“La la lu, La la lu
Oh, my little star sweeper
I'll sweep the stardust for you

La la lu, La la lu
Little soft fluffy sleeper
Here comes a pink cloud for you

La la lu, La la lu
Little wandering angel
Fold up your wings close your eyes

La la lu, La la lu
And may love be your keeper
La la lu, La la lu, La la lu”

Heidi sniffled and stared up at him, resting her chin on his chest, wiping away her tears on her palm.

“You’ll always be my little lordling.” She gasped with her tear-roughened voice. “Taking care of you has been my honor – and my blessing.”

“I love you too, Heidi.” Frey kissed her hair as she tucked her face back into his tunic. “I love you, too.”

…

In an unconscious echo of the previous summer, Frey stepped out of the shadows of Heathrow Airport in London and made his way over to the magical departures and waiting area where he spied a pair of figures that stood out from the crowd: one sitting quietly with his paper and the other pacing anxiously and occasionally shooting comments towards his companion who would answer calmly and take another sip of his tea.

The godling broke into a wide grin as Sirius gave a barking laugh and bounded over with his dauntless enthusiasm when he caught sight of his audience.

“Pup!” Sirius crowed and swept him up into a whirling hug – or tried to anyway. The newly-minted Lord Black might have several inches on his godson but he didn’t have his mass – his body
still recovering from his ten year stint in Azkaban. He settled for a rib-cracking bear hug and
tousling the impeccably pulled-back ebony hair. “I thought you’d never get here.”

“It’s true.” Remus confirmed with a light chuckle as he followed after his mate and gave his cub a
much more restrained but no-less heartfelt embrace of his own. “He’s been worrying himself sick all
summer over getting the apartment in order.”

Sirius grimaced. Dumbledore had tried to convince them to allow him to place their penthouse loft
under the Fidelis since it was in a magical apartment building in a magical sector of the wealthy
Kensington area of London. They’d refused citing his less-than-stellar record with that particular
charm and also held off suggestions of living – at least temporarily – in Sirius’s mother’s townhouse
which she’d inherited after marrying his father and joining the two main branches of the Most
Ancient and Noble House of Black together.

His father Orion was the veritable stereotype of a henpecked husband, though when it came to the
line of succession he put his foot down and apparently refused to completely disavow his oldest son
and Heir.

If he had better feelings for the House of Black at all, Remus’s mate might have considered
relocating to Black Manor in Wiltshire, however due to the proximity to his cousin Narcissa and her
husband that was out of the question as well.

Though his errant mate had agreed to stay congenial with dealing with the Malfoys due to the littlest
Malfoy’s strong friendship with their cub.

Even if it had taken some…persuasion on Remus’s part to effect that particular change.

Sirius was better from the decade of damage Azkaban had done but he still wasn’t mature – as most
would use the word – by any means.

“We’d better go.” Remus mentioned, his enhanced senses picking up the myriad of glances and
whispers they were getting now that they were joined by the Boy-Who-Lived. Nothing like being
with a pair of famous and infamous wizards to draw attention, the werewolf sighed mentally.

Remus held out the port-key, Harry having reassured them he was comfortable with their use in one
of their letters they’d exchanged with plans for the visit. This one was rather innocuous – for once –
muggle ballpoint pen. The three of them all held on and took a breath as Remus gave the password,
feeling the fish-hook set behind their navels and whisk them away from the hustle and bustle of the
magical departures area of the airport.

Each of them easily found their footing on the other side as they set down on gleaming marble.

Sirius had made the portkey himself, allowing it to arrive inside the apartment wards.

Frey’s first sight of his new temporary lodgings was of a painted black door set in a glistening silver
arch.

“Welcome to the Den.” Sirius said with a jaunty grin as he opened the black door wide with a tap of
his wand. “We hope you’ll enjoy it here, pup.”

“I’m sure I will.” Frey gave them each a wide smile, allowing them to tow him inside and show off
their home.

It was a grand place, though clearly furnished by a pair of men that couldn’t be arse to care too
much. All of the furnishings were comfortable but in the same black leather with red rugs tossed
hither and yon. There was the occasional framed photos – both wizarding and mundane – on the walls with a loud Gryffindor banner hanging in a place of pride in the living room.

Remus made sure to warn him away from the warded, locked, and silenced room in the far corner of the loft – it was Moony’s territory and he didn’t want to risk any accidents.

Frey was tempted – highly tempted – to let them in on the secret of his animagus form still being accessible from when he was a child despite the blocks that had once controlled that ability of his but decided in the end against it.

He just didn’t know them yet, for all that they were wound so deeply into his history – both personal and familial.

His room had a desk, bookshelf, and a queen-sized bed with space for his trunk at the end. It’d been done in creams and light golds with only a Gyrffindor comforter which he appreciated. With his being sorted into their own school house he was afraid they were going to try and make his room a copy of the dorms with its screaming red-and-gold. Not the best colors for a restful room. Remus had waved it off, saying it hadn’t been hard to convince Sirius to keep the red-and-gold down to a dull roar after spending so much time around grey.

Sirius could do with some restful rooms of his own.

The kitchen had a neglected air – they were clearly wizards who survived on take-away and tea-and-toast.

Thankfully part of his own education growing up was cooking lessons with Heidi so that he could always throw something together. She’d been very insistent that no charge of hers was going to starve.

“Who cleans this place?” He asked after they’d sat down to a platter of take-away scones and Remus’s excellent tea. “A service?” Frey just could see Siri running a vacuum or gods-forbid dusting.

“Mmm.” Remus shook his head in a negative.

“House elf.” Sirius elaborated. “Not my family one, the vile creature, but a bonded one that takes care of the cleaning in the two penthouses. There’s three or four altogether that take care of the building.”

Frey just nodded thoughtfully and went back to his blueberry scone. Remus had almost snatched all of the chocolate ones off of the plate while Sirius favored a cheddar-and-rosemary one. It was one thing he missed when he was at Camp. The harpies simply didn’t have the same flair for tea and scones as he’d become accustomed to when he was away at school or visiting friends from there.

“Third year in less than a month.” Remus smiled proudly but somewhat sadly at his cub. He was such a bright, growing boy. Prongs and Lilyflower would be so chuffed over him. “How were your results?”

Frey’s end-of-year marks had come via mundane mail on the first of the month after he’d left his confinement with Aniki and his other trainers – though his godfathers didn’t know about the last. Thank the gods the scent of his recent activities didn’t stand up against weapons training, running a fire-gauntlet the Hephaestus campers had created, and several long soaks. Eventually he’d have to come clean about his de-virginized state…but hopefully they wouldn’t try and give him “the Talk” any time soon if ever.
“Top of my year.” He said without boasting, stating it matter-of-factly. “Same as last year.”

Sirius and Remus beamed at him proudly.

“You definitely got that from Lilyflower.” Sirius barked a laugh after he thought for a long moment. “The only subject Prongs got top marks in was Transfiguration.”

“Really?” Frey cocked his head. “What about the rest of your class? I know Professor Snape was tops in Potions.”

His godfathers almost choked at the polite – even warm – way he mentioned their former nemesis but didn’t say a word. They’d figured the relationship was at least cordial from the tones of Harry’s letters but it was a different thing to hear it for themselves. Remus was actually rather proud of Severus for not taking out his animosity on Harry. Merlin knows the wizard could hold a grudge to the grave-and-back.

“Remy was tops in History and Herbology.” Sirius finally answered. “Lilyflower in Charms and Runes. I took tops in Astronomy and tied with Sni-Snape,” he stuttered over the name. “For Defense. The other couple classes went to a Ravenclaw bloke I can’t remember the name of.”

“Hutchings.” Remus supplied after thinking a moment. “Alek Hutchings.”

“Yeah.” Sirius snapped his fingers as the name hit home. “Him.”

“What electives did you decide on, cub?”

“Arithmancy and Runes.” Frey smiled. He wasn’t about to waste his time with Divination or Muggle Studies – if he wanted to pad his OWLs and NEWTs later he could always self-study for the test. Frigga knew that his Far had him working on magical theory beyond Hogwarts levels, studying for an exam on information he mostly knew already wouldn’t be hard. “I dithered over Care but decided against it. I can always do an independent-study course later if I really want to take the OWL for it.”

“Strong classes.” Remus agreed. “What do you think about…”

And from there followed a very pleasant evening of chatter sprinkled with jokes and mixed with Indian take-away.

…

Frey had been staying with his newly-coined “dogfathers” for a week, enjoying games of wizard’s chess with Remus, exploding snap or gobstones with both of them, and tag with Siri – as Padfoot of course. There were many talks about what Frey’s childhood was like, what his parents (will his mother and James anyway) were like both at Hogwarts and beyond, and random wizarding and magical topics that Frey had never had an audience for before.

His Far was great with magical theory - he is an Avatar of Magic after all – but how Loki uses magic and how a wizard or Seidr uses magic were very, very different. And his other guardians had all done a great job with raising him to be a well-rounded warrior. But none of them were Lords of an Ancient and Noble House like Sirius or raised by a Light-oriented pureblood family like the Lupins. There were things about wizarding society that Frey just wasn’t raised knowing that his friends took for granted.

Draco and then his father Lucius had helped fill the gaps but they were hindered in that they were decidedly Dark. Dark magical families followed different traditions and ritual than Light magical
families. And while the Potters were more Grey than Light, it was still information he needed to know to keep playing “Harry James Potter, Savior of the Wizarding World” convincingly. He was of an age to have been dedicated to a god if his guardians had followed Wizarding tradition. There were faux pas he wasn’t going to get away with as a thirteen year old third year that he did as an eleven year old first year.

He also learned that in some cases Wizarding children who followed the Olde Ways could choose a secondary Patron in addition to the one they were sworn to in infancy.

A ritual both of his dogfathers and his adoptive father James had gone through.

Frey had always wondered once he discovered Olde families gave over their children to their Patron so young how Loki had come to be the Patron of the Marauders. The answer was in the ritual. James as a Potter and Peverell was given over to Thanatos, Sirius as a Black to Hades, and Remus as a Lupin to the Roman goddess of War Bellona. Apparently the Pettigrews were a “new” pureblood wizarding family and didn’t hold with such “heathen” notions.

Which explained a lot.

Snape was the one who had explained the tradition to his mother Lily, his own mother a pureblood from the Prince line who were in service to – shock of shocks – Thanatos as well.

His mother had liked the Norse deities much more than the Greek or Roman – to Loki’s whole-hearted approval – and was sworn to Frey’s now-adoptive-grandmother Frigg or Frigga.

However this morning Sirius was in a truly foul mood in anticipation of an onerous errand – today was the day a cursebreaker Siri had hired through Gringotts was going to be doing a sweep through the Black townhouse on Grimmauld Place. The wizard in question – who it turns out was the idiot Ron’s eldest brother – had hopped his family’s portkey back to Britain after his superiors had delivered the request while his family were visiting him in the curse-laden tombs of Egypt. William – or Bill as he preferred – had already completed his sweep of Black Manor, it being a family home it only had a minor curse or two to deal with.

Now they had to meet him at the gloomy Grimmauld Place to let the wizard into the wards.

Sirius was in a right-snit, he’d hoped he wouldn’t have to go there again until after his godson’s visit.

Which is what brought them on a lovely August day in London to the darkened doorway of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black – or so Sirius said his mother had always called the townhouse. His dogfather preferred to dub it a manky old pit and be done with it.

And once more, the door was painted black, though no door handle seemed to be attached to the smooth surface, only disturbed by a snake’s head knocker.

Bill – a tall and lankily-muscled redhead worth more than a second look from Frey’s appreciative gaze – apparated in to just outside the ward line of the property and assessed them with a canny look in his delft blue eyes.

“Right then.” Sirius heaved a sigh and visibly girded himself before walking up the steps and planting his feet on the stoop. With a stab of his wand at the palm of his hand he drew blood without so much as a wince and put the now reddened tip against the center of the ebony door. “I am Sirius Orion Black the Third, son of Orion and Walburga, the Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black. You will give me entry.”
With an audible *snap* the offensive wards retreated, leaving only the still rather impressive defensive wards in place as the door appeared to *melt* away, revealing a long dark hall.

Wands out, Frey, Remus, and Bill followed Sirius into the depths of the House of Black.

…

While the adults traversed the Black townhouse, Sirius pointing out problems that he definitely wanted sorted and showing Bill the hidden cupboard that held the heartstone of the wards, Frey kept himself occupied on the first floor.

He’d already made it very, very clear that his dogfather wasn’t allowed to throw out any books or artifacts, no matter how hacked-off at his dead mum he was. They may be nastily cursed in many cases but they were still parts of history. And besides dealing with curses was what Bill was for.

They had a bit of a contretemps with the house elf, Kreacher, before Sirius gave the foul thing a glove and ordered it forever away from those of Black blood.

Walburga had heard the commotion and started shrieking from her portrait, berating her only living son.

Frey walked over to the now-closed curtains that Siri and Remy had both struggled to close, only succeeding in the end with help from Bill and himself, cocking his head as he looked beyond the surface of the thing with his gift from Thanatos.

Hmm.

That was interesting.

He’d never given Wizarding portraits too much attention, brushing them off as a sort of oddity of magical culture and leaving it at that. But if his sight was right – and it tended to be – then *this* portrait at least was some kind of strange mixture of a ghost’s soul anchor and Moldy-Voldy’s soul leeches. Odd, odd, odd.

Though it made his next action much simpler.

Pushing tendrils of his Death magic out from his aura he enveloped the painting of the late Lady Black with his power and *squeezed*.

The curtains flew open as the painted Black choked out a gasp, eyes wild and whirling in her frame.

“What…” She gasped. “What are you doing you foul little cretin?”

“Ending you.” Frey said nonchalantly as if he was talking about making tea. “Now do me a favor and *shut up*,”

Mouth closing with a click at his command, the painted eyes of Walburga Black seemed to bulge out from the frame as she made muffled sounds of protest.

To no avail.

With a final flex of his will he cut the ties of the portrait to the living world, making the scene inanimate and causing the frame to break loose from the wall and crash to the ground.

“What happened?” Sirius demanded as he came crashing around the corner at a dead run.
Frey smirked at the adult wizards as they all switched from staring at the remains of the unlamented portrait to watching him in worry – and no small bit of awe at his answer.

“I guess she really didn’t like what I had to say.”

…

The portrait no longer an issue and Kreacher dismissed, the adults went back to their tedious trip through the house as they discussed the enormity of the job ahead of Bill.

Now bored after his dealing with Walburga, Frey began inspecting the various rooms on the main floor, making certain not to touch anything lest he die an ignoble death.

Or at least, he did.

Up until he came across a display case in the dining room and lost his breath with a gasp as his powers went wild.

There, laying innocently enough beside an ominous looking orb and a seemingly innocuous music box, was a mithril locket with a snake curved in the shape of an ‘S’ picked out in emeralds and diamonds. More importantly it all but screamed of dark, black, soul magics. A horcrux. One of Riddle’s Horcruxes was just sitting in his dogfather’s dining room.

Rocking back on his heels he shook his head, for the first time giving Snape’s insistence that Potters have liquid luck flowing through their veins credence. This was the second summer in a row that he’d just happened upon one of Voldemort’s soul leeches. Somehow it made him extremely wary.

This one felt… nastier, if such a thing was possible.

The diary was made when Riddle was still a teenager – a right foul little cockroach but still a teen. This one was older, quite a bit older if the vile taint he could almost taste coating his mouth from just being near it was any indicator. Ick. Eau du Moldy-Voldy was going to be hell to get out of his system.

Though if he blocked it off from his magical senses, the locket itself was rather nice. It screamed of something his Far would appreciate. Loki did like snakes and was friends with Salazar after all.

Decided, Frey reached through the ether and pulled forcing a raw, untreated silk cloth to pop into existence from its hidden spot inside his trunk, along with the supplies he would need to take care of it. There was no way he was going to risk either leaving and having it disappear or trying to take it with him. He doesn’t want the thing’s taint near him any longer than absolutely required.

Eyeing the room he spotted a wide, squat stone bowl that would serve admirably as a brazier and tossed in the yew, cypress, nightshade, and sage that he’d been given to use to cleanse a Horcrux and offer the soul leech up to Thanatos. Snapping his fingers he set them alight, glowing low, as he gingerly wrapped the locket with the raw silk, taking great care not to touch the damned thing. Speaking in a bare whisper in Ancient Greek he offered up the soul leech to the Harvest Lord, wincing when it gave off a high-pitched shriek. Remy and Siri would be storming in any second.

Reaching out he tossed in Loki’s favored herbs before giving the locket itself to his Far.

And just in time.

The mystic fire had barely been snuffed and the bowl shown empty when he heard feet pounding down the stairs.
Popping quickly from one end of the house to the other through the shadows, Frey arranged himself nonchalantly sitting on the marble floor with his back against the front door, a book he’d brought in with him open on his lap.

“What?” He asked guilelessly.

…

“It is a handsome piece.” Loki commented as he toyed with the locket now hanging around his neck that night as he visited his son’s dreams. “Thank you, little prince.”

“My pleasure, Far.” Frey smiled over at Loki’s lean form as they walked together along the shores of the Black Lake. This time his Far had popped in on him while he was having a rather bland dream of skipping stones with Neville and Draco with him, the two apparitions evaporating as the god took the scene over.

“Two down.” Loki noted, stroking one thumb down the emeralds on the front of the necklace. “How many more?”

“Three,” he said absently with a frown marring his handsome face. “But there’s something…” He trailed off not being able to put it into words. “I don’t know. Just something tells me it’s not going to be as easy as it has been or as simple as finding three more trinkets.”

“You think the shade has noticed?” Loki asked in concern.

Frey waved that off. Thanatos had assured him that Voldemort’s soul was so fractured that he’d never know unless he physically checked on each object that he’d lost some. He relayed as much to his father.

“Then what?” Loki arched a brow. He was a believer in instincts, especially those that have been finely honed in both battle and studies. Frey’s were exceptional, a trait he’d gained from Lily.

“Something…else.” Frey groaned, unable to verbalize it. “There’s something coming…I just don’t know when or what. Destroying Voldemort might not be the only reason I’m fate-touched.”

Loki growled at that reminder. If it wasn’t for Thanatos’s strange attachment to the Peverell line his son would even know be being beaten and down-trod in the pursuit of the Greater Good because of one of Fate’s favored. Knowing one of those bints had played around with his son’s life string before Thanatos blocked them was enough to make him want to unleash a whole new version of damnation on the bitches.

“Meditate on it when you do your Occlumency exercises.” Loki gave him what advise he could. “Perhaps as your powers grow you’ll gain a better understanding of what is making your senses come on-point.”

Frey simply nodded and stared out into the night, bidding his Far adieu when the god reached the end of the time he felt it wise to stay.

Something was coming.

All he could do was train, and watch, and lay in wait for whatever it might be.

…

In secret one day towards the end of summer as he was visiting Malfoy Manor and Draco, Frey
whispered in Dray’s ear and snuck off to the Malfoy’s sacred grove to gather a piece of wood from their ash tree. Ash was considered the living representation of the World Tree, and considering the new art he had to keep glamored at all times on his body, Frey thought it very fitting to use it to fashion this year’s wand.

He shaped it with care, sanding it smooth and binding the core – basilisk heartstring from his conquest – with the reverence to do such a mighty foe. When it was finished and ready, it was a richly gleaming ten-and-a-half inches, pleasantly firm, and more powerful by far than its two predecessors. He was growing, settling into who he might be.

With a flick of his will he had an overpowered notice-me-not charm on the wand, the same as he’d done the year before to keep both friend, foe, and strangers from realizing his wand had changed once more.

Frey gave a fierce grin.

He was ready for Hogwarts.

And…

To hunt some monstrous spiders.

…

Draco snuggled up to his tall form on the train on September First.

Siri and Remy had sprung a surprise on him when he’d been getting ready that morning. Remus had accepted the job as DADA professor for that year with a provision that he move to History of Magic teacher the year following. Hopefully by that time Sirius will have recovered enough to take over DADA.

So they were meeting him at the castle and were going to show him to their quarters after the feast just in case he ever wanted to visit. Frey was pleased, he’d really enjoyed getting to know his dogfathers over the last few weeks and was glad he wouldn’t have to rely on letters alone for the next nine months.

Plus both Chiron and Sirius had signed his Hogsmeade slip so there was no way he wasn’t going to be able to go.

No matter what fuss Dumbledore tries to raise over his guardianship this year.

Frey wound one arm around Draco’s smaller frame and sighed, looking down at his best-friend with an arched brow.

“You know you’re going to give people the wrong idea about us.” He chided gently, words levied by the soft squeeze he gave slim shoulders.

“Don’t care.” Draco muttered peeking up at him out of one silver eye, the other firmly shut. “Tired. Napping. And you make a grand pillow when you shut it.”

Frey simply chuckled and let the silver-haired blonde rest his head back on his chest. One of their friends laughed at him from their spot on the opposite bench.

“You had to know that was what he was going to say.” Blaise got out between guffaws.
Theo only nodded, not able to speak due to his own laughter.

“I know.” Frey said softly so as not to wake his cling-on. “But I had to try anyway.”

“I thought you two came to an agreement about all of…” Blaise waved his hand between them. “This.”

“They did.” Theo supplied helpfully. “But that’s not really going to stop Draco from treating Harry like his own personal teddy bear. He is a Malfoy after all. They invented the spoiled brat.”

“Shut it.” Draco growled without opening his eyes. “Sleeping you prats.”

See? Theo mouthed, with a grand gesture of his arms.

The two of them devolved into silent giggles as Frey thunked his head back against the compartment wall with a rueful grin.

It was good to be back.

Clingy Draco and all.

…

Third year was passing quickly by in a blur.

With the addition of two new classes – but no real need to hunt anything besides a general dislike of massive spiders and a desire to keep his skills sharp – Frey actually found his time pleasantly full.

Every weekend but Hogsmeade weekends he found himself venturing into the Forbidden Forest and pruning back the acromantula colony – and a good thing he did since it seemed they’d gotten dangerously close to the boundary of the forest. Slaying spiders was good for his reflexes – especially as he found they tended to travel in fucking packs. And offering them up to his Far and Thanatos was good PR for him with the peeping-tom Asgardians. Apparently quite a few were jealous of his Far’s tributes he’d been gaining from it but couldn’t do anything but seethe since it was assumed Frey like James had chosen Loki as his personal Patron in addition to Thanatos as his family Patron.

It made things just a tad bit easier.

Though his Far did suggest gifting something to Frigga eventually to help reinforce that parental connection with his tributes.

And Frey was amassing quite the collection of undyed acromantula silk from his Far keeping half of the silk in tribute and giving the other half back as a token.

Heidi would’ve had a field day with all that silk.

And time rolled on, bringing with it the end-of-year exams and the one mark of supernatural intervention he’d faced all blissful, peaceful, year.

Fucking Seers.

…

*IT WILL HAPPEN TONIGHT.*
THE DARK LORD LIES ALONE AND FRIENDLESS, ABANDONED BY HIS FOLLOWERS. HIS SERVANT HAS BEEN CHAINED THESE TWELVE YEARS. TONIGHT, BEFORE MIDNIGHT... THE SERVANT WILL BREAK FREE AND SET OUT TO REJOIN HIS MASTER. THE DARK LORD WILL RISE AGAIN WITH HIS SERVANT’S AID, GREATER AND MORE TERRIBLE THAN EVER HE WAS. TONIGHT... BEFORE MIDNIGHT... THE SERVANT... WILL SET OUT... TO REJOIN... HIS MASTER...

Frey stared down at the transcript Neville had written for him of his exam final – specifically the fit she went into as his quiet friend had risen to leave.

Though why Neville had insisted on taking ruddy Divination was beyond him.

“What do you think, Harry?” Nev asked after several long moments. It was just the two of them and Draco hanging out at their usual summer spot next to the willow tree.

“Tralawney’s a fake.” Draco brushed it off with a roll of his silver eyes. “Everyone knows that.”

“No,” Frey mused almost to himself as he studied the writing. “She’s not.”

Both of his friends turned to face him so fast they almost got whiplash.

“What do you mean, Tralawney’s not a fraud?” Draco said in his most snotty voice. “She’s a batty old witch who gets hopped up on sherry and incense night after night. Mother says she’s a disgrace to all true Seers.”

“A disgrace, perhaps.” That one Frey could definitely see. “But she’s no fake even if she’s constantly pulling visions and prophecies out of her ass. She’s made at least one genuine prediction before in her life and this,” he held up the parchment. “Sounds like a second.”

“Well…” Nev trailed off exchanging worried looks with Draco. “Then what do we do?”

Frey just shrugged and rose to his feet, dusting off his backside of grass while he was at it.

“Nothing to do.” He said bluntly. “If it’s real, it’ll come true whether we try and stop it or not. If it’s fake there’s nothing to worry about. But just the same…” He stared over at his silvery-blonde friend. “You’d best give your father a copy of this. If Moldy-Voldy is going to try and rise again, your dad needs to be ready for the backlash he’s going to face.”

Draco set his jaw as he felt the color melt away from his skin. His father… His father had all but abandoned the Dark Lord, especially in light of his friendship with Harry. If Voldemort does rise again he’s going to be at the top of maniac’s assassination list.

“Hey, hey.” Frey enfolded his friend in a warm hug. “It’ll be okay. It’s not like Riddle is going to find a new body tomorrow or anything. We still have time to make sure your family is safe, alright?”

“Right.” Draco felt his hands spasm where they were clinging onto Harry’s robes. “We have time. We’re smart. We can make a plan.”

“That’s right.” Frey’s green eyes were dark as he stared off into the distance over Draco’s soft blonde hair. “I’m never going to let anyone hurt you. Not even a manky Dark Lord long past his expiration date. That’s a promise.”

…
Chapter Fourteen – Cursed Apples

Frey scritched Hedwig the way she liked when she shot him a betrayed glance after he used his gift from Draco several years ago, a Golden Eagle named Ajax, to carry his letters from New York to England. This time it was a batch of letters to his honorary Uncles as well as Draco. Plans were in motion for him to come and spend August in England splitting his time between going to the World Cup matches with the Malfoys and his uncles and touring his properties he hasn’t been to yet with Sev and Remus. Siri wanted to come but wasn’t able to promise good behavior around his other honorary uncle and had agreed with the suggestion that he spend that time working on the Black estate and accounts instead.

They were still a mess after all the time Siri has spent sorting them out.

The Black Estate was one of the largest single estates in the Wizarding World. Sirius had lost much of his power when he was sent to Azkaban including voting abilities on the Lords Council and Wizengamot having to post proxies instead regardless of his eventual clearing of his name. The Black Lord held the title in reserve now until he either had a blood heir or turned over the estate to another of the Black Blood.

His godson would rather he have a child of his own blood, knowing full well that the only person Siri would consider turning the estate over to was himself and he had enough on his plate as far as the Wizarding World was concerned with his own interests without adding the Black issue onto his shoulders.

“Go on, girl.” He lifts his arm walking to the cabin doors and letting her free to fly. “I’ll be gone at least a week. Annabeth and the other Athena kids are really looking forward to taking care of you while I’m away.”

Hedwig shot him a superior look and gave a knowing hoot. Of course they were looking forward to taking care of her. No one preened her feathers quite as well as the Athenas though her boy came in close second. She could go with him but she was a wise enough owl to know that her boy and his friend wouldn’t welcome a nosy familiar tagging along.

Younglings.

Fluttering her wings, Hedwig nipped his ear lightly then with a few powerful thrusts of her snowy
feathers she was off to hunt and then return to her favorite roost in the Athena cabin.

With a flex of will, Frey summoned his enchanted bag that had everything he could possibly think of to bring on the cross-country trip with Luke.

His best friend and sometimes-lover had been given a quest from his father Hermes to sneak into the Garden of the Hesperides and steal one or more of the legendary Golden Apples. It was a common quest for male half-bloods not because it was easy but because of the contrary: the only one to ever succeed was Heracles. Ever since Hermes had been giving the most promising of his children the same task, trying to one-up his snotty younger now-immortal half-brother.

Hermes was rather tolerant of his father’s affairs, he wasn’t one to be hypocritical and as Hermes was only matched in decadence by the gods of love and lust and his other brother Apollo, he didn’t judge his father Zeus by any means for continually siring half-bloods married or not.

It’s when the old bastard rubs it in his mother’s face like with Heracles that he takes issue with the randy idiot.

Hence his ongoing desire to have one of his own half-blood sons match Heracles’s legend, at least in some regards – he didn’t want them to ever turn into self-righteous ponces like Heracles did once he finally attained immortality.

Luke wasn’t exactly rolling in funds and the Camp had a standard pack of a few drachmas, some nectar and ambrosia that it sends with all questers – and California was a long way away from New York when you were talking about a sixteen and a nearly-fourteen-year-old pair. And since it was Luke’s quest Frey couldn’t just shadow-step them across the country. They had to get there the hard way.

Frey wasn’t exactly inconspicuous either with his latest growth spurt putting him at a solid six-feet-tall and muscled. He officially looked of-age with all the time-bending he’d down over the years with Chiron, Thanatos, and his far Loki. In addition, being marked and claimed by his paternal grandfather had activated at least some of his previously recessive Jotun traits. Loki had looked him up and down the day before after sneaking down to speak with him while the other Asgardians were asleep since his painful magical growth spurt had knocked him out and they weren’t expecting him to wake up anytime soon to continue “entertaining” them. His Far was convinced that the Apollo’s half-blooded daughter Regina had been a little conservative in her prediction for his eventual size.

There had been so many predictions made by the Apollo campers and then the Norns when he fit the Asgardian radar that Frey had cajoled Loki into teaching him Divining.

Not to be mistaken with Divination, Divining was often referred to as “throwing bones” or “dicing with fate” as well as many, many other variations on that theme. It worked by infusing a set of Divining tools, be they stones, bones, glazed tiles, carved wooden runes, etc., asking a question, rolling or tossing the Divining tools onto a flat prepared surface, and then interpreting how they fell in various ways. It could be very simple or extremely complicated depending on the practitioner, their power, and honestly, how good they are at reading the “bones.”

Frey happened to be very, very good at it.

Regardless, he might not grow to be a genuine mass of a man-mountain like his adoptive-uncle Thor, but Frey was going to be closer to the blonde thunder god’s own near seven feet rather than Loki’s own six-two. As a part-Jotun he would be leaner and lither than the pure-Asgardian warrior but Loki was sure Frey would be nearly a match for him.
Lucky for Frey because he and Luke were counting on his artificial maturity to convince a car-rental agency to let them rent a convertible for their trip cross-country – Frey contributing for the quest in a monetary fashion since his magical abilities would be considered a “cheat” by the gods.

He could assist in all other ways…but using his powers either godling or magical would be like sending up a massive red-flag of both his wizarding and godling status – a warning he couldn’t afford while still vulnerable to harm.

There was still anywhere from a year to several years before he “froze” into his peak physical condition and gained the ability to ascend.

Frey personally had no intention of ascending anytime soon.

Once he gained his immortality there really wasn’t a point unless he wanted to upset the Asgardian apple-cart.

An upset he didn’t need while he still had Voldemort’s soul pieces to worry about as well as the Dark Lord himself and Dumbledore’s machinations.

The second his Far got an inkling that Asgard was close to discovering his heritage – and parentage – Loki was going to insist he ascend and accept his place in the pantheon as well as his godly powers. Something Frey wanted to put off as long as possible. There was still too much he wanted to do and experience before becoming…whoever he would be as a fully-empowered god.

It scared him sometimes. Thinking about how ascending might change him. It was an unspoken part of being a children of gods that no one ever talked about. Like a dirty little secret.

Half-bloods fought and died all for the possibility of gaining immortality.

Once upon a time Asgard even had a series of “tests” that a mortal could go through in order to have some of the immortal apples Odin guarded.

None of them ever even thought about what that meant.

Gods were not the same as mortal men and women – even half-bloods or Wizarding kind.

Maybe it was his close association with his Far that most half-bloods never got due to the strict non-fraternization laws of Olympus. Maybe it was that Thanatos never pulled punches nor had he ever talked down or pandered to him when he was younger. Whatever the cause, Frey had a view of what awaited him in the future that no half-blood hero ever received.

Mortals weren’t made to live forever.

They simply weren’t.

Their souls were but their minds and hearts and bodies were not.

And making an immortal from a mortal always had consequences to those minds and hearts and bodies.

In some cases they gained a little more physical prowess or a wider perception.

Those were the lucky ones.

Others were not so lucky.
Heracles was an excellent example, his personality turning bitter and spiteful upon finally gaining what he’d spent all his life seeking.

It was a truth that haunted his dreams and nightmares. Frey feared what he might become once he ascends to his godhead. And he was determined to remain separate from his godhead for as long as possible – mortality or immortality aside.

One thing he did have going for him was that he was on Midgard which was governed by the Greeks and Roman deities rather than Midgardr which was the province of his Asgardian kin.

They could peek on him and even act – somewhat – but their powers were curtailed so long as he remained within the domain of the Titan-born.

All these thoughts tumbled to a halt as Frey blinked, finding himself standing beside the bonfire, his feet having guided him while his mind hurled itself around and around.

“Lady Hestia.” He bowed, acknowledging the goddess in her girl-child guise that she often used at Camp Half-Blood. A virgin goddess and once a member of the Olympian Council, Hestia was the eldest daughter and first-born child of the Titan Rhea – and was massively powerful because of it. Few at Camp Half-Blood ever spied her in her mortal trappings tending the fires, fewer still recognizing her for a goddess, let alone one as powerful as a First-Born of a First-Born.

He’d always thought Zeus was kinda an idiot for letting someone so powerful leave the Council.

To some it might be seen as a way to curtail a portion of the goddess’s power.

Frey saw it differently.

By cutting Hestia loose from the Council, Zeus also lost a huge portion of the oversight he had over one of his most powerful siblings – a dangerous situation that Frey would never have allowed in his place.

“Young Frey.” Hestia gave him a warm smile that wrapped around him like one of Heidi’s hugs during his childhood. Being in the presence of Hestia was always like coming home. “You are prepared for you quest?”

“Yes, Lady.” Frey nodded, bowing once more as he backed away, turning for Luke’s cabin. “All is prepared.

“Beware, young Frey.” Hestia’s eyes flashed with her inner fire for a brief moment, her voice echoing in his ears as she melted away. “More danger than you know lies ahead. Guard your heart and his carefully, lest they be tainted.”

“Thank you for the warning, Lady Hestia.” Frey responded, knowing she would hear him despite her lack of physical presence. “I shall take it to heart.”


“Coming!” The godling shouted back, falling quickly into a sprinting trot towards the Hermes Cabin.

He would consider the goddess’s words again when he had more time.
“Frey!” Luke shouted again as the now taller (but still younger, as Luke intended to never let him forget) teen loped over with a smidge less predatory grace than normal. He gave a mental laugh. The other teen hadn’t yet got a total handle on his new height since his latest growth-spurt.

Honestly, he has no idea of what kind of bullshit he feeds the rich-kids at his fancy-shmancy boarding school, let alone the staff for how he’s shown up the last three years looking way too old to actually be his actual age.

Either they were the most oblivious people on the planet or the most naïve…Luke wasn’t sure which he would find more comforting considering that either way…these were the people he and ‘Lena and Chiron and Heidi for the sake of the Styx were all trusting with Frey’s health and well-being nine-months of the year.

It doesn’t say much for the school that they just overlooked Frey’s frankly freakish growth spurts.

And the “accidents” Frey had (Luke and Silena were well aware they were more along the line of standard-issue near-death-hero-in-training-experiences) didn’t exactly negate Luke’s bad opinion of Frey’s school.

But no matter how much he or ‘Lena or anyone bitched…Frey just kept on going back.

For the love of theft and mischief, Luke couldn’t understand what-the-fuck-for-or-why.

It made zero sense.

But then…

That was kinda par-for-the-course with his over-grown friend.

“Finally, man.” Luke slapped the taller boy on the back as he fell in beside him, the duo legging it towards the camp head-of-security Argus and the strawberry-be-decked van that was their ride into Jersey for them to pick up their rental car. “I thought I was going to have to handle this shit without my wing-man you were takin’ so long.”

“Nah.” Frey gave a sparkling grin worthy of his least-favorite Professor ever Gilderoy-famous-smile-Lockhart. “Like you would’ve left without taking along this much awesome.”


“Not at all, Lucy.” Frey shot back. “Just like you won’t mind when I §sweet-talk the apples from Ladon§” He hissed in Parseltongue – the wizarding designation for his partial ability with his Far’s Beast-Tongue.

Frey didn’t quite have the full-range of beast speaking abilities that Loki had – at least not yet – but he definitely had snakes, serpents, dragons, and reptiles of all shapes and sizes on lock. He also could communicate – after a fashion – with Hedwig and his other winged pets…though that might be more due to their intelligence than any extra ability he possessed. No matter how hard he tried he couldn’t get Neville’s toad or Mrs. Norris to speak up…so he wasn’t sure yet if it was only Parseltongue or if he was slowly developing other beast-speaking dialects as he aged.

He shook his head as he and Luke pushed-shoved-kicked each other trying to get the best seat in the van, Luke still shuddering a little from hearing his best-friend hissing like that.

Luke hated it when he did that.
But he knew if he ever complained Frey would just do it even more often around him, as had happened already with some of the Aphrodite campers.

Sometimes the normally easy-going teen could be perverse like that.

Those times were usually when Luke and Silena and anyone with sense ducked and covered until it was over.

Collateral damage, thy name is Frey.

…

The counter-worker gave them a gimlet eye as Frey signed (forged…cough, cough) all the necessary documents for the rental, including signing up for the supplemental insurance since, ya know, he didn’t actually have car insurance as a not-quite-fourteen-year-old. His license and everything at least passed without a second look, Frey having easily conjured them after Luke had done some recon and let him know what he’d need to secure the rental. They’d ended up with a sweet little convertible coupe with an awesome V12 and way more horsepower than was advisable in the hands of a pair of teenaged boys.

Meh.

If monsters couldn’t kill them it wasn’t likely their superior reflexes would have them crashing and burning anytime soon.

They’d have to at least consider things like traffic laws since the Mist wouldn’t keep them from getting pulled over by the highway patrol.

So there was that to comfort Silena whenever she thought about what “her boys” were going to be up to without her supervision while she was on vacation with her father.

Chocolatier conventions in Switzerland were hard for any teenaged girl to say no to…even one that was a demigod…maybe especially one that was a demigod considering it was her father’s fine chocolate making ability that drew the eye of her Love Goddess mother in the first place…

Frey tooled them out of the parking lot and into New Jersey traffic, heading for the Lincoln Tunnel and never more thankful than that very moment for the driving lessons Heidi had subjected him to when he was deemed “old enough” by Thanatos to master the skill. Which was when he was all-of-eleven thanks to the time-freezing Loki had used before he entered Hogwarts.

They’d planned one hell of a stretch for the first day, shooting for a whopping thousand or so miles from the car rental agency to Lake of the Ozarks State Park in central Missouri. It would take them around fifteen or so hours to make the trip in one haul, trading driving and navigation duties back and forth between them…but it would be worth it when they can spend the next day lounging around on a pair of beach chairs next to the water before starting their trip back up. As long as they didn’t stay in one place too long they should be able to avoid most interference of the monster-kind.

And let’s face it…they were when it was all said and done, a pair of hormonal teenaged boys cut loose to wreak havoc on the countryside.

Dawdling here-and-there and taking something other than the most-direct route was rather tame compared to what another pair of boys might get up to…

But then again…
It was Frey and Luke.

They would be lucky if the Garden of the Hesperides was still standing when they were done let alone all the beaches and must-see places between Camp Half-Blood and California…

…

The next morning, Frey woke up to a most…pleasurable sensation.

Throwing back his head in a gasping moan, one hand threw off the bunched up blankets while the other quickly found the back of a golden head.

A golden head that was nestled firmly between Frey’s solidly muscled thighs, wicked lips and tongue working away before pulling up and off of Frey’s glistening iron hard cock with a lewd pop.

“Morning, sunshine.” Luke cracked with a smug grin as he leaned down and took one last long swipe of his tongue up Frey’s impressive arousal. The other had certainly enjoyed a growth spurt in every way since the last time they enjoyed each other before Silena left for her trip.

To be honest, Luke had been a little…apprehensive about approaching Frey without ‘Lena with him. He liked boys and girls equally but something about Frey had always revved his engine. Almost as much as ‘Lena herself…and Luke could admit in the privacy of his own mind that he was stupid in love with that girl. Which happened to be the main reason behind his hesitance in getting dirty with Frey one-on-one. He didn’t want to lose ‘Lena because he couldn’t keep his hands off of Frey’s admittedly luscious ass.

He didn’t want to lose ‘Lena full-stop.

Frey answered Luke with a sub-vocal growl, wrapping strong hands around the smirking blonde’s biceps and flipping him, reversing their positions in an effortless show of his more-than-human strength. Pinning the blonde to the bed, Frey settled himself snugly into the cradle of his sometime-lover’s hips, smiling smugly when bright blue eyes widened in shock. Leaning down, Frey nipped lightly at Luke’s throat as the blonde arched back with a gasp as Frey’s frotting against him sent waves of pleasure spiking up and down his body.

“Do you trust me?” Frey asked, staring down into pleasure-dazed eyes.

“Wha-what?” Luke gasped, blinking his eyes as he tried to think. But then Frey lowered his head once more, lush mouth hovering a bare fraction of an inch from the shell of his ear, his warm moist breath ignoring one of his more sensitive zones. Thinking about anything other than getting off was far too much to be asking of him when Frey was looking down at him like that, then teasing the shell of his ear just right, and keeping up the maddeningly slow drag of cock against cock, weeping tips just barely kissing before being ripped back away with a tease of his hips.

“Do,” a kiss to his ear.

“You,” a teasing lick to his neck.

“Trust,” a quick, stinging bite of pearly teeth to his collar bone.

“Me?”

A flick of his wrists had him free and digging his hands into Frey’s luscious ebony mane, the long locks having been teased free by Luke’s nimble fingers as he watched his friend-lover sleep before getting the bright idea to wake him in the method smiled upon by males everywhere.
Tugging lightly until bright, heated green eyes stared up at him, Luke gave a crooked grin and a dip of his chin, having worked out what Frey was asking…without lowering himself to asking.

Both of them knew when Silena left with her father rather than go on this quest with them that she was giving them – well Luke – her tacit approval to get each other out of their systems. Silena wanted – as any self-respecting daughter of Aphrodite would – to be the sole focus of her lover’s desire. Frey was happy for them, glad that they’d found each other so early – especially since half-bloods don’t usually have very long lifespans. She gave them this time together – to be together – knowing that once they returned Frey would never be returning to the bed of either of his friends.

They were about to begin a journey that he for once wasn’t invited on.

But before it began, there was one more journey that he was permitted to take with Luke. And it was one he would like to fully explore.

Including the one arena that Luke had never before permitted him to explore, though Frey was no virgin at this particular act thanks to his oh-so-thorough “tutors.”

Frey knelt between his legs and lifted them, pushing them up and wide, splaying his ass open so his pink hole lay before him. Frey sent out a quick wave of magic, using a spell to clean his friend, then leaned in and licked it causing Luke to let out a moan. Frey licked, nibbled, and kissed his ass until his hole began to open for his tongue to probe it.

"Oh, my god," Luke moaned over and over. It was an act Luke had never experienced before – and one that he’d certainly never performed for Frey. He sent up a quick prayer of thanks to Frey’s tutors before losing himself completely in the pleasure.

Luke was mewling like a kitten as Frey fucked him with his tongue, his cock laying against his stomach leaking so much that an absent thought wondered if might have ejaculated already before Luke called his attention away from the musky heat under his lips and tongue.

"Put your cock in me, Frey," he whimpered. “I’m ready, please.”

His blue eyes still burned into green as Frey quickly cast a spell protecting them followed by a second which had lube appearing into the spasming pink opening. Frey lifted his legs onto his own strong shoulders as he knelt between them and slowly pushed his cock into Luke’s hot, wet hole. Luke gasped at the new sensation of being so very full grabbing Frey’s taut arms and squeezing hard enough to bruise.

"Too much?" Frey whispered, drawing back until only the head of his rock-hard cock remained inside his lover.

Luke shook his head no, pinching his eyes shut and taking deep breaths.

"Take it slow."

Frey pushed gradually until over half of his erection was inside of Luke, pausing a moment to give him time to adjust when Luke suddenly pushed his body against Frey’s, impaling himself onto his cock. He shuddered and cried out, Frey immediately starting to withdraw and Luke pulled him back into his heated passage.

"Fuck me hard," he ordered hoarsely, hot blue eyes burning up into Frey, demanding his all. Luke wasn’t a delicate desert flower. He could take it. He would take it.
They only had one last adventure together before Silena claimed him, he wouldn’t waste it by letting Frey be overly chivalrous.

Reading all of that in his lover’s eyes, Frey pulled back once more to his opening and then slammed back into him, giving him the hard fuck Luke demanded from him. Luke’s fingers dug into a sweat-slicked back as he began to rock with his lover’s motion. Frey fucked him hard until suddenly he arched his back and pearly ropes of semen exploded from his cock onto his chest, his face, and the floor.

Luke's sphincter squeezed Frey’s cock harder with each shot until he was past the point of no return. Frey quickly slammed home, once, twice, thrice, all the while looking into those shining blue eyes before feeling the hot heat enveloping him push him over the edge, emptying himself into his willing vessel.

Luke reached up and pulled Frey down beside him once he’d finished, nestling his younger lover into his arms as Frey shot an absent cleaning spell at the rapidly-cooling semen coating him.

After several long moments, Frey looked down into sleep blue eyes.

“I’m going to miss you.” He admitted, nibbling at his plush, kiss-bruised lips. “Going to miss being like this with you.”

The son of Hermes didn’t say a word. He didn’t have to, his eyes saying it all for him. Friends and lovers, yes: but as always, being friends came first. And as much as they loved each other – and they did, it wasn’t the kind of love that life partners shared. They were friends and comrades, and brothers-in-arms. Just with a little extra between them.

Just before Frey dropped off to sleep, naked skin cooling, Luke suddenly guffawed.

“What?” Frey cracked open a cranky-green eye to glare over at his bedmate.

Luke gave him a lascivious leer.

“This trip just got a lot more interesting…wouldn’t you say?”

…

The two teens high-tailed it out of Missouri the next morning, leery of staying too long in one place and having their monster-draw kick in before they even reached California. That didn’t, however, stop them from taking a circuitous route, hitting National and State Parks from the Crazy Horse Memorial to Old Faithful in Yellowstone to the awe-inspiring glaciers in, heh, Glacier National Park. They cut straight across Idaho without pause, shooting for Highway 101 and the scenic byway that would lead through the Redwoods and down into California.

It was while they were within a couple hours of the famous highway, intending to take the ferry across Puget Sound and see the mortal worlds’ version of Mount Olympus at Olympic National Park that Frey first felt it, that tingling of wrongness that always warned him danger.


Frey of the two of them had a much better developed sense of when monsters and other dangers were near. Luke had asked Chiron about it once, wondering if Frey’s godly parent was actually Apollo for how closely his friend’s intuition seemed to border on precognitive. The ancient centaur had shaken his head, dispelling his idea, telling him instead that it was likely due to Frey’s close
relationship with Thanatos and therefore the darker realms of magic and immortals that gave Frey his ability.

Chiron was partly right at least, a large part of Frey’s ability being from his connection to Thanatos, yes, but also from having his Far being an Avatar of Magic and a god of Chaos giving him an instinct about things and events which were ripe with either – such as monsters.

Luke turned his head to follow where Frey seemed to be staring off at the view of the two closest peaks of the Cascades that they could see from the ferry.

“I don’t know.” Frey answered slowly after several moments before closing his eyes with a wince and shaking his head. “Promise me something?”

“Sure, Frey, anything.”

“Let’s take the southern roads: Route 66, hit Joshua Tree, etc., on the way back.” Frey turned resolutely away from the mountains rolling his shoulders in an attempt to shake off the twitchy feeling he’s been dealing with for several hours – even since coming into view of those damned mountains. “I don’t want to be anywhere near this mountain range…ever ever again.”

Luke blinked. Even for Frey who was nowhere near normal for a demigod, that was weird. But then…he’d never been proven wrong before.

“Sure, dude.” Luke gave him one of his movie-star handsome smiles, throwing an arms around his shoulders and giving him a joking kiss to the side of his head. “Anything.”

…

The irritating feeling didn’t go away until they hit the pacific coast, only to re-emerge the next morning after they stopped for the night in Seaside, Oregon, coming back and hitting Frey hard as they entered the Redwoods and crossed into California.

Turning over the wheel to Luke, Frey fought to center himself, pressing hard on his grandfather’s sigil in an effort to shove down his godling nature in favor of his latent Jotun abilities.

Say what you like about Frost Giants but there was little they had cause to fear or be wary of, an attitude Frey desperately needed to lock onto or he could kiss sleeping without aid of a potion goodbye until they finished the quest and got away from whatever was giving him the mother of all migraines.

Luke’s own mood had darkened as he watched his friend and lover’s normal unflappable nature deteriorate.

Once Frey had gotten more accustomed to the sensations, pushing them back until they were no more than an irritating buzz in the background, he opened his eyes and glanced at the road atlas they’d been using for the trip, commenting:

“It must be Mount Othrys.” He said absently as he traced the interconnected mountain chains, thinking on what he knew about the western coast of the U.S. from his Far’s and Heidi’s teaching.

“The Titan stronghold?” Luke frowned, glancing over a quick moment before turning his attention back to the beautiful – but dangerous – highway the convertible was traveling. “I thought it was destroyed in the takeover?”

Frey shook his head, calling up everything he knew about the changing of the guard – so to speak –
of the Greek factions.

“The Greeks are very cyclical.” He said, running one hand through his loose ebony mane. “And annoyingly hard to destroy. Mount Othrys was sundered when the Titan Lord was defeated but Atlas remained behind in the wreckage – holding up the sky. According to what I’ve been taught, Mount Othrys is Mount Tamalpais in the “new world” – at the base of which is the Garden, the golden apples, and Ladon.”


“Mmm.” Frey nodded, thinking hard. “The West Coast has two major fault lines that nearly connect: the notorious San Andreas and one that’s supposed to be even worse for all that it’s less famous: The Cascadia Subduction Zone. Mount Tam itself is part of the Northern Cali coastal ranges which meet up with the Sierra Nevada range in the north end of the state’s great central valley…”

“What’s going on in that mind of yours, Frey?”

Frey looked up, eyes grim.

“Outside of the opening to the Underworld in L.A.,” he said. “There’s zero presence of Olympus on this side of the country. None.” His voice was hard. “If I was say,” he rolled his eyes. “A pissed off older brother who got shafted in a rigged dice game or an extremely pissed off former king, this is where I would have my people located.”

Hands flexed, knuckles turning white, as Luke turned that around in his head. Greece, back when Europe was where civilization was thriving, had been far too small for anything like what Frey was suggesting. And if there was one thing the States had in abundance it was size. But still…

“What,” Luke joked a little. “Do you want to go poke at the Titan in his cage or something? While we’re in the neighborhood?”

“Pass.” Frey punched Luke lightly in the shoulder. “You twit. But still…” He trailed off a moment, staring out at the beautiful blue Pacific Ocean, gleaming like a jewel under the California sun. “We need to be very, very careful. I don’t want anything to happen to you because we were outnumbered and cocky.”

“I hear ya, Frey.” Luke took one hand off the wheel to ruffle his friend’s hair. “I hear ya.”

No. Frey thought to himself, worry ruling his heart. I don’t quite think you do…

…”

“Then I don’t understand why you’re doing this!” Frey cried out, running frustrated hands through his hair and falling back, still naked from the night before, onto the silk sheets on the massive king-sized bed Frey’s money had paid for during their stay in San Francisco. “Why would you even bring me along if you won’t let me help?”

Luke continued to pack, robe falling down along one shoulder, making sure he had everything he would need for his clandestine adventure into the Garden. Frey hadn’t stopped badgering him for a moment since they’d woken up and Luke made his announcement that he would be going alone to the garden at the base of Mount Tam. He’d brushed it off that he was thinking of Frey, that Frey’s reaction to being on the West Coast made him vulnerable…but he knew in his heart that it was more than that. Moreover…Frey knew it too.
“Just tell me why, Luke.” Frey’s voice had turned from demanding to heartbreakingly sad, face turned away from the lithe figure beside the bed. “Why would you come on this quest, risk your ass, all for a dumb apple?” Especially when they both knew Luke didn’t have anything to prove to either himself or Silena. Which only left…

“Because I will not be ignored.”

Luke leaned over, looming over his lover as Frey reclined on the bed. His blue eyes glowed like iced diamonds. They were mesmerizing but so very cold. Frey found himself falling into them.


There was the slightest softening in the demigod’s eyes, but then that disappeared and Frey was not sure that he really saw the emotion or not.

“Then will you?” Luke asked. “Stay here for me?” Love me one more time, he asked silently, too proud to say it out loud. Just in case… I don’t make it back from this.

“You promise that if I do that you’ll come back if you need my help?” Frey demanded, trying to force him to come back alive and well through sheer force of will.

Luke ran a hand through Frey’s hair, smoothing it back from his forehead with an almost tenderness. Frey’s skin prickled in pleasure and alarm. It really was like walking the edge of the blade when one of Luke’s moods overtook him. More power to ‘Lena for wanting to live with the moody prat forever.

“I promise.” The demigod said, crooked smile flashing over his face.

“How much is the promise of a trickster and a thief worth?” Frey asked, half-joking.

“Does it matter? If I’m lying, then you won’t have to worry about it after today…one way or another.”

Frey suddenly grabbed one of his lover’s hands. He hadn’t realized he’d done it. Luke went very still and the whispering started.

“No,” Frey said, his voice quiet, the whispers saturating the air around them as his green eyes flashed the color of the Killing Curse though he couldn’t see it. He knew that Luke heard them. He knew the demigod knew what they were.

“Or you will bring the shadows down on me?” Luke didn’t seem particularly afraid exactly. There was more a challenging light in his eyes.

“Yes,” Frey said then added, “And I am certain that you cannot keep yourself safe from them forever…they’ll hunt you down one way or another.”

Luke trailed a finger along his jaw. He looked pleased. He nodded and said, “I promise.”

“Then let’s do this. Show me something.” The last was a challenge. Frey knew it. Luke knew it and his friend laughed.


Frey pulled the tie of Luke’s robe loose. It cascaded off the bed as if the tie had somehow been
holding it where it was and then, like a kite, it was blown away. Now they were both naked.


And then Luke was kissing him. Those lips, teeth and tongue teased his lips open and then it was like he was consumed by the other teen. It tasted like…goodbye. The hot slide of tongues, the slightly painful rasp of teeth and the press of lips over his was all consuming. Luke undulated his body on top of Frey’s. Their cocks lined up together and rubbed along each other. Frey moaned and his cock throbbed.

Luke slid one hand all the way down to Frey’s stomach. His muscles jumped in reaction to that light trail of fingers and suddenly a large sword-callused hand was gripping Frey’s cock. Frey gasped and arched his back as Luke kissed and stroked him. Almost immediately his balls drew tight to his body. The swordsman’s thumb parted his slit, smoothing the slick precum over the hard knob. He used such perfect pressure from his experiences with Frey to slide up and slip down his length that Frey’s hips were rising and falling. He wanted the other boy to remember this forever…and beyond if Luke didn’t make it back. Luke rode his movements with liquid grace. He didn’t miss a step. He continued to twist his wrist just as he reached the tip of Frey’s cock. Heat built between Frey’s legs. His cock was just a molten rod in Luke’s hands. His cock surged up and his balls tingled. He was going to cum.

Between kisses, licks and nips, Frey got out, “Lu-Luke, I’m going to -- Merlin! If you keep doing that -- I’m going to cum!”

“You act as if that’s a bad thing,” his friend chuckled.

“But -- but we’re not -- not done,” Frey gasped. His whole body arched like a bow.

“We’re not done by a long way.” Luke was rolling his balls now as he stroked him. The demigod nibbled on Frey’s lower lip. His mouth kissed along Frey’s jaw and moved around to his ear. He nipped the lobe of Frey’s ear and whispered, “Cum, Frey. I want you to cum.”

The words tipped him over. He was cumming. His body shook. His semen painted the air and fell onto his belly. Luke stroked him throughout, milking the last bit of cum out of him then the more experienced teen moved down his body and licked the head of Frey’s cock clean of semen, hedonistic in his frantic mood. Frey’s penis trembled and he let out a half-pained cry. His cock was too sensitive to be touched now. Frey reached down and fisted his hands in Luke’s hair, holding him back.


Luke kissed the tip and then rested his chin on Frey’s left thigh. “Do you know that you blush all the way down to your belly button when you cum?”

Frey’s eyes were half closed and his body was singing with endorphins. “Do I? Never saw myself cum.”

“Your tutors ever told you? It’s quite … sweet,” Luke said and kissed Frey’s inner thigh even as he coated his fingers in Frey’s cooling cum.

Before Frey could respond, Luke was moving. He was pushing Frey’s legs apart as he was folding them against the young man’s chest.

“Hold yourself open for me,” the crazed thief said.
Frey’s muscles felt like jello, but he grasped each leg in a hand and held them against his chest and spread far apart. The cool air circulated around his ass. His anus felt so exposed. He felt so exposed. It had never been like this before with Luke, and especially not with his tutors. There was always a sense of separation. Now with the candlelight shining on him, exposing everything of him to Luke and everything of Luke to him, it felt as intimate as he feared and had always wanted it to feel.

And this was going to be one of – if not the very last – times together.

Luke dragged his fingers through the cum on his stomach again and Frey realized he would likely be using that as lubricant. His stomach trembled and he was shocked that his cock already started to strain to harden again. He whined softly.

“There’s no need to beg yet, Frey. I’ll be inside you very soon.”

His fingers were suddenly circling Frey’s anus. The semen felt cool and slick. Luke’s fingertips pushed lightly against his pucker. Frey let out a short gasp and he rolled further up to expose himself more. Luke leaned down and his breath puffed against his opening, in a mirror of Frey’s own actions mere days before.

“Lick me,” Frey nearly begged.

Luke peered up at him from between his legs. “Lick me what?”

“Lick me please,” Frey did beg this time.


Then his mouth was on Frey’s ass and the godling let out a sound that he didn’t know he was capable of. Only one man had done this to him and it had been for awhile, but it still hadn’t been like this. Luke pulled his anus farther open with his thumbs and his tongue dipped inside. Frey’s legs trembled and heat bloomed inside of him. Molten. Quivering.

Luke’s tongue thrust inside, touching his silken insides beyond the tight muscle. Frey nearly bucked. His cock was already hot and hard against his stomach. He’d never gotten so hard so fast again. He yearningly moved his hips and he was rewarded with another thrust of that tongue deep inside of him. Luke licked the interior of his ass and he clenched down on that tongue. His lover kissed his anus and Frey released him.

“Mmmmmm, Frey, I cannot wait to have you clench down onto my cock that same way,” Luke said. His eyes were burning blue now, glowing in the twilight dawn.

His slicked fingers sank inside of Frey then. Two of them at once. There was a burn, but it was a good burn. Luke pushed them in until they were up to his knuckles. He pulled them out, spreading them as he did so. His tongue snaked inside Frey again between the fingers, fluttering inside of Frey, licking him, wetting him, slicking him. He thrashed but Luke gripped his hips and held him still as his tongue thrust in and out and then those fingers were probing him, dragging out of him, pushing into him, spreading him until he was just a mass of sensation.

Luke drew back. He was poised above Frey like some kind of Greek god of ancient times. His beautiful face, masculine yet with a sharpness that was so compelling, shone with victory and that was the only warning before his cock thrust right into Frey.

Frey took in a sharp gasp and arched, raising his hips higher and clutching his legs to his chest. He was prepared, and used to being filled after nearly a week of sex every night both giving and receiving, but Luke was large, larger than two fingers and a tongue, and his breath froze in his throat.
as the burn of being filled to the max flowed over him.

He thrust in and pulled out before thrusting fully back in again. Then he was lifting Frey up so that the other teen’s legs were forced to wrap around the demigod’s trim waist and Frey’s ass was snug against Luke’s thighs. That had the effect of piercing Frey far deeper with his cock. Frey’s hands raked Luke’s back as he tried to breathe around the fullness.

“God, it feels like your cock is in my throat,” Frey managed to get out.

And it did. It was like he was speared to the very core. If he tried to actually draw his body off of Luke’s cock, he had feeling he wouldn’t be able to do it. The tender tissues of his ass were clinging to the thief’s pulsing penis. Waves of pleasure alternating with pain raced through him. The pain stopped him from cumming. He actually saw black dots in front of his vision. He wasn’t ready to be fucked like this, but Luke didn’t care.

“Soon, I will be in your head,” Luke murmured. “You’ll never forget me, not until you meet that perfect match of yours your Divining has warned you of. It won’t matter if it’s a thousand years from now when you meet them or tomorrow: you’ll never forget me…I’ll make certain of it.”

He fastened his hands on Frey’s waist and lifted the godling up and then set him down again. The feeling of being parted, of that slide of cock and interior walls of his body. So deep. So hard. So good. His ass burned. His body trilled.

“Let go, Frey,” His thief urged. His eyes were the color of hottest flame now. So beautiful. So inhuman. What had Luke seen that his eyes could look like that? What had him so frantic and crazed? “Let go.”

Frey felt like he was truly standing on a knife’s edge or more like a knife’s point. Any way he went meant falling. It meant pain, because no way was safe. But it also could lead to intense pleasure.

Frey suddenly wound his arms around Luke’s neck and he was kissing his lover. His buttocks clenched around Luke’s cock and he bore down as hard as he could. He was so large. He felt split open. But he wanted to keep the thief deep inside. Then he began to rock, drawing himself up and down on that stiff rod. He was going to enjoy every second of this. He would control the rhythm and depth. He would determine when he came.

Luke bit his jaw. Hard. Harder on the throat. It hurt and felt good. Frey raked his fingers down the other’s back. He may have drawn blood. They suddenly were falling off the bed and onto the floor with Luke on the ground and Frey on top of him. He thrust his hands on top of the swordsman’s shoulders as he tried to fuck himself on Luke’s magnificent cock. Luke grinned and suddenly Frey was on his back, legs in the air, and the hedonistic teen was pumping into him with machine-like repetition. Deep. Hard. Deliberate. His cockhead ran over that magic bump inside of him and had ever thrust sending him into the stratosphere.

Luke manhandled Frey onto his side, drawing one of the young man’s legs up against his chest. Frey scrabbled against the carpet as this position allowed Luke to plunge into his interior from a totally different angle. Luke ground inside of him, then cupped his balls and squeezed them. Frey let out a whine.

“You were going to cum and you don’t get to have a second time before I get my first.” Luke demanded into his ear. His friend sounded completely different than the placid, easy-going persona that he put on at the Camp. He was raw and needy. His blue eyes were now more fire than ice. His irises had nearly swallowed up all the color.
“Fuck me, fuck me, gods, fuck me!” Frey cried out, babbling, but needing to talk as the pleasure was building inside of him like a tidal wave that threatened to drown him.

Luke rolled Frey onto his hands and knees. Frey stuck his ass further up into the air and spread his thighs to give the sorcerer more access and he took advantage of it. The thrusts into his were short and sharp now. Luke was breathing hard. Both of them were slick with sweat. Despite the painful press of the hardwood floor beneath his knees, Frey didn’t care. The pounding he was receiving felt too damned good. He reached back and Luke’s hands braided with his. It rough. It was almost tender. It really was a goodbye. Then Luke thrust inside one final time. Frey was nearly pressed flat to the floor by the force of it. His cock jerked just as Luke’s did inside of him.

Frey turned his head and Luke kissed him before erupting. Hot spurts of cream coated his insides. Frey felt it pouring into him, filling him, marking him. He shook with it, glad for a brief moment that he always cast protective spells for all manner of things – including male pregnancy - and then he was cumming, too. They kissed as if both would die if they didn’t.

All too soon, both of them were spent. Luke rested lightly against his back. Sweat plastered them together. The demigod continued to kiss him almost dreamily and then to lick the perspiration off his shoulders and back. Frey shivered in pleasure even as his cock hurt at the very thought of getting hard again.

“You better come back.” Frey turned his head and pinned Luke with a fierce glare as the other pulled out of him before moving towards the bathroom to clean up before leaving for the Garden. Luke paused one hand on the door jamb as he watched his long-time friend and some-times lover come slowly to his feet and move towards him with the predatory grace that was all Frey. “You hear me, Luke?” Frey demanded, reaching out as he made it over to his friend and grabbing him by the jaw. “You come back. To me and to Silena. I don’t care if you fall flat on your face or make off with all the damned Golden Apple in the Garden. If you make it without a scratch or are mortally wounded. You have a portkey I made for you that will bring you to my side. You damn well better come back.”

Luke gave a broken laugh, leaning forward and resting his forehead against the sweat slicked one of his friend.

“I promise.” He said, this time with meaning. “I’ll come back…no matter what happens in the Garden of Hesperides, I’ll always be your friend and ‘Lena’s Luke.”

“You better.” Frey said in a whisper. “Or I’ll sic Thanatos on your ghostly arse.”

…

“Fuck!” Luke dodged around the tree filled with ripe and glowing golden apples away from the roaring form of Ladon, the apple’s dragon guardian.

He’d known he’d made a mistake in insisting Frey stay behind as soon as he’d stepped foot inside the legendary Garden but there wasn’t much he could do about it at this point. Ladon would be on high-alert after this even if he did escape empty-handed, making going back for his best friend a pointless endeavor. His pride had gotten him into this now he would have to get himself back out of it.

Well…

Pride and worry.
Frey hadn’t been himself ever since they’d hit central Washington. He’d gotten a reprieve through most of Oregon, but then his wariness and high-alert state had come back with a vengeance when they got to Cali. Whatever it was that was bothering the other teen, it most definitely wasn’t natural by any means.

And Luke didn’t want to risk pitting Frey up against Ladon of all monsters when he wasn’t feeling quite up-to-snuff.

He’d always been a little in awe of the younger half-blood, even more so when they became friends after losing his first friend to a damn hell hound. When he was in fighting-form, there was little that could best Frey. And that was the problem and the reason he was here without back up. Frey wasn’t in fighting-form, despite his protests otherwise.

Which left just Luke to take on one of the fiercest creatures in any pantheon.

Yay.

As he dodged another swipe from the dragon’s vicious claws, Luke began to wonder if he was going to be able to keep that promise to Frey after all…

Bellowing in pain as his dodge left him a little short and Ladon caught him, tearing a vicious gash down his face, Luke leapt narrowing missing a low-lying fruit as his portkey, spelled to bringing him back if he sustained a mortal injury, whisked him away from the Garden of the Hesperides, failure tasting like ash in his mouth as his fingers just barely brushed against the cursed golden skin of the Apples of Immortality.

…

Silena watched the arch that led into Camp Half-Blood anxiously, worried for both of “her boys.”

Frey had called her from a road-side pay phone outside of Phoenix when they’d started making their way back to New York after leaving California behind. He’d told her something had happened, that Luke wasn’t in a good way, and to get her “peachy-sweet behind back to Camp” to support her boyfriend. She’d been kinda relieved honestly that he’d called her.

She hadn’t been sure how the younger teen would take the two of them diving into exclusivity – or the possibility of it anyway.

That Frey had called for her told her that Luke had talked to Frey – and more importantly gotten the extremely handsome hero out of his system enough that he was able to commit to her despite his all-too-real feelings for their friend.

It was her Frey thought Luke needed now.

And that was all she needed to know about what happened between California and back again.

When she saw the two figures, golden and ebony hairs, making their weary way through the arch she let out a cry at the sight of a livid gash on Luke’s cheek that she could see all the way from the top of the hill.

Bad that told her.

Whatever had happened…it had been bad.

Rushing down the hill, she lightly brushed her hand over the mark after giving her lover a
resounding kiss, throwing her arms around him like he was a vanquishing hero rather than one so
obviously broken in spirit. Her job now was the one of women throughout time – building her man
back up again for the next struggle that was coming.
Because as sure as the sunrise, there was going to be another struggle for her man to face head-on.
The only question was, when?
“This must have been awful if you couldn’t heal it all the way, Frey.” Silena murmured, seeing the
burgeoning loneliness in her friend’s eyes. She was sorry for it, even though she wouldn’t give Luke
up to him for all the heroes in the world. Luke was hers.
And Frey had a love of his own out there somewhere. He only had to find it.
“I should’ve died.” Luke admitted in a rasp, tucking Silena into his arms and resting his chin on the
top of her head. “Forget failing the quest. If Frey hadn’t been there, I would have died. If it wasn’t
for one of his wizard tricks, I would be no more than a pile of dragon shit right now.”
Silena reached out a hand, squeezing Frey’s larger hand in hers once he acquiesced and allow her
grasp.
“Thank you, Frey.” She whispered, tears in her eyes and her words heavy with double meaning.
“Thank you for bringing him back to me.”
Frey didn’t say a word just nodded to them both and headed back, along, towards his cabin, leaving
the lovers to bask in having each other safe and sound in the glow of the heavy late-June moon.
…


Frey cursed as he stared at the glowing digits hovering over his hand thanks to his wandless Tempus. His portkey back to Siri’s apartment in England was set to go off in less than two hours and he still hadn’t had time to sit down with Luke and talk to him one-on-one since they arrived back from their semi-disastrous trip to the Garden of the Hesperides.

Not that Frey resented Silena for monopolizing her now-exclusive significant other. No. Not at all in fact.

But that didn’t change the fact that Frey sensed a need in Luke. Something had changed in his best-demigod-friend. And Frey was damned and determined to figure out what that change was before haring off across the pond for another ten-or-so-months.

His birthday was tomorrow, and with it came a new set of worries as he set off on a tour of his holdings in England and beyond. Though he’d claimed his lordships, he didn’t have access to the investments or properties until he turned either seventeen or was legally emancipated – and fourteen was the youngest age emancipation could be considered. However…emancipation would be hard to gain since Chiron and Thanatos had done such a damn good job of raising him – or having him raised as the case might be.

He could tour the properties and know about the investments – but he couldn’t live in any of the many manors, cottages, cabins, or townhouses until he came “of age”, nor could he change the current investments that came with his inheritances.

Add more, yes.

Do anything with what he already had, no.

Thankfully while Siri wasn’t able to access the political responsibilities of being Lord Black due to his incarceration – lawful or otherwise – his dogfather could deal with the rest of it, just leaving the political crap for Frey to handle until either Siri turned over the estate in its entirety to his current Heir or finally caves and has a child of his own to turn it over to.

Personally Frey would much rather Remus get over his issues with worrying about passing on his lycanthropy than have Siri turn over the title of Lord Black.

As if he didn’t have enough to handle in the Wizarding World without the massive headache the House of Black entailed.

A flex of Frey’s power had the rest of his things packed and ready for his return to England – sans most of his wardrobe since his ever-increasing growth meant another visit to Twilfitt’s was in order. Though thanks to his rampage against Aragog’s spawn he had more than enough acromantula silk that having his robes made would be less expensive than his last couple trips to the Master Tailor’s. He’d already sent off bolts and bolts of the stuff for Masters J. Twilfitt and M. Tatting to ready for his upcoming order – and thought ahead to Yule and had lovely scarves and robes and other garments readied for gifting in the Winter Season to his many friends and associates. The Malfoys especially would reap the benefits of his loathing of giant-fucking-spiders so near a school full of children,
along with the ladies of his social circle including Silena, Annabeth, and Luna.

For once, shopping for Draco’s Yule present wouldn’t have him comparing boots and robes and books for *ages* on end in December.

Small blessings.

Another small blessing was that thanks to the power of the basilisk heartstring core and the fine ash wood harvested from the Malfoys’ sacred grove, Frey didn’t have to go through the hassle of making himself yet another wand this year. Careful maintenance and no need for massive displays of power had kept the wand in somewhat good shape, the only use it’d gotten outside of class and Remus’s private lessons being charging the Heartstones with Sev during the school year.

Hogwarts was brighter, cleaner, and more responsive to her charges’ needs than ever before— injuries from trick stairs and old curses being non-existent in the previous term.

The staff—save Sev—and board were at a loss to explain it but all were satisfied with the state of things.

Now all that was left was for Remus to bring Frey’s suggestion of having the board, staff, and students actively donate power to the school brought before them—a suggestion that *should* pass with support from Lord Malfoy and Remus holding the voting proxy for three seats: Potter, Peverell, and Black.

It was a measure that was sure to put a kink in Dumbledore’s tail...especially as from what Frey could tell a good number of the spells, enchantments, and even curses that the castle had cleansed once the stones were charged had come about either directly from the Headmaster’s wand or while under his tenure.

A knock at the door pulled Frey from his wool-gathering as a golden-blond head peeked inside his sanctuary. Part of Frey was already mourning the day he was outed as being of Asgardian lineage and barred from Camp Half-Blood. This place has been home as long as he can remember—and honestly it was a miracle he’d made it this long with only Thanatos among the Greeks knowing who he truly was. Even Heidi didn’t know for certain—only guesses based on her uncommonly-close relationship as his previous nanny/caretaker/friend while he was growing up and growing strong enough to survive the vicious dance being a godling required.

Outside of Thanatos only the goblins—who would never say a word about one of their best and richest customers—Lucius, Draco, and of course his Far knew of Frey’s unique heritage.

And if he wanted to live to see his immortality freeze into place it needed to stay that way.

Shaking off that maudlin thought he turned and smiled at his demigod friend, welcoming Luke into his private rooms and offering him a bottle of butterbeer from his chill-charmed cabinet.

“Man.” Luke shook his head in bemusement as he always did on entering Frey’s quarters—aka the Thanatos Cabin. “It’s like stepping back in time in here. No electronics, no T.V., no computers. I don’t know how you survive, dude.”

Frey laughed at the oft-repeated complaint.

“Lord Thanatos doesn’t *appreciate* modern comforts the same way other Greeks do.” He admitted as the two of them settled down onto the dragonhide-covered couch. “Honestly if Heidi hadn’t insisted I wouldn’t even have the charmed cabinets to keep things hot-or-cold.”
“Dude.” Luke just shook his head, unable to wrap his modern-teen-mind around that. “Things are cramped in the Hermes Cabin but at least I managed to bring in a flatscreen and pirate up myself cable and an internet connection.”

Frey shrugged pointing towards the screened-off king-sized bed and the massive private bathroom saying: “There’s a tradeoff to enduring the lack of modern comforts in the range of creature comforts I have here.” He smirked tipping back his butterbeer. “I’ll take my private rooms and luxurious trappings any day over your playstation and x-box.”


The two teen laughed at each other before polishing-off their slightly-alcoholic beverages. After several moments, aware of the fleeing time, Frey sat his empty bottle aside and leaned forward, staring at Luke in patent concern.

“Are you okay, Luke?” He asked gently. “I know things have been a little…rough since we came back. How are you handling it?”

‘A little rough’ was an understatement. Chiron had taken one look at the scar on Luke’s face, heard his report of how the mission went and of Frey’s strange reaction to the mountain ranges of the west coast, and promptly called-off all further quests for the time being. An extremely unpopular move to say the least, on which at least some of the campers were blaming Luke’s failure for.

Things were…well…rough for the Hermes cabin at the moment, with Luke himself taking the majority of the fallout.

The golden-haired son of Hermes let out a shuddering breath, his carefully-designed mask of good cheer and bonhomie cracking and crumbling into dust at the sight of his best-friend’s honest concern for his welfare.

“I don’t know, Frey.” His voice cracked as his eyes got damp. “I just don’t know what’s wrong with me the last couple days.” Pearly-white teeth to shame a toothpaste model tore at his shapely bottom lip as one long-fingers hand worried a fray in his well-worn jeans. “I’m just so angry all of a sudden. I mean…” He trailed off, waving one hand in a futile gesture of confusion. “I was fine – well, mostly – on the way back to Camp, when we were just hanging out and well you know…”

Frey smirked, his answer nothing short of sultry: “I know very well. I happened to find the trip rather orgasmic your injury and my reaction to the West Coast aside.”


“Yes, I liked yours very much.” Frey snarked back, eyes gleaming. “Just as you enjoyed mine, and my hands, and my mouth…”

“Yes, thank you.” Luke fidgeted uncomfortably. Now that he was exclusively seeing Silena he was a little taken aback whenever Frey would unleash his rather potent charm on him or tease him about the formerly sexual bent to their friendship. Honestly, if he hadn’t been so head-over-ass in love with the girl he would still be enjoying all the younger teen had to offer. “I remember. Anyway.” Getting back on topic. “Since we got back to Camp it’s like whenever I’m not with you or with ‘Lena that I’m just so damned angry and resentful all the time. Everyone’s dogging me over failing the quest,” he ranted. “Which isn’t even fair. Heracles is the only one who’s managed to take on Ladon and win so I was going into it with a stacked-deck anyway. It’s not my fault I failed. Fucking Dad,” he sneered at the relation he had to the god of Thieves and Mischief. “And his fucking need to outdo his fucking brother. He set me up to fail and because of the fucking Law he can’t even
come down to see if I’m okay or fucking apologize for sending me on a jinxed-fucking-quest. It’s not fucking fair!” He railed, panting and out of breath as he finished his rant with a shout and a punch to the couch cushion beside him.

Frey just watched the outpouring of – as Luke had called it – anger and resentment with a stoic gaze. There was more to this than – understandably – anger over a near-impossible quest or being pissed at himself for his failure. No. Something else was at work here. And fuck-it-all but he didn’t have the damn time he needed to root out the cause of the poison he could see now that was growing in his best friend.

If something – anything – wasn’t done soon, then the Luke he’d spent the last several years befriending and teaching and training alongside would be gone and this angry creature would be left in his place.

A dangerous thing considering how high up the hierarchy of the Camp Luke was.

It made his unease around the mountains of the West come alive once more as he reconsidered the idea that’d been floating in the back of his mind ever since:

If he was a pissed off god or immortal and immoral being of any power, and had a bone to pick with Olympus…the West was where he’d hide until the time was ripe to strike.

For the first time, it hit Frey that maybe a scar wasn’t the only thing Luke had lugged back with him to Camp Half-Blood – but something much, much more insidious: a rage that had hatched inside him and could destroy him if left unchecked.

Waiting several long moments to see if Luke was truly finished, Frey finally moved, taking the empty seat beside his friend and wrapping him up in his long arms. Frey rarely showed Luke this kind of affection, the other teen preferring to get this type of thing from Silena or Annabeth or the legion of younger Campers that seemed to flood Cabin Twelve on a regular basis – both his own younger half-siblings and the unclaimed who looked up to the older – and therefore infinitely tougher, stronger, and cooler – Lead Camper. Luke was a bastion of strength to the others who looked up to him, the youngest – and sometimes not-so-young – counting on him to chase away nightmares, boogey-men, and the sometimes-rabid Ares Campers. Luke got more hugs on a daily basis than some others – like the intelligent but rarely demonstrative Athenas or the rough-and-tumble Ares kids – get in a month or longer.

But rarely did he get them from Frey.

Which was a shame when he considered it.

Frey’s hugs mattered.

The younger half-blood always wrapped his arms around you tight, squeezing gently but firmly, resting his cheek against your head or shoulder or chest, rocking back and forth.

It wasn’t an exuberant showy display of affection, but a wordless vow of caring.

Frey truly gave a damn about those he deigned to hug.

Luke broke, a sob tearing from his lips as he wrapped his arms around the taller teen’s waist, leaning in and really giving back into the embrace, feeling that ball of…black…something just loosen and give way in the face of Frey’s honest loving regard.

“I don’t know what’s wrong with me.” He whispered. “I don’t know where all of this…
this…vengeance desire has come from.” He looked up at Frey through teary blue eyes. “I mean, yeah, I’ve always been pissed and hurt that Hermes left me with my mom. Made me grow up there when he knew she wasn’t quite right. And I hate that I never get to see him and there’s always at least a handful of kids who live in Cabin Twelve because their divine parents don’t give enough of a fuck to Claim them or aren’t considered worthy of having their own Cabin. That stuff all pisses me off, especially since the Hera, Zeus, and Poseidon cabins are all fucking empty and Twelve is so damn overcrowded. All of that pisses me off. And hurts. But I’ve never actually…”

“Thought about killing them for it.” Frey supplied what Luke couldn’t bring himself to say. “Making them pay for their disregard, maybe?”


“I’m glad Chiron has the Camp on lock-down for quests then.” Frey said, much to Luke’s shock and confusion. Confusion that dissipated once Frey finished verbalizing his thoughts on the matter of Luke’s newly-born homicidal tendencies. “Because something is stirring in the West. Just the few days we spent there combined with not being able to complete a nearly-impossible quest has you ready to take on Olympus itself. I don’t know who or maybe what has caused it, made me have migraines for days and now has wormed its way into you, but I’ll be damned if I’ll let it lay or allow it to poison you.”

Blue eyes blinked in shock. “You really think that I’ve been…compromised…or something?”

“Honestly,” Frey leaned back against the couch, taking Luke with him and cuddling the older teen against his strong chest. “Yes. I do. Just like I think the atmosphere in Camp isn’t entirely natural either. Something deeper is going on underneath all of it.” Frey cursed. “And with me leaving today it couldn’t have happened at a worse fucking time with things starting to stir in England as well.”

“Is there anything, anything at all, you can do?” Luke’s voice was nearly begging of his friend. “Anything, Frey? I don’t want to be this…raging person. I don’t want to lose ‘Lena over this, man, please.”

Frey gave him one last squeeze before letting go and rising to his feet, padding over to one of the locked chests that lined the wall underneath his weapons display. With a wave of his hand he unlocked it, searching the depths for something he remembered seeing mixed in among the other ancient jewels and sacred items Thanatos had liberated from the Potter and Peverell vaults while he was busy meddling in the wake of Frey’s parents’ deaths. Smiling he left out a sound of victory as he grabbed the sedate onyx pendant, conjuring up a braided leather thong for it to reside on before affixing it with his nimble hands.

Walking over to his friends he held out the quarter-sized triangular smooth gem, one side inscribed with the sign of the Hallows – marking it as a Peverell treasure – and the other with runes Luke quickly gave up trying to decipher as they all but danced before his eyes.

The thief reached out with cautious hands, taking the pendant and settling it shakily around his neck and hiding it under his Camp t-shirt, feeling a cool wave overtaking him as the stone came into contact with his skin.

“How do you feel now?” Frey asked as he cursed under his breath at the glowing time, having cast another Tempus. He hoped his little token helped because he was shit out of time to help Luke – for the moment anyway. He would do some more digging and research once he was back at school and
bored out of his gourd with nothing to do but pointless homework and culling the acromantula colony back.

Needless to say he wasn’t Aragog’s favorite human-shaped creature.

Not that the monster knew that Harry Potter was the cause of the sudden decline in the numbers of his clan but…he definitely knew someone was culling his spawn.

With the death of Selena, the fucking thing had likely planned to take over the Forest with no more Queen Basilisk to fear upon coming close to the school – a plan Frey had put paid to before the giant spider could act on it.

Luke blew out a relieved breath.


“Good.” Frey nodded, tapping one finger against where the pendant was hidden. “Keep that on you at all times. I’ve spelled it to be theft-proof against those little buggers you call brothers and sisters but that won’t help you if you lose it in a spar or take it off willingly. It’s meant to protect the wearer from outside influences – that it made you feel better moments after wearing it says that there’s something supernatural about your rage and desire for revenge against Olympus.”

“What should we do?” Luke asked simply, bowing to the more experienced half-blood.

“Nothing at the moment.” Frey’s eyes flashed with a strange mixture of disgust at the timing and consternation. “Just keep an eye on the Campers – let me know if you see someone starting to act strange – or stranger as the case may be. Try and see if there’s any one person whipping up resentment towards Olympus or anything. Just…” Frey laughed shaking his head. “Be you, Luke. You always seem to know what’s going on and with who. Just keep it up and alert me if anything bothers you. I’m only a call or an owl away – and with weekends off grounds I can always shadow-walk back to Camp if you really need me.”


“Do.” It was nothing less than an order. “I’m not kidding: we need you here.”

…

Rap, rap, rap, rang the gavel in Lord Lucius Malfoy’s hand as he called the 1994 Summer Session of the Hogwarts’ Board of Governors to order.

The platinum-blonde’s eyes traced coolly over those gathered, many of whom were lords, ladies, or proxies that represented thirteen of Britain’s greatest Houses, with only the most begrudging of allowances made for the fourteenth and fifteenth members of the body: the now-in-disgrace Headmaster and the sole representative of the Ministry of Magic. Hogwarts, after all, had been founded hundreds of years before the formation of that governing body and barely allowed the minutest of even an idea of control over its continued existence to the sitting Minister. When push came to shove, Hogwarts was after all a private boarding school that rarely took in scholarship students. Said student had to have a prodigious amount of power – or prodigious connections – to gain such status, a feat that happened only rarely, Lucius’s former Master being one of those few.
And a private boarding school had little to be concerned over when it came to governmental oversight – so long as the galleons from paying families kept rolling in.

In fact, it was the matter of *galleons* that was one of the main items on the docket for this Session.

“First item of business.” The Board’s Secretary, Lady Cedrella Weasley nee Black – who sat in governance in place of her less-politically-minded husband – read out in her still-clear and commanding contralto. “The induction of the Four House Heads as put to this body by Proxy-Lord Peverell-Black-Potter. Mr. Lupin?”

“Yes.” Remus rose to his not-inconsiderable height and addressed such lofty-names as Lords Ollivander, Malfoy, Greengrass, and Nott and Ladies such as Longbottom, Bones, and Weasley. Two more seats sat empty, no one able or willing to make it to the session such as the LeStrange and Prewett seats, and another four were held via Proxy in addition to those held by Remus. “Over the last year and some months, the current Headmaster of our illustrious school has fallen into disgrace. Moreover, the actions of a single pair of student and teacher have shown to have cleansed the Hogwarts’ Ward stones – allowing the school to better maintain itself and carry out its duty to the children. As a result, there are two matters put before you today by myself and our Head, Lord Malfoy, those being: the induction of the Heads-of-House onto the Board, and the mandatory powering of the ward stones by all the members of the board, staff, and student body.”

To call the resulting cacophony an uproar would be to put it mildly, Remus thought to himself as he sat back down, with Dumbledore supports and traditionally Dark Lords and Ladies battling back and forth over the two main items on the docket – outside the coming *Event* anyway.

Lucius rapped his gavel once more, calling for order after he’d felt they’d acted like the very schoolchildren whose educations they were supposed to oversee long enough.

The Malfoy Lord help up one hand before one of the other members could pose a question.

“Before this can devolve any further.” The word was so icy it sent chills down more than one spine. “Let us first agree that having the Heads-of-House available would give us a more rounded view of the events and activities that happen in the school…rather than having to hear about them second-and-third hand from the *Prophet* or Circe-forbid a Wizengamot case when the Headmaster’s *laxity* once more makes the papers…or lands him in *criminal proceedings*.”

“Lucius.” Albus’s voice and eyes were patently hurt and disapproving. “There is no call…”

“There is *every call*.” Madam Longbottom cut him off, still fuming over the events uncovered thanks to the trial of Sirius Black. If she’d had her way he’d be in a cell not still sitting in a place of large influence and even luxury as the post of Headmaster of Hogwarts. “You know *full well* my feelings on this subject, Albus.” She cut her eyes towards the Malfoy Lord. She had every reason to hate and loath the pompous blond but just *this once* she found herself in agreement with him – no matter how grudging that agreement came off. “I second the notion. Let us vote on it rather than sit here name-calling and twiddling thumbs.”

“Very well.” Lucius hid his pleased smirk, calling for the vote as directed. “All for the inclusion of the Heads-of-House?”

“Aye.”

Lucius did a quick count.

“And against?”
Silence. Even Dumbledore, no matter how enraged, would dare vote against a measure that had all but one of his fellows in agreement—and that naysayer merely being the Minister’s lackey. No. He knew he’d lost this round, better to wait for a more advantageous time to press his agenda.

Lucius nodded. “The motion passes, thirteen for, zero against, and two abstaining.” Cedrella’s auto-notes quill scratched along with his words. “Proxy Lupin, if you would be so kind?” Lucius arched a brow and Remus gave a genial nod before taking out his wand and sending out four patroni to each of the Heads, summoning them to the Governing Board chamber.

It was a mere matter of minutes, spent in tense small-talk among the two main factions, before the Heads presented themselves, ready as ever to be called before the Board during their normal sessions. It happened rarely, Dumbledore’s formerly-iron-grip on the body keeping them from seeking second opinions very often save when Lucius managed to finagle his way around the elderly codger. But still…it wasn’t unheard of.

Lord Malfoy stood and with a wave of his wand had four more seats appear—two on each side of the long oblong table where Lucius sat at one end and Albus the other. Minerva, naturally, took the seat that appeared on Albus’s right-hand beside the Ministry’s flunky while Pomona took the seat on his left next to her school-and-house-mate Lady Bones. Severus found himself on Lucius’s left between the Malfoy Lord and Lady Weasley nee Black while Filius took the seat on his right between Lupin and Malfoy. Once all were arranged, Lucius quickly summed up the reasoning behind their summoning—and their new indoctrination into the Board. Save for a small gasp from Minerva and a widening of eyes on the part of Filius, all went smoothly and the Heads were quickly sworn in, Cedrella bringing forth the next item of business at Lucius’s nod.

“The next item, as previous brought forward by Proxy Lupin, is the donation of magic and energy to support the Hogwarts wardstones.”

Before Lucius could wave Remus on, Severus interrupted.

“Perhaps.” He said in his silky drawl. “I might be able to shed some light on the subject.”

“How so, Severus?” Albus asked with a barely-hidden edge to his voice.

“Well.” Severus and Lucius exchanged devilment-filled looks. “As I am the staff member in question who helped with the ritual cleansing of the ward heart stones in the first place, a duty which I believe belongs to the Headmaster or Mistress, I might have insight on the subject. Sir.”

…

After nearly having the life squeezed out of him from both of his dogfathers, Frey sent his trunk to his room with a flick of his wand—the trace having been lifted when he claimed his Lordship—and settled down to hash out the schedule for the rest of his birthday and the following month.

“Okay pup.” Sirius was nearly bouncing in excitement—both at having his pup home for most of the next month and for the party that was coming later that evening. “So your party is all set and ready to go—we decided to use Black Manor since the penthouse doesn’t have any grounds to speak of and Grimmauld still isn’t finished being renovated.”

“That’s great, Siri.” Frey said with genuine appreciation at his godfather handling party issues for him while he was busy in the States. “What about the guest list?”

Sirius couldn’t help a lightning-quick frown at that reminder but snapped out of it just as fast. Just because he had problems still with the Malfoys doesn’t mean he was going to turn into—Merlin-
forbid – his mother and throw a fit over it.

“All invited and accepted, cub.” Remus jumped in when Sirius’s pause grew a bit long. “And Severus has sent over a list of days he’s available to visit your properties with us and help disarm any curses or traps we might find.”


“We have tickets to the games for England, Scotland, and Wales since they’re all in the U.K. as part of the wind-up to the Cup this year.” Sirius was back to bouncing in place. “Don’t have much hope for any of them but it should still be grand. We’re in the SkyBox for all three, as well as the Semi-Finals and the Final.”

“We can’t make the Semi,” Remus shot his lover an exasperated look. “We have a staff meeting that day at the school so you’ll be solely in the custody of Lucius and Narcissa.”

“Dray will be happy about that.” Frey commented with a grin. “You’ll make the Final though, won’t you?”

“Of course, pup.” Siri grinned doggishly. “ Wouldn’t miss it for the world.”

“Ok then.” Frey kicked back. “Presents?” He asked hopefully.

Loki and Thanatos had already given him his gifts before he’d left Camp, his Far bestowing a set of finely crafted basilisk-bone divining dice – much finer tuned than anything he had before – while Thanatos had sent a reminder about the Elixir along with a quiver full of arrow for his bow the Harvest Lord had given him two years before that were tipped in poison made from the toxic blood of his favored Shadow Hounds.

It was a powerful neurotoxin, and one that made Frey leery of even handling the arrows before he came into his immortality.

It also made him wonder about how well-informed his patron was, especially in light of recent events and worries.

Sirius barked out a laugh, shaking his head.

“At your party, cub.” Remus rolled his amber eyes in amusement. “And not a moment sooner.”

…

The party went off without a hitch – most of the invitees were already friendly if not out-right friends, and no one wanted to ruin Frey’s – well, Harry’s – day for him.

He raked in his usual assortment of candy, books, and odds-and-ends, with the Malfoys and his godfathers both agreeing to split the cost of the Cup box tickets between them. Draco could barely keep his hands to himself, let alone his eyes, once he saw the results of another June-July growth spurt. For his part, Frey wasn’t all that innocent-minded about his wizarding-best-friend either, the Malfoy Heir having a major growth inheritance of his own as he’d said he would a couple years before.

Of course, the two of them weren’t the only ones doing that sort of noticing, as shown by the two teens’ friend Blaise not being sure who he wanted to eye up more, a sentiment shared by most of the witches and not a few wizards their age and some older.
So it wasn’t much of a surprise when a couple days later, having met up at the stadium’s Sky Box for the England-Transylvania game (which England was pummeled in much to the teens’ dismay) that Draco had some news for his friend.

“Blaise?” Frey turned towards his blond friend, giving him his full attention. “But…why?”

“What do you mean, why?” Draco nearly spat, eye narrowed. “Are you implying no one else would want to date me?”

“No!” Frey shouted, quickly raising his hands to ward off the dynamo and back-peddling as much as possible without jumping to his feet and running from the box. “Not at all. I just meant…well…he knows about our deal, yeah? Why would he be okay with a guaranteed break-up in a year?”

“Oh,” Draco waved a hand, settling back down much to his friend’s relief. “That. I think he’s hoping to change my mind. You know, make me fall for him so I’ll forget about you or something.” He shrugged. It could happen, they were young after all and Blaise was very handsome and charming in his own quiet way. “But I did ask him and he said that he’d rather have a year than nothing at all.”

“Oh.” Frey nodded, somewhat appeased. It wasn’t that he considered Draco his possession or anything. On the contrary he was happy Dray was taking his advice and dating someone else for a time. But he didn’t want his friend – either of them – hurt.

Either way…

He’d been waiting for Draco to grow up for three years, he wasn’t going to let him go without a fight. Not when he was so damned close to being old enough that it didn’t freak him out. Sometimes being years older than his commonly-held age really sucked ass.

Draco leaned forward, searching emerald green eyes a little tentatively. He knew it wasn’t fair, especially with him dating Blaise now. But… He didn’t want Harry falling in love with someone else any more than Harry apparently wanted him falling for someone else.

“What about you?” He asked. “Are you finally going to date someone? Or just find someone to shag while we’re at school.”

He wasn’t an idiot. It was pretty clear from how Harry treated others that he had experience…and not with just boys or just girls either. No. Harry was an equal-opportunity flirt…even if he was much more sultry with males.

Frey looked back, seeing the warring curiosity and worry and possessiveness in Draco silver gaze. At least, for once, his possessiveness over Frey seemed to be dialed back. With his new-found maturity, maybe Frey would date someone this year.

“Maybe.” He settled for the simple and non-committal answer. “Maybe I will.” He gave the other teen a crooked grin. “It all depends on whether there’s someone I like enough to date but not so much I have to be concerned for them stealing my heart away, doesn’t it?”

And that was that…for the moment.

…

Severus, Remus, and Frey touched down on an old, abandoned lane just outside the township of Little Hangleton, England, a few days before the World Cup final.
Most of Frey’s time had been taken up with attending the smaller games leading up to the semi-final, where he’d had the time of his life watching alongside Draco and his parents as Ireland flattened Peru and secured their place in the tournament finale against Bulgaria. In between, he, Remus, and Sirius had all visited Potter Manor and the cottage in Godric’s Hollow – now that he’d managed to reclaim it from the Ministry that had seized it following Voldemort’s initial defeat. This was the first time Severus had had the time to go with Frey to the more worrisome properties – such as this one that Frey had unearthed as the home of Tom Riddle’s mother Merope Gaunt, a domicile that had reverted to the larger Peverell estate upon the death of her brother with no other known heir.

Riddle should’ve rightly inherited the shack – and to Frey’s keen eye that was exactly what it was though the land was as promising as reported by Gringotts – but all signs pointed towards Dumbledore keeping such information out of the hands of the muggle-raised orphan.

And if there was one thing Frey had learned about the Slytherin purebloods it was that come hell or high water, they’d go to the grave before turning over secrets like right-of-inheritance traditions to someone “out of the circle’. For all Voldemort’s power and influence, even fear, apparently not one of his followers had told him of how to actually claim his Slytherin legacy. Maybe they assumed he knew and wouldn’t welcome their interference – from all Frey knew of the young Dark Lord that would’ve been a valid line of thinking. Maybe they thought he already had since he had the audacity to make claims to the Line without going through the accompanying Rituals.

Who knew?

But push comes to shove, Riddle never had gone through the Rites and Rituals to claim his inheritance, leaving it just waiting to be claimed by another – no matter how distant said claim actually was.

Frey hissed out a breath as they came close to the shack, feeling the wards surrounding it.

Remus shuddered out a breath, his inner wolf yelping at the feel of rich, vicious Dark magic.

“This is familiar.” Was all Severus said in reaction, turning calm black eyes on the youngest member of the party.

“Yes,” Frey answered the unspoken question. “It is. You would recognize his handy-work I would think, especially since we two,” he waved an elegant hand between himself and the Potions Master. “Encountered it in the Chamber.”

“What is it?” Remus narrowed his eyes. He’d studied Dark Magic extensively for his Mastery in Defense, but this whatever it was, was far out of his range of experience, though he thought he saw a couple of nasty enchantments and curses he’d seen before. It was just hard to make them out in the morass of distinctly other magic tangled up with them.

“Parselmagic.” Frey answered absently as he blinked, letting his own other abilities come out to play, feeling the wards and the lines of tangled and entwined magic for himself. “Or rather, magic cast using Parseltongue.”

“Merlin.” Remus blew out a breath, studying the schema that his cub brought to life in a riot of colors with a long sibilant hiss and a slash of his want. “I haven’t seen this since…” Eyes shooting wide he stared at the other two wizards as they discussed something just a hair too low for his enhanced senses to pick up. They weren’t as powerful as normal being the week of the new moon. A boon for the two secretive men he found himself keeping company with. “Harry, Severus.” He drawled in a near growl. “Is there something you would like to share with me before we go any further?”
“This was where Tom Riddle truly became Voldemort.” Frey answered after a small back-and-forth with Severus, never looking away from his work in tandem with the Dark wizard.

For his part, Severus was markedly focused, even though much of the information his charge was about to share was new even to him.

“He committed his first murder at Hogwarts,” Frey continued, breaking his story every now-and-then to his another string of Parseltongue, likely counter-curses and hex-breakers to his audience. “But it wasn’t until later that he really shattered and became the crazed creature Voldemort was known for. Here he learned the story of his desperate-near-squib-mother and his muggle father who abandoned her. Here was where he killed his father, his grandparents, and framed his maternal uncle for it all. And here was where he originally worked his most…evil of magics.” Frowning in concentration, he cocked his head and then narrowing his eyes made a final slash-sinister, sending the wards and protective enchantments tumbling down, leaving only the normal Dark curses and such to be dealt with by Severus and Remus, who both stepped forward at his gesture.

“Owner or not, cub.” Remus said in an aside as he worked with the Dark wizard to undo the remaining curses Harry left for them. “You wouldn’t come here, knowing that much of this place’s history, if you weren’t looking for something. Just what is it you hope to find, Harry?” He asked intuitively then gave an exclamation of victory as together with Severus they brought down the last curse.

Frey motioned for them to step back, prepared as always to go first in case of more Parseltongue traps. The older wizards heeded his call, though with ill-grace on both their parts. Neither man was eager for their young one to face whatever evils remained in the run-down hovel.

“Nothing.” Frey answered after several long moments searching through the scant rooms for imminent danger. “Anything. Everything. Something.” He shrugged. “Doesn’t really matter in the end. I just wanted to see…before I burn this cursed place to the ground.”

“Finally.” Severus drawled, head cocked to the side as he felt the taint of Dark magic drawing him over towards a floorboard near the common room exterior wall. “Something about this jaunt into idiocy we agree on.”

“Sev.” Frey rolled his eyes, which sharpened as he noted his teacher’s preoccupation. “Sev!” This time it was a stern command, bringing the nearly crouching man to a sharp halt.

“Yes?” He asked without regaining his footing. Something was down there. It was calling him…Eyes widening with an-out-of-character gasp, he slammed his Occlumency shields down, locking them tight and the siren-call of the curse most certainly out of his mind. Shaking, he stumbled away, warning the werewolf off. “Away, wolf. I don’t recognize whatever that is, but if it can affect me it can affect you. Better to let the idiot Gryffindor handle this: it doesn’t seem to call to him the same as it did myself.”

“No,” Frey murmured as he studied the enchantment. “It doesn’t.”

And if he were a normal wizard, it would.

Even someone as powerful as Dumbledore would have been affected by the curse.

But then…

Nothing about Frey was normal.

“Ooh.” Frey shook his head. “This is a nasty one. Used by some of the more vindictive members of
the Slytherin line I believe during the Witch Trials. It would ensnare anyone who came across the item before hitting them with a fatal curse – this one as a special spin on it: A Necrotizing-Flesh Curse. Even worse, there would be no way to reverse it once it struck.” He looked over at Severus with a devil-may-care grin. “Not even your level of skill, Sev, would be able to cure someone hit with this little beauty.”

“Cub.” Remus spoke very, very calmly in the face of his charge’s openly admiring of a nastily-deadly curse. “I think I speak for both of us when I say that you are freaking me the fuck out right now.”

“Oops.” Frey lowered his head bashfully. “Sorry.” He hissed out the counter-enchantment and then the counter-curse, wand moving in sinuous swirls to accompany the sibilant language rolling off his tongue. “There. No more Mastery-Dark curses or enchantments. Promise.”

“Thank you, cub.” Remus gave a soft smile. “Though I see now how you and Severus are so easily able to get along.” He gave a little laugh. “You have the same appreciation for excellence in magic – no matter how Dark. However,” he arched a brow. “I think we’ll keep this little episode between the two of us. Others might not be so understanding.”

“Deal.” Frey said with a nod. Turning back to the floorboard he levitated the board off from the cache it hid, a small box following. The godling set it down on the remaining rickety table at the far end of the room, the group moving to hover over it. “Now.” He whispered. “Let’s see what’s so important.”

Although…based on what he’s feeling now that the box and whatever it hid wasn’t being concealed by some high-scale dark magic, he had a damn good idea about what he was about to uncover. In more ways than one.

“There were once three brothers who were traveling along a lonely, winding road at twilight.” Frey murmured, almost to himself, as the box opened with a gentle flick of his wand and an old, tarnished silver ring inset with a plain black stone gleamed dully in the muted light of the shack. Frey had had his suspicions about the Tale of the Three Brothers ever since he picked up Draco’s dog-eared and often-read copy of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* to read his first stay at Malfoy Manor. He’d put it aside, but the story had niggled at him, never more so than when he’d found out that his Cloak was a family heirloom of great value, passed down from father-to-son along the Peverell and then Potter lines according to the family histories.

“What?” Severus whipped his head around, staring at his protégé as if the teen had grown a second head. He knew that line, his mother having read the stories to him like all pureblooded mothers did. On the young wizard’s other side, Lupin was staring at him likewise.

Frey just shook his head chiding them. “All fairytales have a founding in reality: no matter how loose and shaky that founding is.” Reaching down into his robes he removed a length of pure silk, the same as he used to handle the locket the summer before, and plucked up the ring from its dusty nest to examine it more carefully. “The Three Brothers is one such tale, wizards and witches have sought the legendary Hallows for ages. Grindlewald even took the symbol of them – one of the Peverell coat of arms – as his sigil. Is it really so far-fetched that three powerful items actually exist to correspond with the tale?”

“So…” Remus said uncertainly. “Is that supposed to be the Resurrection Stone then?”

“I doubt it.” Frey dodged skillfully, his two companions weren’t the sort to believe in that sort of thing and so were eager to write his ramblings off as a young man’s temporary flight of fancy. “But it’s definitely a Peverell artifact.” He motioned to the carving in the stone without actually laying
hands on the Ring. “See: as I said, one of the Peverell coat of arms.” He held up his Peverell Lordship ring for comparison.

“Yes,” Remus nodded, agreeing. “Yes I see. But what has been done to it?” He narrowed his amber eyes. “Dark magic practically drips from it even with you removing the curse and enchantment.”

“That it does.” Severus nodded shortly, hands clasping his forearms inside his robes as was his want.

“Not all of it.” Frey shook his head, using his Thanatos-given-skills to analyze what was most definitely a Horcrux – in addition to being the fabled Stone. “Just the metal band: the Stone itself is uncorrupted.” By Dark magic anyway. It was most thoroughly saturated with Death magic however, likely the cause of Remus’s unease.

Wrapping the ring in the silk until it was complete contained, he took out a silk bag identical to the one he used on the locket, tucking it inside for double protection before concealing it in his inner robe pocket. Thanks to the two layers of insulation from the soul leech’s taint – better than the locket but worse than the diary, telling him where it fell in the order of creation – he felt confident, enough anyway, to wait until he had privacy to deal with it. It wasn’t the sort of thing he was willing to do with an audience – Lord Malfoy excepted since he didn’t have much choice with the diary.

And it wasn’t like either was going to step outside for a mo’ either, not with curses and enchantments just waiting to be triggered at a second’s notice.

“Okay.” He breathed out in relief once the taint of the Horcrux was at least partially nullified. “We’re good. I think we’re done here.”

“Thank-bloody-Merlin.” Severus muttered under his breath, striding for the door in the lead.

Once all three of them were outside and arranged around the hovel, Severus and Frey sent out waves of Incendios, Remus standing by to provide assistance in keeping the fire under control.

It was a loophole in the binding magic surrounding his inheritance: he couldn’t live in any of his properties. Not until he was emancipated or came of age. But that didn’t stop him from using magic while visiting them. A loophole he used in this case to burn the damned shack to the fucking ground.

The three wizards all watched as the place nearly imploded once the enchanted fire hit some of the curses and enchantments they hadn’t either disabled or triggered – for good reason, Frey having noted them and left them in place because he knew they would add to the ease of destroying the place.

Once the fire had done its job, the three of them cast smothering charms in unison, slowly bringing the flames to a standstill and then banishing the rubble left behind, leaving a cleared patch of ground that had none of the overwhelming taint of the remnants of the Ancient House of Gaunt.

Frey blew out a breath when it was done, easily picking up the sounds of the fire brigade coming their way. It would’ve – and had – taken quite a bit of time for the township to figure out where the fire was coming from, so few people ever came this way after the Riddle murders. He was just glad it was done.

The land could finally heal with the lingering madness of the Gaunts burned away and banished.

That didn’t explain the sense of Dark magic that was still pinging on his radar.
Honestly, the Gaunt shack had been so corrupted he attributed all of it to that. But the shack was gone and yet… He glanced over at Sev, asking a wordless question to which he got a slow, worried nod in response.

“We need to get out of here.” He responded immediately, holding out the portkey that would take them to their next stop – and hopefully a less worrisome one: Peverell Castle. “Now.” He said as he felt at least part of the Dark magic coming closer at quite the clip.

Each of his companions laid hands on the burnished piece of mithril that Gringotts had given him as a master portkey leading to all of his properties. He simply had to choose the right password and it would take them away. In this case:

“Death’s Chosen.”

The portkey whirled them away, but not before a greying rat, missing a toe, spied an old friend – and his companions.

…

Frey’s boots had barely touched down on the wide grassy moor that was the home of Peverell Castle before he was shooting off a Patronus to one of his newer allies: Lady Amelia Bones, the Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement.


“Remus Lupin, I concur.”

“Severus Snape, I concur.”

“Expecto Patronum.”

Severus wasn’t surprised by the shape his charge’s Patronus had taken being familiar with the big cat from their mutual adventure in the Chamber of Secrets. Likewise, since Remus had helped refine Harry’s skills, the Patronus was familiar, though his ability to use it to carry messages, especially the addition of others’ voices – that was new.

“Good job, cub.” Remus said, buffeting one shoulder at the display. “Now let’s see about this castle of yours…”

…

The creature known as Lord Voldemort or Tom Riddle depending on who was talking, waited impatiently for his most incompetent servant to return to his side.

Nagini had smelled waves of smoke nearby while out hunting, returning to report it to her Master who sent Wormtail out to spy – as it was one of the only things the worthless wizard was even moderately good at.

Wormtail was just rushing in, sniveling as always, when his Lord sensed the tell-tale signature of anti-disapparation wards snapping into place around the Manor.

Eyes widening, the Dark Lord cursed in his high-pitched hiss, calling for Nagini to wrap herself
around him as Wormtail summoned the few very-incriminating texts and artifacts, as ordered. It was a costly delay with Aurors on their tails, but a necessary one if he had a hope of completing his plan before the year was out.

Curse that fucking Potter brat!

If only he’d gotten the Stone, but no, the child’s infernal, eternally infuriating meddling hide had somehow kept him from his prize, forcing him to give up his host earlier than planned. That it killed Quirinus in the process was of no concern to the Dark Lord.

He’d been unutterably weakened by that attempt at regaining his body, left to scavenge once more against the lowest of the low as he built his strength back up – a process that had taken much longer than he’d anticipated. He felt he had been somehow diminished, but dismissed it as an aftereffect of taking the cursed unicorn blood for so many months on end. If nothing else, the weakening he’d experienced had convinced him to stray from that path for good.

Three years from when he’d first tasted it, and still he was weak! Having to rely on the likes of Wormtail, the cowardly creature only coming crawling back to him after having one-too-many close calls with his former friends.

Friends.

What a useless liability.

“M-master.” Wormtail whimpered, one hand out. “We must g-go, before the Aurors find us.”

“Very well, useless creature.” Voldemort hissed, grasping the portkey with one misshaped hand as Pettigrew picked up himself and his precious pet, staggering under the weight of the snake as he whimpered and whined at having her so close. Living as a rat for so long had multiplied his fear of snakes to near-insanity. “§Sanctuary§” He hissed the password, the portkey taking them away from his preferred domicile – for the moment – and to one of his other hidden bolt-holes scattered across Britain.

A shame.

The nearness to his un lamented Father’s grave was ideal.

No matter.

Wormtail wasn’t worth much as a follower, and barely more than that as a servant, but even he was capable of Apparating them both to the Graveyard when the time came.

…

Alone in his often-used guest room at Malfoy Manor later that night, preparing for their departure to the World Cup Final’s grounds, Frey lit the fire in his fireplace after having prepped it with the proper woods and herbs to cleanse the Horcrux from the Ring.

Using Ancient Greek, the language as always tripping off his tongue with easy familiarity, Frey offered up the soul leech – and the soul leech alone – to his Patron and guardian.

It wasn’t without readiness that Frey turned his head once the deed had been done and the ring settled into place – and under a glamour – on his bare index finger and watched with calm eyes as the Harvest Lord himself stepped from the shadows to his side.
“So.” He said, leaning back onto the cushion at his back and linking his fingers over his stomach, the Resurrection Stone gleaming dull and black before both of their gazes, the glamor having no effect on either of them. “The Three Brothers. Peverells after all as the lore claims?”

“Yes.” Thanatos said, giving a short nod. “But rather than having bested me, they had proved themselves to be worthy acolytes, friends even. All three of them joined my Harvestmen in the end, even though the elder two had done some rather stupid things with the boons I granted them.”

“Why didn’t you tell me before?”

“You had to discover it on your own.” Thanatos answered simply. “You had suspicions ever since you were introduced to that story about the grain of truth it might contain. Especially since you’d already been granted the Cloak by that time. But it wasn’t until you knew that I could tell you the rest.”

“And the Wand?” He cocked his head to one side. “It’s the one you warned me of right? The only one that will truly fit me?”

“Again, yes.”

Frey got a sardonic look on his face. “I don’t suppose you feel like sharing where I can find it, then?”

Thanatos gave a genuine laugh at that. “You know better than that, my young hero. You’ll have to find it yourself. But I can give you a hint: It is closer than you might think. In fact, you have seen it used within the last year. That is all I can reveal.”

His young ward sighed, knowing better than to push the Lord of Death.

“Yes, Grimmy.”

“Cheeky.”

…
Author’s Note: With this chapter marks Lokison going from a T rating on FanFiction to an M rating. There will be more mature content in the Fanfiction version from now on which includes a less-heavily-censored version of the story. Chapters will still be censored but not as completely as chapters 1-15. Chapter sixteen is not censored but chapter seventeen will have censored content. That is all, please enjoy!

Chapter Sixteen: Festival of Fools

The campgrounds outside the stadium for the Quidditch World Cup of 1994 were a riot of color, commotion, and clashing languages.

Frey easily recognized the sounds of Greek coming from a group of swarthy wizards gathered around a wireless, listening to the commentators talking player stats and scores and rehashing the games in the series leading up to the final set to start the following day.

Other languages stood out to the multi-lingual godling: the sounds of Norwegian and Swedish and Danish, all languages coming from a similar Ancient-Northern dialect close to the Old Norse he spoke when alone with his Far. He heard the romantic murmurs of French and Italian, the guttural sounds of German and other Slavic dialects, and the quicksilver cadence of Spanish. Wizarding kind from all nations and walks of life had gathered together to enjoy two teams at the top of their game, it brought to life memories of watching the Olympics or World Series, the FIFA World Cup or the Super Bowl on the big screen at the Big House at Camp Half-Blood. All good memories shared with good friends.

And now this memory, shared with those as close to him as his own family should have been.

He and Draco wandered around, sometimes with their parents/godparents and sometimes alone, spending more galleons than was perhaps wise on souvenirs and special Omniculars just for this one game.

Draco found himself waffling between the two teams playing – for reasons he had no problem sharing with Frey.

“It’s Krum you see.” Draco whispered, eyes darting back-and-forth over the myriad offerings on display at one booth. “He’s the best Seeker in the professional leagues. And he’s only seventeen, in his last year at Durmstrang.”

“I’m sure it doesn’t hurt that he’s got a rough sort of dark-handsomeness going for him either.” Frey arched a brow knowingly at his best friend. It was nothing less than the truth. Frey himself wouldn’t mind a snog or seven with the handsome – and from some of the promo shots taken, well-built – teen.

Draco sniffed, nose in the air, before going back to his shopping.

“I’m sure I don’t know what you mean.”

“I’m sure you don’t.” Frey rolled his eyes before leaning down to whisper hotly in his ears. “But I think we both can agree that it’s a good thing your hot-blooded French/Italian lover isn’t here to see the look you get on your lovely face at some of those promos…isn’t it?”
Draco blushed all the way back to their campsite, refusing to so much as glance at his far-too-amused best-friend.

... 

The Quidditch World Cup Final was awesome.

Both teens yelled and cheered as the Irish Chaser flew loops around the Bulgarians, the only hope the eastern European Champions had lying in their brutal defense and their star Seeker from the Vrasta Vultures: Krum.

Though, both of them had gotten a bit of the side-eye from the elder Malfoys when neither reacted to the Veelas’ display.

In fact, none of their party had reacted.

Oh, Lucius and Sirius had both leaned forward before their Occlumency shields – and in Siri’s case – mate-bonds kicked in. Remus being a mated werewolf didn’t desire any but his mate and Narcissa had no love at all for her own gender. That just left the younger two wizards. Draco was easy enough, having been comfortable in his sexual preference for years. But Frey was a surprise, even to Dray.

Before the Veela display, none of them had known that Frey was basically 99% homosexual, with only the barest of base attraction to the female form.

But they certainly had it figured out now and if those looks his godfathers were giving him were any indication he couldn’t avoid them doing a run at “The Talk” when they got back to the penthouse after the game. None of their party were going to spend the night at the campground, their tents already being broken down and sent away with house elves.

Narcissa was shining in the Box, showing off her fine breeding and social abilities, Lucius a handsome foil at her side. Remus and Sirius – after a shared roll of their eyes at the behavior – had observed the basic niceties before planting themselves firmly at the box’s rail, the two teens soon joining them when the Weasley brood entered. They thought there might be a scuffle between the three classmates but apparently the older – and very handsome as Frey had noted the previous summer about the eldest, the second eldest being much the same – brothers had “Ronniekins” well in hand.

So while the “adults” were polite and made nice with the Bulgarian Minister and that bumbling twit Fudge, the younger Weasleys with Frey and Draco hooted and hollered in joy and shared love of the game.

“Well, fuck.” Draco drawled in dismay as the Ireland chasers and their superb teamwork had the score over 160 for Ireland. “Little hope now with the bumbling the Bulgarian chasers are doing.”

“Too right.” Bill Weasley nodded his head in agreement, wincing as the Bulgarian Keeper failed to make yet another save. “Bulgaria’s just outmatched in every way except for Krum there.”

“That Wronski Feint of his looked fun.” Frey said, leaning forward eagerly. “I might just try it…”

“Why would you do that?” Ron scoffed sneered at the much-taller boy in disdain. “You don’t even play Quidditch.”

“Yes, he does.” Draco said with a tone usually reserved for the most moronic of beings. Or, you know, Crabbe, Goyle, and most of all the Weasel. “Just not for Gryffindor.”
“You play, Harry?” Fred popped over, George right behind him, throwing arms around the teen that was just a wee bit taller than them. “What position?” George asked.

“Seeker, mostly.” Frey answered absently, having spotted the Snitch. “Helps Draco stay in shape for the Season during summer and breaks.”

Draco had taken over the empty Seeker position the year before when Higgs had dropped from the team to focus on his O.W.L.s. The older boy was due to come back and play in his sixth year but was going to take one of the open Chaser positions to give them time to train a good prospect for the year after. Slytherin had an excellent plan of recruitment that kept the Cup safely tucked away in Snape’s office – much to McGonagall’s dismay.

“What?!” Ron all-but-shrieked. “You help this slimy git?! Potter you bloody traitor!”

“Merlin Ron…”

“Chill out…”

“It’s not like…”

“We have that…”

“Great of a…”

“Team anyway…”

“Without a good…”

“Seeker.”

The twins said in their – rather annoying – way of speaking.

“Dad said I could try out.” Ginny piped up, craning her head around her favorite brother Charlie to join the conversation. Charlie, like Frey, had spotted the Snitch and was watching it closely, not paying much mind to his siblings’ conversation. “Charlie was training me this summer while he visited.”

Ron got a mulish look on his face. He wanted to play, he had to play if he wanted to go professional. But he wasn’t good at being Seeker and that was the only position due to come up any time soon. Wood and the Twins were all due to graduate – and leave open spots on the team – at the same time as two of the Chasers – Johnson and Spinnet. Bell was in the year between them and Ron, and the Seeker position had been a waste of a broom ever since Charlie graduated.

Altogether, Ron was only going to have two years to prove himself and show off to scouts if he wanted to play professionally – not six like most who get recruited.

Or even bloody Malfoy who didn’t even need a career like Ron did, what with all of Daddy’s money.

And here was bloody Potter helping the git to beat Gryffindor.

It was the worst sort of betrayal, that was.

“KRUM HAS SEEN THE SNITCH!” Sounded throughout the stadium, punctuated by a pair of snorts from Frey and Charlie who shared a knowing glance. Thankfully, the announcement also cut off the coming rant from an idiotic redhead.
Granted, Frey and Charlie had only had eyes on it for less than a minute, but that was still thirty seconds longer than Krum. But then, they didn’t have to worry about dodging bludgers and disrupting the Chasers the way Krum did either.

…

Draco was on cloud nine the next morning as he floated down to breakfast.

Not only had his favorite Quidditch player caught the Snitch to end the World Cup Final, but Ireland had also won, an outcome he hadn’t seen as likely. He’d also spent several days with his best-friend’s almost undivided attention. Best yet, said best-friend had been…flirty with him. And this on the heels of showing possessiveness over him dating Blaise.

Yes, things were falling into place nicely for one Draco Malfoy.

A sense of well-being that instantly shattered upon reaching the dining room and seeing his parents’ tense faces as they studied the front page of the Prophet with something akin to horror but that was even more like despair.

“Mother?” He gazed in confusion between the two bulwarks in his life. “Father? What is it?”

Before either could answer they were interrupted by the glowing spectre of a Patronus in the form of a large jungle cat that promptly opened its massive jaws and spoke in a familiar voice.

“We’ll be there shortly. Severus is on his way.”

…

The five adults along with their two teen charges gathered in Lord Malfoy’s personal study. Once tea had been dispensed (and brandies despite the early hour for the adult wizards) Remus took the bull by the horns, leaning forward attentively.

“Allright, cub.” He said, eyes worried after the day’s headlines screaming of a Death Eater attack on the World Cup campsite in the early hours – not to mention Harry’s reaction to it of summoning them all to the Malfoy’s post haste. “We’re all here. What’s going on?”

Severus and Lucius traded concerned glances, the blond lightly brushing his right hand against his lower left arm in an unconscious gesture.

Neither of them had been either contacted to join nor warned about the attack.

As far as their former fellows were concerned, the Dark Lord’s former right-and-left hands were suspect, a situation that doesn’t give itself long to a lengthy lifespan.

“Tom is making new moves to return.” Frey said without an ounce of worry or concern, simply stating the facts as he saw it, utterly lacking in an emotional response. To him, Voldemort was just another evil to battle – but not until he’d destroyed his soul leeches. That was the only part of the situation that worried him: the Horcruxes. With the Death Eater attack, it put a clock on his quest where before he was just content to take it one step, one day at a time with only the most vague of plans. He glanced up at Sev and Lucius from his seated position centered before the Lord’s desk. “I’m assuming you two didn’t know about the attack? That your former compatriots failed to inform you?”

“Yes.” Severus responded after taking a bracing sip of brandy. “My loyalties were already suspect after the war.”
“And even the dimmest of Death Eaters couldn’t fail to notice your close relationship to my family, Harry.” Lucius sighed, swirling the dregs of his glass. “Especially in the light of your entrusting your Wizengamot and ICW proxies into my care.”

“Merlin.” Sirius blew out a breath as the reality of the situation the two former Death Eaters faced. “You’re going to be at the top of his list, right under Harry and Karkaroff.”

“For once, mutt.” Severus sneered with a barely-hidden eye roll. “Your analysis is correct.”

“I knew this would happen.” Narcissa whispered, hands clinging to Draco’s own, beautiful blue eyes swimming in worried tears. “That one day he would return and we would have to choose between Harry and him.” She drawled the word with disgust plain even through the tears.

“What about the Mark, Father, Godfather?” Draco’s own eyes shot wide with fear as something his father told him once upon a time came rushing back in the wake of the other revelations. “He can reach you through it, can’t he?”

“Yes.” Frey answered, sparing the older wizards from having to impart the dastardly news to their precious platinum-haired child. His voice was steely and cold. “That Mark of Tom’s is one of the cruelest pieces of magic ever fashioned. And even worse: he worked it on his own followers who loved, feared, and trusted him above all others.”

The others studied him carefully, taken aback at his cold tone.

“You…expected this, didn’t you?” Sirius probed with great care, unsure of Harry’s current state of mind. “As the Malfoys and Snape expected their loyalties would be called into question, you followed that same trail of logic and knew the Mark would be a problem.”

In lieu of an answer, Frey reached into the deceptively simple woven bag at his feet and removed a small box, barely four inches wide by six inches long, and intricately carved of ebony with a – to them – familiar sigil carved on the top: the triangle, circle, and line of the Peverell rings adorning Frey’s hands but usually kept under glamor. Not so today. On this day, his rings shone and gleamed under the candlelight of Lucius’s study as his nimble fingers opened the latch and with great reverence in every move flipped back the lid to lay flat against Lucius’s black leather desk blotter, revealing the interior of the casket.

The inside was lined with shimmering black silk shot with silvery threads, cushioning a quartet of vials in the blackest of onyx. Where most gemstone vials were purely decorative, these clearly held something within of greatest treasure and import, the flat black cylinders seeming to absorb all light that hit them rather than glimmering under the lights of the study.

“Very few concoctions can be or should be,” Severus drawled, black eyes gleaming as he glided forward, one hand reaching to just hover over the small collection. “Kept in an onyx vial. The most deadly of poisons and…”


Severus whipped his head around to stare at his young protégé with an implacable and discerning gaze.

“One day.” He began, his voice low but carrying in its silky way to all corners of the room and all the ears that would hear. “Before the school year of 1991 began, Albus came to myself and several other members of the staff with one of his harebrained-schemes: though this one had the potential to
be deadlier than any other before it. He was resolved that the Dark Lord would be trying for the Flamel’s Philosopher’s Stone and meant to protect it in the school. Hagrid was sent to fetch it and we all placed protections around it. It stayed safe…or so we thought.”

“The protections weren’t that great.” Frey admitted with a small smirk of triumph. “They were pretty easy for me to get around. Honestly, I think that if they’d actually tried most of the upper years could’ve broken through them, not even mentioning the abilities of the most adept younger students.”

“What happened?” Sirius prompted, almost bouncing in impatience.

“The Dark Lord.” Frey took up where Severus left off at a wave from the Potion’s Master. “I knew something was wrong with Quirrell and assume, rightly as it turns out, that he was possessed and in pursuit of the Stone or whatever was kept hidden in the chamber leading from the third floor corridor entrance. I wasn’t about to let him get his hands on whatever it was so I took the challenge and bested the trials. When I reached the end, rather than dither about, I simply undid the enchantments of the Mirror, making it reveal its cache.” He cocked his head to one side, rolling his eyes. “Which held a lot more than just the Stone by-the-way. I gave the Stone to Thanatos and kept the rest.”

“Then how…?” Draco made an aborted motion towards the case.

Frey chuckled then answered.

“I came home that summer and when I arrived I found the case on my bed with a note from my Patron. I had removed something he despised from the mortal plane and in return he blessed me with a few vials of the Elixir to do with as I pleased. But not knowing what I would have to pay to receive more if I wasted these,” he gestured towards the vials but made no mention of the other two he held in reserve. He still hadn’t managed to make it to St. Mungo’s. Before too much longer he was going to have to rectify that. Maybe sooner than later depending on what happens after this day. “So I waited to see what would happen, and made contingencies.”

Reaching in with the gentlest of hands, he spoke no more. Picking up one vial at a time he offered one first to Lucius, then Severus, then Sirius, and finally Remus.

“Cub, what…?” Remus couldn’t even vocalize his thoughts; they were so boggled by the gift.

“The Elixir of Life is so much more than most would ever even dream.” He answered the unspoken question. “It can’t cure you Remus, but it will remove the damage caused by decades spent under the curse. Siri,” he turned towards perhaps the most-confused member of the gathering, the older wizard staring at the vial in utmost perplexity. “Azkaban left its mark, and before that you had sustained damage from duel after battle after confrontation with the Dark and going up with your family.” He gave a sardonic smirk as he looked back-and-forth at the Slytherins. “I don’t think I need to explain to either of you why you’re holding a vial…do I?”

And he didn’t, Sirius, as always highlighting the situation with a quip and his devil-may-care grin.

“Bottoms up.”

…

A few weeks later, sitting in a compartment on the Hogwarts Express, Frey was still baffled by the sheer power of the Elixir of Life.

Many times, since he’d given it to four of his most important allies in the Wizarding World and snuck into the Janus Thickey Ward of St. Mungo’s and banished it into the stomachs of Alice and Frank
Longbottom, he would find himself shaking his head ruefully or giving anywhere from a grin to a guffaw at the hint Thanatos had given him three years prior:

“…did no one study what it actually does…?”

All four of the wizards who had taken it knowingly were like new men. Years had seemed to fall off of them, Lucius no long looking a decade or more older than the lovely Narcissa as the damage from Dark Arts abuse and being held under the Cruciatas and other curses sloughed off the years away. The Mark had disappeared from both Lucius and Severus after a rather painful-sounding shriek from the skull, the curse that bound it unable to remain in the wake of the Elixir. Severus himself had found himself rather more handsome than he’d ever even had the vaguest hope of being as his skin cleared and healed, his hair took on new life, his teeth whitened and straightened, and his nose healed from a series of unset breaks harking back to his abusive childhood. The slight limp that bothered him in the colder months ever since being bitten by Fluffy healed, along with the scar it had left behind.

Sirius as well had seemed to find new life, much of his mental damage and wounds left from Azkaban and even his rotten childhood melting away, leaving behind a much happier (and if it was even possible) a somehow in turns more mature and more bouncy Sirius Black. For his part, Siri’s regained vanity at regaining his former very handsome looks had him almost matching Lucius for smugness at his lustrous hair and clear skin unmarred by the tattoos he’d gain in prison. It was enough to make Severus sneer in disdain at the pair of them, though it had lost a little of its chilling force in the wake of his own transformation.

But of them all, it was Remus whose post-Elixir figure was the most striking.

No longer hunched and bowing in on himself from the constant and chronic aches and pains from three decades of suffering under his curse, the werewolf found himself tall and strong, the scars of many, many transformations spent in confinement washing away, leaving behind unblemished golden skin. His hair regained its sandy-brown pigmentation, the professor no longer appearing on the shady side of middle age. He was quick and lithe and with a lightning-quick grin, nothing but joy sparkling in his amber eyes.

Yes. Frey decided as his friends finally located him hiding away in a compartment. It had taken him years to decide on who should benefit from the Elixir, if anyone at all, but in the end he truly felt like he’d made the right choice.

A feeling that he felt swell and treble with the impossibly happy and enthused look on Neville’s face as he burbled and laughed and told the story over and over again about how one day, out of the blue and with no known cause, his parents woke up.

…

“We know something you don’t know.” Draco all but sang to their friends once everyone was present in the compartment and Frey and Cedric had cast the appropriate charms to expand the space.

And Frey did mean everyone.

Between the attack on the World Cup campground and the Wizarding World being held in a state of confused awe over Nev’s parents having a sudden turn-around so soon afterwards (and didn’t that have the Healers, Unspeakables, and the Ministry in general in a right tizzy), every single one of their larger group of friends was present. Even the ones that didn’t necessarily get along like the Patil Twins (Padma had eventually won over her sister but it took a couple years to manage) and the Greengrass sisters who being from families aligned with different parties tended to butt heads.
It was an unrelenting source of alternating entertainment and migraines for the three boys that were at the core of the group: Frey (as Harry), Draco, and Neville.

Which was an eclectic group from the beginning since Malfoys were members of the Dark political sect, Longbottoms Light, and Potters Neutral.

However, when you looked deeper beyond the last names, you found more in common between the three than truly different.

For example, all three of them were of Black Blood but not one of them bore the name.

For another, all three of them were descendants from a truly Olde family the Malfoys having been Malfoi’s before splitting from the main family in France during the War of the Roses, Potters from the Peverells, and Longbottoms being able to trace their lines back to Camelot and beyond.

On this day though, the Patils and the Greengrasses had sheathed their mutual claws and dislike in preference for being able to be around their wider group of friends without having to share time: like divorced parents who behaved themselves once a year for their child’s birthday or wedding.

Altogether there were Cedric, Hannah, Susan, and a Charms prodigy in the year between Cedric (a sixth year) and the fourth years named Wayne Hopkins present from Hufflepuff; Padma Patil and Cho Chang from Ravenclaw’s fourth year and Luna Lovegood from their third; Draco, Blaise, Theo, and Daphne Greengrass who were fourth year Slytherins and Daphne’s younger sister Astoria also from third year; and of course, a whole plethora of Gryffindors including Harry/Frey, Neville, and Parvati from fourth year, Katie Bell from fifth, along with the Weasley Twins, Lee Jordan, and Angelina Johnson and Alicia Spinnet from sixth year.

To say that with that large of a group, Frey learning expansion charms for all sorts of situations (train compartment, library tables, hidden alcoves for pranking meetings, etc.) was a necessity would be an understatement.

Blaise rolled his eyes at Frey from his position on the seat across from the godling as Draco chanted his semi-taunt from his position snuggled up to the French/Italian wizard.

“What do you know, mi dolce?” He asked with a cross between being a long-suffering friend who was used to pandering to the blonde’s whims and the newly-indulgent boyfriend who was trying to keep from pissing him off in hopes of snogging later.

“My sweet?” Frey arched a brow in disbelief. “Are you sure all that snogging hasn’t rotted your brain, Blaise?”

Snickers and laughs broke out among the assembled group at the good-natured teasing as Draco rolled his eyes with a huff, reaching out across the aisle and smacking Frey on the shoulder for the jibe.
“Fine then.” Draco scoffed with mock-indignation. “See if I share with you lot.”

“Doesn’t matter if you share or not.” Theo pointed out from where he was buried in his book next to the window. “If you know so does Harry, and he never lasts long against Luna’s puppy-dog eyes.”

A fresh wave of laughter broke out as the two teen wizards in question let out a wave of “Hey!”s in stereo from opposite benches.

“Oh please.” Daphne shook her head, entertained as always by the playfulness between the consummate Slytherin and his Gryffindor best-friend.

Before Draco, Harry, and Neville became friends through their study group, it was thought impossible for the two houses to get along let alone actually befriend each other. But no amount of inner-house censure had stopped the pair and at this point everyone had given it up as a lost cause, especially as more and more students crossed that invisible but still very real divide. Quidditch was still a different story, however. It wasn’t unusual for Draco and the Gryffindor players that he’d befriend ed however reluctantly to not speak to one another for days if not weeks before and after the annual match. A state of affairs that was even worse if the two teams wound up against each other a second time for the cup.

“You know it’s true.” Neville pointed out from his spot reviewing his DADA summer assignment with help from Angelina and Cedric.

“Like you’re any better!” Frey pointed out in exasperation. “She doesn’t even have to say anything and you’re already helping her search for the Snorkack or bringing her a new necklace to ward off Wrackspurts.”

Neville blushed beet red as his friend alluded, but didn’t out-right out him, to his crush.

“Neville is very considerate.” Luna said dreamily, as she did most things when she wasn’t studying for classes.

“I’ll bet,” Fred whispered in a mock-aside to George, the older boys all breaking down into another round of snickers as Neville ducked his head at the good-natured teasing. They’d been trying to convince him to ask her out since the second-half of last year but had yet to make any progress against his well-ingrained diffidence towards the fairer sex.

“Anyway.” Draco said forcefully dragging attention back to where it should belong. On him and his juicy tidbit of news. “The fact remains that Harry and I still know something you lot don’t.” He studied the blonde Greengrass sisters. “Except maybe the Slytherinettes. They might know depending on how tight their father is about sharing ‘confidential business’ with his family.”

Daphne and Astoria shook their heads in unison. Their father kept business to himself, being very traditional in his views on what was to be shared with the “womenfolk” in his life. Unless it directly impacted them – which this most not – he didn’t worry them with unpleasant business talk.

How that was supposed to work when Daphne was his Heiress and Astoria wanted to be a Healer, they weren’t sure but they respected their father’s ideals.

Even if it made him seem like nothing short of a fossil.

“Out with it.” Cedric prompted with a laugh. “Before you explode.”

“Hogwarts,” Draco said with flair. “Is this year, going to be hosting a most exciting event.”
“A ball?” Parvati perked up, her interested peaked.

“A festival?” Her sister hazarded a guess.

- “Of fools maybe.” Frey muttered under his breath, sharing a knowing look with Draco. The blond was well-aware of the godling’s feelings on the coming festivities being nothing less than glory-seeking idiocy on the part of the various school heads and Ministers.

“A Tournament.” Draco answered, eyes bright. “Though,” he added to the Gryffindor Patil. “There is a traditional Yule Ball as part of the Ancient Traditions surrounding it.”

“A tournament?” Katie cocked her head to one side as she looked up from her game of Snap with the other Gryffindor Quidditch players save for Angelina who was helping Neville. “I don’t remember reading anything about a tournament in recent history.”

“That’s because it’s not recent history.” Cedric enlightened the others with a little sigh. He’d heard about nothing but the tournament ever since his father found out through the Ministry gossip train. And as the only one of the upperclassmen present who had stuck with NEWT-level History of Magic, he was the best one to answer. Except maybe Harry, he admitted to himself. Harry always seemed to know subject matter way beyond what he should. “It’s called the TriWizard Tournament and is supposedly a contest that allows a champion from each of the three most prominent European schools to achieve glory – and a prize purse. In reality…” He trailed off shaking his head.

“It’s a festival of foolish and stupidly dangerous risks.” Frey finished the thought for him, though likely with a great deal more acidly than the Hufflepuff would’ve. “And with little glory attached. It’s all about bragging rights.” He shrugged bad-temperedly. And to him it read like another salvo on the part of the Headmaster to ‘test’ his would-be weapon. Not that Frey had any intention of going along with it.

Dumbledore could suck it; he wasn’t taking the bait.

“Bragging rights?” Padma asked in her quiet way, her gentle voice cutting across the whispers that had broken out in the compartment at Cedric and Harry’s words.

“Gold?” Fred-and-George had a much more pertinent – to them – question.

Frey threw up his hands in exasperation motioning for Draco to continue.

“Harry’s not a fan of the idea of the Tournament.” His best-friend made the excuse for his out-of-character bad-temper. “But yeah, gold: a thousand galleons to the winner and so-called ‘eternal glory.’” He put the phrase in air quotes. “In reality it’s a pissing-match, excuse the language ladies.” The girls all waved him off, having heard worse from the boys before. “Between the Ministers of Britain, France, and Bulgaria and the Heads of Hogwarts, Beauxbatons, and Durmstrang.” He shrugged. “If I hadn’t known about it because of Harry’s seats on the Board and the Wizengamot, I wouldn’t have been able to tell you much about the Tournament at all, let alone who the last winner was.”

Frey rolled his eyes and sneered: “So much for eternal glory.”

“Okay.” Cedric held up a hand, unable to take it anymore. “I get that you’re not a fan.”

“Understatement.” Draco muttered having to put up with his best-friends rants on the subject for the last couple weeks since his proxy Lupin told him about it.

Cedric continued.
“But really, why all the negativity?” The older boy asked, perplexed. “It’s just a Tournament.”

“A Tournament where people,” Frey pointed out. “In this case, children barely old enough to Apparate let alone make sound decisions, die. In fact, it was discontinued in the first place because the death toll was so high.” He shook his head. “Call me crazy, but I’m not a fan of anything that puts the lives of my friends or even those I dislike, at risk just for bragging rights for adults who are much better qualified to take the same challenges on, and the entertainment of an audience.”

“Well.” Fred said.

“When you put,” George continued.

“It that way…” They said together, with cheesy grins.

“Where do we sign up?”

“Idiots.” Frey bit off, then turned to ask Neville if he needed anymore help with his essay, shutting down that line of conversation.

…

“Brother!” Thor called out in his jovial way, either ignoring or just not noticing Loki’s quickly hidden grimace at the title.

Loki still wasn’t sure what he was going to do about the information his son gave him the previous summer. He knew himself well enough to know that he had to do something but he didn’t know what yet. Though, it did explain how Frey had started to avoid referring to Thor as his uncle and Odin as his grandfather – while curiously enough claiming Frigga still. Loki had wondered but had written it off as a teenager phase.

Frigga knew he’d gone through several of those.

Thankfully so far Frey’s rebellions had been small, except for the matter of the basilisk…which in hindsight Loki had to agree that his son took the right path.

He was just growing with such haste.

He’d known he was going to regret the premature aging he’d been forced to put his son and heir through due to the meddling of that damned Headmaster, but it wasn’t until this summer when he’d had to watch helplessly as his son was affected by some form of strange aura leeching out across the California coast, that it’d really hit him.

Frey wasn’t a child anymore.

The wee babe he’d held in his arms and comforted in the wake of James and Lily’s deaths had turned into a highly honorable young godling, as evidenced by his gracefully stepping aside in the matter of his young lovers’ feelings for one another.

Loki couldn’t say that he would’ve been able to do the same, with such respect for what they felt. Nor would he have been able to comfort his male former-lover with sympathy and calm, as Frey had.

His child was nearly a man – was a warrior grown by the markers of Asgard if not by that of the world where he resides.

And it killed him a little more every day that he was forced to remain apart from him, leaving his son
to grow and learn without his presence, even if he was able to give some measure of comfort and guidance through his dream-walking and using his doubles.

It just wasn’t the same as in the years before Frey gained the interest of his true (well…apparently adopted) people.

And above all, Loki resented Odin and his damnable nature for that most of all.

Thor was still talking while Loki was lost in thought.

“How goes events with our young Warrior-Mage?”

That was new, Loki had to admit.

Most of the warriors of Asgard looked down on Loki for using magic, despite Magic Herself choosing him as an Avatar, the highest honor any god could receive.

It was only since they’d become witnesses to Frey’s adventures that that prevailing attitude if not outright disdain had started to lessen, to change into something approaching respect after seeing what a Mage who was also a Warrior was capable of.

Not that they respected Loki per se…

But they were now much warier regarding riling him or pushing him too far.

“A Tournament comes to his school.” Loki answered, hands braced on either side of the Seeing-Pool as he lifted his head from watching his son to converse with the Prince of Asgard. “A contest of daring, bravery, and cunning. It should be a most interesting year…though the young Seidr shows no interest in competing himself.”

“Hah.” Thor shook his head, for once showing the wisdom that the Thunder god was capable of but rarely used outside of battle strategy. “That cretin ruling his school will likely force his hand, if not another. Shall we summon Heimdall to begin the betting? What are the trials and rules of this Tournament?”

And for once, the two princes, one true-born and one adopted, whiled away an Asgardian afternoon in perfect concord – a rare event indeed.

…

Frey found himself waiting with impatience as Dumbledore took his sweet time rising to his feet for the start-of-term announcements following the feast later that night. The students had all been – as the old codger liked to say – fed and watered and Frey was looking at another year of barely paying attention to lectures as he worked ahead on the studies his Far set him when they met in his dreams and gaining allies and friends through his study group that he’d began in first year. Yes, fourth year was shaping up to be another year of watching Granger fume when she couldn’t match his marks, Weasley exhibit the absolute worst of table manners, and honing his Far-and-Father given pranking talents with the Twins.

Well.

Except for that one thing.

Which if he knew the old man’s machinations well enough – and at this point he was all-too-familiar with them – would probably end up throwing him in some kind of either mortal danger or a clash
with Tom. After the events at the World Cup and the Riddle Manor – and wasn’t that a shock to his system learning just who was likely the culprit behind the Dark magic he sensed in Little Hangleton – Dumbledore was sure to try and throw them at each other…unless Tom took the initiative and came after him on his own.

It was a toss-up really; which old man would be the conductor behind their next encounter.

Personally, Frey was betting on Dumbledore.

But then, of the two of them, Frey appreciated Tom’s lack of guile. He was evil. He knew it, he flaunted it, and therefore everyone else knew what to expect from him.

Dumbledore’s brand of elaborate manipulations while playing the genial grandfather – as long as everyone did as they were told – well…that just didn’t sit right with the godling.

Give him an honest knave any day over a dishonest schemer.

Especially one that felt a sense of moral superiority because they were favored by one of the gods as a particularly useful tool.

Stupid Fates.

Ah.

The old bastard was finally talking.

“Well now that we’re all settled in and sorted, I’d like to make an announcement.” Dumbledore wheezed from behind his ornate pulpit after introducing Remus as the new History Professor and Sirius as the new DADA instructor – the latter to the sound of stereophonic gasps over his reputation and sighs from the girls at his good looks. “This castle will not only be your home this year but home to some very special guests as well. You see, Hogwarts has been chosen to host a legendary event: The Triwizard Tournament. The Tournament brings together three schools for a series of magical contests. From each school a single student is selected to compete. Now let me be clear. If chosen, you stand alone. And trust me when I say, these contest are not for the faint-hearted. But more of that later.”

“Blimey.” Frey heard coming from farther down the table, the school breaking out into a hive of whispers and gossip as soon as the words “Triwizard Tournament” came out of that decrepit mouth.

Dumbledore continued:

"The Tournament was generally agreed to be a most excellent way of establishing ties between young witches and wizards of different nationalities -- until, that is, the death toll mounted so high that the tournament was discontinued."

Some of the younger students were in shock over this while many of their elders simply frowned or sighed, the ongoing threats of death or dismemberment being old hat to them.

“But enough about that.” Dumbledore beamed in his patented mien, blue eyes twinkling out at the students. “A reminder that this is an opportunity to create lasting friendships spanning nations that can also span your lifetime. We, the staff, all encourage you to make the most of this opportunity. Now, as the Tournament is occurring on our grounds there will be no formal Quidditch cup this year.”

The old man paused and let to shouts – and heartbroken sobs from Oliver Wood – calm down.
“Yes, yes.” Albus sighed. “A tragedy I am sure. However, this will give you even more time to enjoy the festival surrounding the Tournament and make new friends. Even study, as strange as that might seem.” His joke fell flat with the outraged students, as could have been foreseen. “Now before you all go off to bed with visions of winning eternal glory for your school – and the prize of a thousand galleons for yourself-“

“Blimey a thousand galleons.”

“Eternal glory?”

Frey rolled his eyes and hissed out to his friends who seemed to have gotten caught up in the old man’s theatrics:

“Death toll. Danger. Dismemberment.”

“Oh, right.” The Twins visibly deflated.

“Thanks for the reminder, Har.” Angelina leaned over and whispered in his ear as she watched Fred pout to his ‘other half’. “I rather prefer my half of the Twins in one piece.”

“No problem, Angie.” Frey grinned and then lightly jerked his head towards the podium where Dumbledore was still speaking – and apparently squashing many student’s dreams of glory and gold.

“---only students who are of age, that is seventeen, by October Thirty-First may compete.” Dumbledore continued on, acting completely oblivious to all protests from the student body. “You will be given more information as the time for the other schools to arrive nears and the Tournament approaches. For those of you too young to compete, you might wish to support your coming Champion to the best of your ability. For those of age, I admonish you to consider this choice with great care. The Triwizard Tournament is a deadly and dangerous trial, designed to test your nerve, daring, courage, and above all your magical abilities. Better to not step forward than to lose your life. Now.” Dumbledore returned to his cheery self after his final – dire – warning, clapping his hands briskly. “Off you trot! Classes start bright and early in the morning!”

…

Author’s Note 2: Okay, before anyone says anything about Frey’s rant regarding the TriWizard, let me say this: the trials and quests demigods go through is a vastly different thing than the Tournament. Slaying monsters and such is how demigods protect mortals from things they can’t see and prove themselves as being worthy of gaining a boon from the gods or even of immortality. That’s a very different thing (in my opinion) than the glory-seeking and bragging that surrounds the TriWizard. And Frey, being aware of how short life can be after witnessing what happened to Thalia when he was much younger, and almost losing Luke a month before he found out about the TriWizard, is always going to be scathing of anything that puts people’s lives at risk just for the sake of bragging and entertainment.
Chapter Seventeen: Bread and Circuses

The first weeks of school flew by for Frey as he acclimated back to life at Hogwarts and spending time with his wizarding friends and his dogfathers and Sev. It was very strange having all three men in the same place, Frey had to admit. Though for the sake of the student-body (and to keep up their individual relationships with himself) they had managed to mostly leave Snivellus, the Mutt, and the Wolf behind them over the last couple years since Frey forged their initial bonds with him. It was still very hit-and-miss, especially with their new leases on life making both Siri and oddly enough Sev rather frisky and willing to bait one another.

But they made it work, and there was a lack of rumors revolving around the Potions Master and the two new-and-newish, in the case of Siri and Remy, additions to the staff.

Though there was a bit of opening-month scandal but it revolved instead around the so-called “security consultant” Dumbledore had tried to bring in to live in the castle, one retired-Auror Alastor Moody. The staff and students were all rather boggled when upon his announcement at breakfast the second day of school that the doors to the castle refused to open and allow him entrance. Indeed, it was a state of affairs that yet continued with the Headmaster unable to sway, bully, or otherwise entice Lady Hogwarts into allowing his “old friend” entrance, leaving the scarred and semi-crippled man no choice but to Apparate from his home to the school grounds to complete his “duties” as security consultant.

Rumors abounded over the cause of the castle’s refusal to relent but no one yet seemed to have an answer – and Frey was keeping his own knowledge of the situation close to his chest as he delved into the world of the pre-OWL year (which he was already prepared for thanks to the grueling taskmaster he called Far) and his personal research of where he might find the remaining few Horcruxes. With the coming Tournament drawing so much attention from Asgard, Frey had found himself more distracted by his Far’s continued long periods of absence rather than worrying about the old meddler. The Headmaster had put-up a cottage not unlike Hagrid’s on the ground for Moody to use as half office and half crash-pad for late nights, so Frey kept his nose out of it and left well enough alone. And he would continue to do so until it became an issue for him to handle.

If he’d done his calculations correctly from what Thanatos had told him about Tom’s soul leeches and his own Arithmancy equations, he believed that with the destructions of the leech on the Resurrection Stone that there remained three more for him to find and cleanse.

Though what those might be was the question.

His intuition told him however that at least one had to be at the school.

Tom had thus far shown a strain of magpie-kleptomaniac tendencies and a rather startling sentimental-streak in the choices of using his maternal family’s home as a hideaway as well as the choices of vessels: his school diary, the Slytherin Locket, and one of the Peverell Rings, even allowing Lucius to hold the diary for him.

All of this gave him two divergent directions in which to look – both for hiding places as well as what was hidden.
The Black and Malfoy Houses were both previously some of, if not the closest supporters of the Dark Lord while the Gaunt shack was a link to his own “great” heritage.

In turn, the diary was sentimental and personal like the shack while the Locket and Ring were of historical significance.

Hogwarts was both personal and significant to the Dark Lord as it tended to be for every student to attended there, but especially for those with less-than-pleasant home lives. For Frey, it was an easy logical leap to make that Tom might have hidden something within the hallowed walls of Hogwarts. Besides which…Frey had to admit that if he were in the same position as Tom, Frey would’ve gotten quite the kick out of hiding the darkest of dark artifacts under the so-called Light Lord’s very nose.

Being methodical about it, it took Frey almost the whole time before the arrival of the rival schools and the beginning of the Tournament to search all of the highways and byways of the Chamber, bringing Sev with him sometimes so the Potions Master and ultimate-Slytherin could peruse the Library section of Salazar’s quarters as well as spending time tending to the master Ward-Stones.

Spending so much time mapping the Chamber made him massively curious over what had happened to the Marauders’ Map. According to his dogfathers, they’d had it confiscated by Filch in their last half of seventh year. But when he’d snuck into the caretaker’s office and picked the lock on the drawer, he hadn’t been able to find it.

One thing he was sure of though – someone had it.

There were things in that drawer that went back the before Filch took over the position forty years before so Frey knew it hadn’t been tossed. That only left someone doing as he’d done and picking the lock and making off with it. The only question that remained was whether it was still within the school or had it happened years before and whoever found it took it with them when they graduated?

Frey was waffling between the two but with so much else on his mind (and Siri and Remy’s coaching on how it was made in the first place) he didn’t give it too much thought since he’d mapped more of the “hidden” parts of the castle than even the Marauders had been able to find with the Chamber and the Room of Requirement. Siri had the year before told him of many secret passageways as well, beyond those his Far Loki knew of from when Hogwarts was built, so Frey felt he had a Map that was almost as good as the original if not better due to his additions with the formerly unknown/legendary hidden portions of the castle. But still…he’d like to know what happened with the one his Father and dogfathers made.

In the wrong hands the damned thing could be bloody dangerous, and that was an understatement.

Still, time marched on and with the Professors alternately dumping an unseen before amount of work onto his shoulders (he’d never before been so glad that he’d stuck to two electives unlike others he could name that were driving him and everyone else insane) or chivvying everyone into helping present Hogwarts under the “best light possible” Frey had little real opportunity to add yet another additional search onto his plate, especially since with his removal of Binns, History of Magic had become an actual class and not merely nap time or a chance to catch up on work for other classes.

It didn’t help matters that Draco, normally his partner in class and studying, now preferred to partner Blaise as his boyfriend, leaving Frey with Blaise’s partner Daphne in the joint Slytherin/Gryffindor classes. Daphne was fine, and rather smart…but she wasn’t Draco.

As he stared blankly at his bed curtains, Frey shook his himself lightly before turning over and trying to get some sleep and put it all from his mind. The delegations from the other two schools would arrive in the morning and Samhain was the day after next. This wasn’t the time to obsess.
But still…

That one phrase rang in his head.

*She wasn’t Draco.*

Merlin…he needed to get laid so he could stop *obsessing* over his blond friend.

They’d *both* agreed to date other people while waiting for Draco’s physical age to not be so… young…to his older-than-he-looks friend. And Frey, while he hadn’t dated anyone, had certainly taken advantage of having physical partners this past summer. He shouldn’t, in all fairness, be bothered by Draco following their agreement.

But then…

Frey had been raised jointly by Thanatos and Loki, and while Death might be *neutral* that didn’t necessarily mean *fair*, while Loki would tell him that things like equality were mere illusions, and not something that applied to the double-son of Asgard and Jotunheim.

Jealous on the other hand, was alive and well in the ranks of divinity, many were the gods, goddesses, and their half-blood kin that experienced it as their fatal flaw.

Hera was one such goddess and many would say the same of Loki, however, Frey saw it a bit differently.

His Far *could* be jealous, petty, and spiteful, that was true.

But Frey rather thought that is wasn’t the dark parts of Loki’s heart that was the problem at all.

No.

He thought that it might be the extent to which Loki *loved*: fiercely, wholly, and with every part of himself to the extent that he would do highly foolish things to try and win the love and approval of those he cared for in turn.

Loki, after all, had gone to great extents to hide the truth of Frey’s sire from all others in order to keep him safe. Extents that could very well start a war with Olympus over a half-Jotun, quarter-wizarding, quarter-Elder God (thanks to Thanatos’s contribution to Frey’s creation) half-blood being raised among their own children. The act of hiding him as well was dangerous to the point of Odin making a case of treason from it should it be uncovered in the wrong way.

His Far had given up a great deal to protect him: freedom to raise him wholly on his own, the ability to openly claim him, the possibility of war, and the even-more real possibility of execution…all for his son.

Yes, if there was one thing Loki did better than anything less it was love.

Frey just hoped that someday he was able to love his own children half so well as his Far had taught him – not through words or books – but through his deeds.

Part of him wanted to prove to *everyone* – whether they knew of his parentage or not – that he was a worthy son and heir for his father, so that when the day came for him to Ascend or his parentage was revealed that there could be nothing for Odin or any other to use against him – or his father.

What treason could there be, after all, in siring a godling who had proven over and over again to be
of heroic stock, with a list of deeds to their name that would secure them a place in Valhalla among the greatest of warriors?

Such an offspring would be a boon to Asgard – or Jotunheim as Laufey is apparently aware of him, which sparked a whole ‘nother round of questions – not a cause for shame or ridicule.

He warred with this ambition within himself, this desire to prove himself worthy that he knew he inherited from his Far who had always felt second-best to Thor…though at last he had an answer as to why that was so with Laufey’s claiming of Frey.

And it was this ambition that tempted him into perhaps failing to curb whatever plots Dumbledore or Tom had designed around this Tournament.

Frey had a running bet with his Far that he was somehow going to be entered and chosen – even if it was as Harry Potter – but without knowing his true name they had no way to bind him to the Tournament as his research had told him the Goblet of Fire worked. A fact that if revealed would possibly derail his ability to dodge Dumbledore’s prying into his home life and call his childhood into question – questions he had no intention of ever answering…which was problematic in itself. But if it let it go on, Frey would have to pretend to obey the rules of the Tournament – at least in public – and act as Harry Potter to the hilt.

Sometimes wearing the Boy-Who-Lived mask was exhausting, in fact it most often was, and he hated having to pretend to be the glittering golden child.

But it was highly beneficial at distracting those – like Dumbledore – who would muddy up his quest for the Horcruxes.

Frey abhorred the very idea of the Tournament, it went against all the values he’d been taught from the cradle about the value of life.

Just this once…he hoped he was wrong.

And that when the Champions were chosen on All Hallows Eve, that the name Harry Potter wasn’t amongst them.

…

The other schools arrived with grand pomp and circumstance, Frey quite enjoying both schools and their usage of magic for their entrances, both Beauxbaton’s illusions and Durmstrang’s fire.

Students from all houses gathered around the revealed Goblet of Fire, some hoping to fool Dumbledore’s age line – to much hilarity – while others entered with ceremony both great and small.

And then Samhain was upon them and the feast was begun.

…

Frey stood with grand ceremony and strode forward, taking the cleared place at the front of the Great Hall, standing on the dais that had been cleared of the teachers and visitors who were now seated among the students when he’d been called forward to perform a tale of the dead for the Samhain feast.

Every bit the showman from his father’s lessons, Frey had plotted and planned for weeks over what to perform before landing on a singular tale – that of his own half-sister.
Holding his hands out before him, he channeled his illusion magic into his palms until it was a glowing ball of golden light then tossed it up towards the ceiling, the candles extinguishing on cue as the magic began to illustrate the story as he spoke, the same as his Far had done for him as a young godling when he told this and many other stories in the days before the eyes of Asgard fell so heavily on Frey.

“This is the tale of Hela, daughter of Loki, and Queen of Niflheim, a goddess of the Dead and Avatar of Death.” He spoke solemnly his voice resounding through the Great Hall and enthralling his audience, even those like Hermione Granger who scoffed at his words.

“There’s only one God.” She snorted derisively, fed up with this nonsense of the Board of Governors imposing lessons in mythology on Hogwarts and calling it “Wizarding Tradition.”

“No, there’s not.” Neville drawled, many around him purebloods and half-bloods alike nodding their heads and shushing her. “And saying things like that is why many wizards and witches don’t like muggleborns. Now shush and maybe you’ll learn something.”

Before Hermione could retort, a harrumph from Neville's Head of House silenced her, Professor McGonagall’s stern gimlet gaze forcing even Hermione into watchful silence as the truly impressive display of charmwork played out the story young Mr. Potter was telling – though it was a version even Minerva would admit she’d never heard before.

Perhaps Mr.’s Black and Lupin were correct and Mr. Potter’s guardians had seen to his education in such things far better than even a British wizarding family might have done.

Whatever the cause of the tale and Mr. Potter’s charmwork – which Filius was already planning on providing Mr. Potter extra credit and house points for – it was clear they had chosen the right student to represent Hogwarts as part of the opening ceremonies, as honoring one of the “Death” gods was a new mandate to go hand-in-hand with bringing wizarding traditions back to Hogwarts per the demands of both the Wizengamot and the Governing Board.

“Long ago,” Frey’s voice carried, caressing and weaving around his captivated audience, ignoring the by-play between some of the students and teachers. “Loki, son of Odin and Frigga and god of Mischief, Avatar of Magic Herself, looked around him and felt a lack. His brother’s good friend, Volstagg, one of the Warriors Three had wed and his wife had born him a son, bringing a new life and joy into the warrior. Loki, wanting this joy for himself but being unwed, decided upon a plan. He would bend his very magic, his blood and bone, and create for himself a child to love and be loved by in turn.”

The illusions overhead played out: a striking form with glowing green eyes watching a rotund male and winsome female cuddle a child; then that same green-eyed form studying and hunching over texts in a library; and then as Frey spoke strands of white red and green flowing from the figure and forming another, smaller form.

“And so, as Zeus had once made Athena, so too did Loki make his child – a girl child who he called Hela.”

The dark figure crouched and picked up the smaller figure who was wearing a pretty dress, twirling her about as the audience felt more than heard a joyous sense of laughter and delight.

“But.” Frey’s tone darkened as did the vignette. “Odin, son of Bor and King of Asgard, looked upon Hela and was disgusted. For she had been born not as all Aesir were from a woman but from the loathsome magics worked by a man, for the only man who could wield magic with impunity in Asgard was Odin himself, not his weaker younger son. Odin called her monstrous and forbade her
presence in the Realm Eternal, casting down she who would be his granddaughter with a fearsome curse and binding her to the Realm of the Dead for in his eyes – she never should have lived.”

Now the illusion showed a fierce and tall man in armor wielding a spear and missing an eye snatching the small figure representing Hela from Loki’s arms and then with his spear tearing open a rift in the worlds before casting her down, looking over at the huddled and crying form of his son with disgust before whirling away.

“None of Asgard ever knew from whence Hela came, save perhaps those who had the sight, but all feared the dreaded Queen of the Dead. All save her father, Loki, who despite his being forbidden to see his own child kept his beloved child close to his heart.”

The illusion showed two figures, one growing steadily until it was as a grown woman and the other the familiar green-eyed man, each in their different halls but reaching out to each other from opposite sides of a mirror.

“In time, Hela grew to be a beautiful maiden, one who ruled the realm of Niflheim, sometimes called Helheim after her being bound there. And so her heart in turn yearned as her father’s had. But who would love the queen of the dead when only the dead surround her?”

Hela was shown with long gleaming locks and the same green eyes, watching over the realms wistfully from her mirror or sitting in judgement over the dead.

“And so Loki, unable to see his own child, spread whispers and rumors of a great treasure residing in Helheim, so that the bravest and most worthy of warriors would go there and perhaps one might fall in love and stay there as love and consort to his daughter. It was a plan that worked too well, as Loki’s plans often did, having an unforeseen consequence: many were the warriors who sought the treasure of Helheim but none of them were canny enough to realize it was Hela herself nor constant enough to stay in the land of the dead, even to win the hand of one of the fairest maidens of the Realms, for all knew that Odin had bound her there and to love her and wed her was to never leave Niflheim again.”

A parade of warriors knelt before Hela, or fought her guards, some dying for trying to act as brutes and others content with only a kiss. But none stayed and Hela always returned to her cold throne watching over the dead.

“Heart weary and sore, Hela barred the gates of her palace to every warrior of Asgard, be they Aesir or Vanir, she would have no more coming to trying and take or charm her without desiring to stay.”

Blue runes climbed over the arched gates of the fortress Frey wrought as he took a breath and a deep drink of water before continuing the tale.

“Loki was stymied: for he wanted only happiness for the child he had made and it seemed all was lost. For of the other races, the Light Elves had no place in a dead land and could not survive, the Fire Giants were busy trying to start a war with the Dark Elves, and those of mortal men would not survive Niflheim long enough to even see the beauty that was Hela. But Loki had forgotten the last race – or perhaps the First – the first of the Nine Realms was Jotunheim, but they were locked away from the other Realms as punishment by Odin, however, they had gifts that allowed them passage through the blood of Ymir along the World Tree – but only those of the direct bloodline of Ymir, that of Laufey King and his family.”

The scene switched, illustrating the massive blue Jotnar and showing a group of a hundred or so standing on a dais above thousands more, all those standing high of Ymir’s bloodline including a trio who wore crowns fashioned of ice.
“Of the line of Ymir that shared blood with Laufey king were many Jotnar who could – with training and sacrifice – learn to walk among the branches of the World Tree. But with the Casket of Ancient Winters taken by Odin – another punishment for the Jotnar’s loss in the Aesir-Jotnar war – their powers were needed to keep their people from starving. Two young cousins, barely old enough to have their markings of maturity, heard tales of the treasure of Niflheim. Skadi and Jarnsaxa waited and planned, eager to bring back the treasure to their family’s hold in the once-prosperous North of Jotunheim, and learned all they could from listening to the few traders who would dare disobey the Allfather’s edict to trade with the Jotnar in secret.”

Two blue forms, one taller and holding an ice spear and the other smaller but still of average size for a Jotun and holding a scroll, traipsed over a frozen land, hiding in shadows and listening at doors while Dark Elves, dwarves, Aesir and Vanir alike dared the rifts between worlds or piloted ships to Jotunheim to seek out stacks of fine furs or casks of whale oil, even rare Jotnar gems.

“And so in time once Hela had tired of warriors and locked the gates of both her palace and her heart, the two Jotnar set out, combining their powers for the trip through the rifts and branches to Niflheim. Hela’s palace gates opened easily – for they were not of Asgard – and the two Jotnar sought out the muchly-vaunted treasure guarded by the dark maiden and her army of the dead. And stunned at having Jotnar invade her halls, Hela rose to her feet but was stunned into silence at the sight of them – for they had a rough handsomeness with their marks and features and deep blue skin – only to see that they were likewise struck by her, for Hela was taller than any Aesir the Jotnar had ever seen, nearly on part with Skadi’s own height and outstripping her father by far.”

The Jotnar were shown slipping through shadows before confronting Hela in her throne room, the audience getting a deep sense of synchronicity as the trio met for the first time.

“In that moment, a pair of Jotnar hearts forswear their quest for Hela’s treasure whatever it may be, and vowed to each win her for their own or for many were the Jotnar, the Aesir or Vanir who had taken a lover or even a war-prize from their cousin realms, often creating children both great in power and in beauty. Skadi, believing that as an Avatar of Death that Death would win Hela’s favor, swore to bring Hela the trophies of a thousand hunts for proof of his devotion and so he set out once more, leaving his cousin and now competition for her hand behind. But Jarnsaxa was wiser than Skadi and could see the loneliness in Hela’s eyes, and in so seeing, knelt down on one knee and set aside his great spear, vowing to never leave her side until Ragnarok came.”

The shadow-figure of Skadi with holding his scroll threw a fist into the air and marched off purposefully while Jarnsaxa’s knelt with one large hand pressed to his chest over her heart as Frey continued with the story of his half-sister’s courtship.

“Moved by Jarnsaxa’s promise, Hela allowed him rest and succor in her halls, desiring to see how long his vow would remain true. A year and more passed and Jarnsaxa’s heart stayed steady and constant, and in the face of such earnest and true regard, the queen felt her heart soften and yield, at last agreeing to take Jarnsaxa as her husband and consort.” Frey paused as scenes of simple courtship and the eventual handfasting played out. “And so Hela found herself for the first time in many a year happy and at peace, her loneliness banished. But Odin’s curse was more dastardly than she – or any – knew, and the time came when it struck once more.”

Happy scenes of domestic idyll danced in shadows and light, the giant Jarnsaxa showing a gentle loving side of the warlike people as he remained content at his bride’s side.

“For in time, as often happens between those who share intimacies, Jarnsaxa begot Hela with child.” Grief was apparent in Frey’s voice, those all listening - save for one of the eavesdropping Asgardians who were watching the spectacle through the seeing pool…and all vowing to never speak of the
scene to the All-Father – attributing it to story-telling than the actual pain this part of his sister’s tale caused him. “However Odin had bound Hela thoroughly to the Realm of the Dead, and such a binding it not easily thrown off. No sooner had the beautiful queen quickened than had she lost her first child. Grief filled the halls of Niflheim as it happened again, and again. A terrible, vile thing done to any woman, let alone one as gentle and lovely as Hela. Distraught at what had been done to his love, Jarnsaxa scoured the tomes in the library of Niflheim, certain that there must be a way for him to give his beloved the child she yearned for, even as the souls of their lost little ones grew – though as wraiths rather than living young.”

Murmurs sounded throughout the great hall as the grieving parents surrounded by the ghosts of their children – from infant to toddler to child and beyond – were bracketed by scenes of Jarnsaxa searching and comforting his love.

Frey had many reasons to dislike and distrust Odin – but what had been done to his half-sister was more than enough to push him to the very edge of hate where he wavered even now.

“And in time.” Frey’s voice picked up an ominous resonance. “Jarnsaxa found the answer – as their children were conceived inside of Hela’s womb they were unable to take from her to sustain themselves as Hela was made of magic not of life and bound to her very soul to Death. Her very being was anathema to carrying and bearing young. And so Loki mourned for his daughter – for he had created her only for his child to live a life filled with loneliness, anguish and grief with far too few moments of true happiness. However, Loki locked away on Asgard and under nearly constant watch, and even Hela herself underestimated the resolve of Jarnsaxa. For he had promised her all the desires of her heart and he would not rest until he delivered all she wished for into her hands – no matter the cost.” Frey took a ragged breath. “A great and terrible resolve – for the cost would be great indeed.”

“And then.” His voice rasped lowly through the hall though none had difficulty hearing it. “When next Hela felt life quicken within her and began to mourn – as with all her children she was able to shelter them within her before the time came for them to feed from her and die – Jarnsaxa cast a spell. Hela’s consort and lover was many things, learned and powerful among them, but he wasn’t a true sorcerer preferring martial abilities to those magical. And so his spell worked – their children drew breath, a pair of twin boys and shapeshifters with it – but at a devastating cost, that of Jarnsaxa’s very life.”

The tall figure of Jarnsaxa faded away as Hela labored, barely able to lay his children in their mother’s arms before being stuck down and then reappearing at her side as a shade – dead but choosing to remain at her side for all of time…as he’d promised her.

“Those were bittersweet days for the daughter of Loki and Queen of Niflheim. Her beloved remained at her side – but as a shade. Her children lived and grew – but as time passed it was clear they did not have the near-immortality of herself or her father. Jarnsaxa’s spell had been enough to save them but not enough to bless them with the long days of Asgard or Jotunheim. They would still die,” Frey’s voice was solemn. “Their father’s blessing a mere extension of the inevitable. A hundred years and more had passed since the two Jotnar had slipped into the halls of Hela’s palace, and in that time she had known both the highest of happiness and the very dregs of despair when at last her other suitor reappeared, having waged wars and won many battles in her name to prove himself and his love. The sight Skadi returned to was not the one he expected…to say the least. His rival was dead – but not gone. And his love both adored her children – and mourned them – in equal measure, knowing that it was only a matter of time before they joined their father in her halls as shades rather than the joyful living beings they currently were. Known Fenrir the Wolf and Jormangandr the Serpent for their preferred forms, shapeshifters and sorcerers, Fenrir with the First-Born blessing of Hela and Jormangandr with that of Jarnsaxa, each destined to be more powerful
than their parent…should they live long enough for the Blessing to take effect.”

“Then one day when her children were grown and still aging, Skadi returned. Triumphant from battles numerous in worlds both near and far, he found himself welcomed as an old friend by the Queen who had entered into a melancholy, already fearing and anticipating the day when her children would die and join their sire as a shade among her court. A strong sorcerer and moved by her grief, Skadi found the spell that Jarnsaxa had cast, seeing at once the problem of where Odin’s curse had kept it from giving Hela’s beloved sons the fully measure of years that should be their due. And without thought for himself, he cast the spell once more, conferring his own span of remaining life onto Hela’s sons, thereby joining his beloved as her second husband and consort of Niflheim for all of time until Ragnarok comes.”

The hall erupted in applause as he took a deep bow, Dumbledore reclaiming the podium and thanking him with glittering eyes and false enthusiasm for his performance.

…

“And now.” Dumbledore said with great effect. “The time has come for the Goblet of Fire to select our Champions for the TriWizard tournament. Now let me be clear. If you are chosen, you stand alone as the representative of your school.”

The Goblet’s Fire shot high, all eyes on the magical flame as they waited with baited breath.

Then the first slip of paper and the first champion’s name shot forth.

“Representing Beauxbatons Academy of Magic, Ms. Fleur Delacour!”

Weeping sounded from some of the Beauxbatons girls as a willowy blonde with an icy expression stood, accepting her Headmistress’s congratulations gracefully before continuing back to the antechamber to await the rest of the champions and the instructions for the first task.

Once she was clear of the great hall, the Goblet’s fire turned red once more, revealing another piece of paper which Dumbledore snatched from the air.

“From Durmstrang Institute, Mr. Viktor Krum!”

Frey arched his brow as he applauded good-naturedly, snorting a bit at Karkaroff’s deputy headmaster’s over-the-top cries, Karkaroff himself restricted to Hogwarts’s grounds and the Durmstrang ship as Lady Hogwarts had refused to allow the man entrance to the school.

The Goblet turned red once more as the door closed behind the back of the tall and rather roughly handsome Viktor, ideas already tumbling through Frey’s head and tugging at his awakened libido.

“And finally, the Champion for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is…” Dumbledore paused, eyes widening dramatically. “Harry Potter?”

All eyes turned to Frey as he gave in internal groan.

Sometimes he really hated being right.

“Harry Potter? Harry where are you?” Dumbledore searched the benches for the thorn in his side.

Frey slowly stood, taking out his wand and letting of a flashbang of sound and light to silence the shouting crowd.
“Sonorous. I’m only going to say this once. *I, Harry Potter, swear on my magic that I neither entered the tournament nor had someone else enter my name for me. So mote it be.*” Holding his wand high, he locked gazes with the stern face of the headmaster, who *clearly* didn’t approve of his method of dealing with this newest manipulation. Though be who was the question. *“Lumos maxima.”*

A bright light shone from the tip of his wand, nearly blinding in its intensity before he cancelled it, making many people cry out and cover their eyes before he put his wand back in its holster and strode away into the antechamber with the other champions, leaving the great hall in stunned silence in his wake.

…

Frey entered the antechamber, the other champions just giving him a once-over but not throwing a fit…mainly because unless you knew who he was, you wouldn’t know he was supposed to be only fourteen instead of the seventeen you were supposed to be to enter the tournament.

Technically he could get out of it, he wasn’t bound in any way by the Goblet, he’d felt the artifact searching for him, but it couldn’t find him.

Harry Potter after all, wasn’t his true name.

Several minutes later, likely after they shot off some platitudes and sent the children off to bed, the two school heads, a trio of deputy heads, a pair of ministry lackeys, and Remus, Sirius, Severus all piled into the antechamber with Dumbledore at the head arguing with Madame Maxim as well as Professor McGonagall and Severus.

“It is an outrage.” Maxim declared, Minerva nodding along while Severus simply caught Frey’s gaze and arched a brow, wordlessly asking if he was alright and wished to continue. Frey gave him a small nod and Severus stood back against the wall, tucking his hands into his sleeves. “He is too young!”

“That’s right.” Sirius growled in fury. “Harry is only fourteen. How did his name get into that fucking Goblet, Albus?”

“Sirius, language.” Remus scolded him mildly. “However, I agree Albus. This is a serious breach of the safety regulations the ministry promised the Board that would be in place. There will have to be an investigation.”

“What is going on?” Krum asked in his deep bass voice from where he stood by the fire.

“I’m only fourteen.” Frey told the other champions. “Someone entered me without my permission.”

“Bah.” The Bulgarian deputy head spat. “How would such a thing happen or why?”

“How about.” Severus suggested silkily. “Because he’s the bloody Boy-Who-Lived and there are known Death Eaters living in freedom who just might be interested in entering a young man in a competition he has a very real chance of perishing in…to start.”

“All that aside.” Albus said, stroking one hand down his beard. “Harry has given a magical oath that he had nothing to do with it, therefore the question that remains is does he have to compete regardless, Ludo?”

“Well…there’s no precedent…” He spluttered, turning to look at the new head of the Department of International Cooperation. “Sir?”
“The rules are clear. He’s been chosen. Fourteen or not… the boy will have to compete.”

“Well, there we have it.” Bagman said helplessly, clapping his hands in a mockery of cheer. “So, the First Task.” He continued as the educators bickered and hissed amongst each other and the students just watched him carefully. “It is traditionally a test of bravery and nerve… so you will not receive any notice or help regarding what it entails. It will take place here on Hogwarts grounds on November 24th of this year.”

…

The population of Hogwarts was behaving… odd to say the least after that.

Most believed him, taking his oath as truth, though a few holdouts who were hopefuls themselves complained over a Fourth-Year being chosen over themselves.

His friends and study group all buckled down and helped him prepare, granted none of them knew what he was preparing for, he did as Remus was on the Board who had approved each and every task, an advantage that apparently no one but himself and Remus knew he had.

And gods knew, Remus wasn’t about to say anything if it meant his cub having a better shot at surviving the death circus of a tournament.

Still, his friends all made up lists of upper-level spells for him to learn, and were willing to submit themselves as test-dummies once he’d gotten the knack of casting them, except for a few borderline-illegal spells that they all agreed were more of a last resort. He’d also netted himself more work-out and sparring partners, as particularly the older boys were worried about him. That they didn’t have Quidditch this year to keep them in shape probably had something to do with the new interest in his workouts likely had something to do with it as well.

But with his becoming Champion brought a full-new level of attention down on his head, which would lead to him ducking into the library or whatever quiet corner he could find somedays, including the RoR, just for a few moments of peace.

A habit, he was entertained to learn, that he shared with one of his other Champions who also had a problem with both fame and – to Harry’s shock now that he was older – fangirls.

Viktor Krum may be hell-on-wheels on a broomstick chasing a snitch but take him off the pitch and he turned rather shy and awkward… which was just about one of the cutest things Frey had ever seen in his life.

“Do you mind if I sit here?” Viktor asked quietly one day, gesturing to the open space at Frey’s table that was tucked deep within the library. It was the unofficial “Harry wants quiet or he’ll prank your ass off” table, so other than his closest friends, like Draco or the Twins who weren’t afraid of a good pranking, people left him alone after the first couple examples he made of silly students during his second year.

“Not at all.” Frey smiled brightly up at the professional athlete, pushing out the opposite chair with a gentle nudge of his foot. “Please.”

“Thank you.” Viktor said, setting down his bag and pulling out a few books written in German which was the official language spoken at his school.

“Bitte.” He responded. Or you’re welcome in German.

“You speak German?” Viktor asked, dark brown eyes sparking with excitement as he switched to
German himself.

“I speak many languages.” Harry answered in the same. “German is just one of them.”

And it was true, he did thanks to his father’s exacting standard for his education. Part of which was Loki explaining that it was easier to gain the All-Speak when he froze into his immortality if he already was multi-lingual. Something to do with the pathways already being well paved for the magic of the All-Speak to come in and build on the existing paths rather than having to dig whole new ones in his mind.

Which honestly, just sounded ridiculously painful to five-year-old Frey when his father explained it so he’d been diligent about his language studies ever since.

“Wonderful.” Viktor smiled awkwardly before ducking his head and applying himself to his studies.

And that was that, the sum of their first real meeting, though it by far wasn’t the last or even the most awkward.

No, the most-awkward award went to the day of November 23rd.

It was the day before the First Task, and Frey was well-aware that the dragons had arrived the night before, and that likely the heads of the other schools had come up with some way to discover the details of task and pass them on to their champions.

Which was the main cause of the awkwardness between himself and Viktor, who had grown over the last two weeks to be increasing more comfortable in his company.

After several long moments of silence and fidgeting from Viktor, Frey said blandly: “The First Task is dragons. There. Now we’re both aware that the other is cheating, and likely the French Veela is as well. Can we please work on figuring out how not to die a fiery death now?”

…
Frey joined Viktor in the striped champion’s tent, the two of them exchanging smiles and comfortable with enjoying the silence of each other as the sounds of a roaring crowd and stamping feet easily penetrated the thin silk walls, gladly avoiding the hovering form of Rita Skeeter who was stalking the outside of the tent hoping for an exclusive.

She’d given pinning down Frey a good try at the Weighing of the Wands only to be stymied when faced with facts that she couldn’t refute, though she gave twisting them a damn good try.

But Frey wasn’t the son of Loki Silvertongue for nothing, and easily deflected the worst of her queries.

The witch still managed to get quote from the disgruntled few at Hogwarts that attempted to paint him as an attention seeker but with only one or two students with an axe to grind as her sources, it didn’t have nearly the impact she could have hoped for.

And it certainly hadn’t managed to stymie the budding friendship – and possibly more – between Viktor and Frey.

For while he hadn’t anticipated Rita Skeeter trying to tear him apart to the public, his magical oath – though worthless due to the name he used, true or not – had done more than enough to silence all but the most dogged of his detractors such as sore losers from the upper years and the always-irritating Ms. Granger, who found their school less patient with her than ever especially the Gryffindors who had not only the Boy-Who-Lived as a Lion but also the Hogwarts Champion to their name.

Lions tended to look askance at anyone trying to tarnish their shine, which was very much how they saw her attempts at constantly maligning Frey and his closest friends.

Fleur finally arrived, casting a look at the two young men sharing a settee before taking herself off to the opposite side of the tent with a disdainful sniff.

All three of them were in similar uniforms for the task which allowed freedom of movement but were made of tough leather. Frey’s was in actuality a modified version of his dragonhide armor from Camp, simply with the more obvious armor pieces removed like his greaves and vambraces, and with a simple Hogwarts crest attached over his left breast above his heart.

Viktor’s were a rather garish burgundy and burnt orange, his school colors, and clearly modeled off of Quidditch leathers, Fleur’s nearly identical only in the light blue of Beauxbatons.

As the hour arrived, Ludo Bagman bulled into the tent with his usual over-the-top bonhomie, greeting them all as if they were about to go out and throw a party not face off against a fire breathing monster.

After several moments of this and explaining the object – facing a dragon, retrieve the golden egg, etc. – Ludo held out a cloth bag that moved a bit saying: “Ladies first.”

Face filled with trepidation, Fleur reached in and drew out a small figure of a dragon, an animated simulacrum, not an inexpensive bauble for using in as a method of choosing the order of champions.
for a single event from what Frey understood.

It was a miniature Chinese Fireball, Fleur’s eyes widening perceptively, as the sinuous dragon roared out a massive spire of flaming, well, lava for lack of a better example.

People could talk all they liked about their Hungarian Horntails and Swedish Short-Snouts, but when push came to shove, Chinese Fireballs were one of the most dangerous dragon breeds in the world in the world.

Ludo held out the bag to Viktor next, the stoic and shy Bulgarian pulling forth a miniature Horntail filling Frey with dread, knowing what dragon was left. He would be going first followed by Fleur and then Viktor. Reaching in he took out the last dragon, appreciating the sparkling teal and blue scales even as he mentally cursed.

The Peruvian Vipertooth, containing one of the most venomous bites of any creature in existence second only to highly-venomous serpents like the Basilisk.

Great.

Just fucking fantastic.

They really decided to go all-out for the first task, he had to admit.

Three of the most dangerous dragon breeds, all for very different reasons and requiring very different methods of handling. It was a case of knowing only being half the battle. All three of them knew that they were facing dragons, even what breeds. But without knowing which dragon you couldn’t prepare for it, having to instead come up with a plan of attack for three very different scenarios.

For one thing, Frey’s parseltongue was out since only Fleur’s dragon was close enough to a snake in evolution for it to work and he had no idea if his beast-speaking abilities from his father had developed well enough to translate a dragon’s speech or not.

Which meant he’d have to go about things the hard way…or the easy way depending on how you looked at it.

“Good luck, Harry.” Viktor told him earnestly with a shy smile, sticking to German as they did when they spoke to each other unless one of them wanted to practice a language the other spoke.

“You too, Viktor.” Frey smiled back easily, green eyes glinting flirtatiously. “See you on the other side.” He sent Viktor a wink, a blush rising in the other young man’s cheeks as he ducked out of the tent at Bagman’s signal.

Facing the roaring crowd, Frey gave a jaunty wave and a bright smile then took out his wand at the ready for the signal, which came a moment later as he stared down at the crouching dragon who was tensed and at the ready, riled up by the moving around and the noise of the crowd.

Frey mentally thanked Remus and Lucius who insisted that using actual dragon eggs and nesting mothers was risking endangered species, the Romanian reserve agreeing, and sending adolescent males who while extremely bad-tempered weren’t as deadly as a nesting mother protecting her eggs.

He was beautiful. Frey thought to himself, cheered to his toes that for once while facing a dangerous – but so very beautiful – creature that he wasn’t responsible for slaying it. This was one beauty who was safe so long as he stayed on his preserve.

Taking a breath, he flicked his wand, casting an illusion over his hands that wouldn’t show anything
to the audience, they likely didn’t even know what he’d just done as the magic was entirely from his father’s teaching and not really using the wand at all. Another breath and he crouched himself, slowly coming as close to the dragon and nest as he dared, watching the signs for the dragon to ready an attack. And he was ready in turn when the Vipertooth breathed in, getting ready to spit out a blast of poison-laced fire.

Slamming his hands onto the ground, ice flew from under his hands, lunging under his power towards the dragon and encasing it, quickly dropping the dragon’s temperature and forcing it into hibernation then retreating back. Biting at his lip as his forehead beaded with sweat from the effort of utilizing powers he’d barely begun to learn and train, Frey forced the ice away from the now-sleeping dragon. Unable to make it disappear, he instead formed it into a cage around the slumbering creature, then cut it off, not even needing to look to know that his hands had turned light blue under his illusion.

Rising to his feet, still intentionally deaf to the crowd and the commentary, Frey easily loped over to the nest and retrieved the golden egg before striding over to the finish line, then pause before he left the area and cast a simple controlled light incendio, melting the ice and raising the temperature in the arena back to safe levels for a creature who was cold-blooded…and not half-Jotun.

“He’s done it!” Bagman was shouting, the judges all eyeing Frey with varying amounts of shock and amazement, Dumbledore twinkling as if he’d just figured out the secret to the perfect lemon drop. “Harry Potter bested the dragon and retrieved the golden egg in an unbeatable time of two-minutes and thirty-nine seconds using elemental magic! Never in living memory has a student used such an impressive display of elemental magics!” As Frey wasn’t injured, Bagman went on to call for the scores. “And the scores! Beginning with the Head of International Cooperation.”

A 10 curled into the air above the head of the forgettable man, who gave Frey a short nod.

“Headmistress Maxime!”

The Head of Beauxbatons studied Frey with narrowed eyes, then raised her wand and gave him a 9.

“Headmaster Karkaroff!”

Scowling deeply, but obviously impressed despite himself, Karkaroff parted with another 9.

“And last but certainly not least, our own Headmaster Dumbledore.”

Still twinkling all the way, a 10 rose over his garish purple and gold robes.

“Another 10, that gives Harry Potter a nearly perfect score of 38 out of 40, I daresay that’ll be first place! But not to get ahead of ourselves, next we have the lovely representative of Beauxbatons, Ms. Fleur Delacour!”

Frey’s ice magic had made it easy for Charlie Weasley and the other dragon handlers to move his dragon out, though it took a bit more doing to get the Fireball into the stadium. Frey, just smiled and shook his head when Madam Pomphrey tried to chivvy him into the medical tent, instead transfiguring himself a raised director’s chair beside the judge’s platform, watching with interest at how his fellow champions handled their own dragons.

Fleur had apparently chosen to play on her own natural abilities as well, drawing on her partial Veela heritage and allure to attempt to enchant the Fireball to sleep.

She was at least partially successful, losing patience after a good ten minutes of singing and charging ahead with the Fireball only in a dazed, sleepy state instead of knocked out.
That tactic would have worked better on some of the western breeds like the Horntail but it was still a good effort that only left her with burns down her right side which Madam Pomfrey treated while the dragons were switched then Fleur returned for her scores, gaining a respectable 27 for her go.

Which left only Viktor and the reason Frey was sitting in plain view of thousands of spectators rather than taking refuge in the champions’ tent or the medical area and letting the school mediwitch fuss over his non-existent injuries.

Frey ended up being glad he’d stayed as Viktor ended up being the only one of them who actually put on a real showing of fighting the dragon, casting fire-shielding spells, which were particularly effective due to the shorter-range of the Horntail’s fire, then hitting it with a Conjunctivitis curse and sending off loud concussive blasts that were noisy but relatively harmless, herding the blinded dragon back and using his speed rushed the nest, snatched up the golden egg and ran.

Viktor was fast, but not fast enough, a flick of the angry and hurting dragon’s tail slashing down his back and sending him tumbling over the finish line as dragon handlers rushed the area to stun the dragon and levitate it back to the holding area.

“Hey you.” Frey smiled down at the prone, heavily muscled form. Viktor was alone in the healing tent for the moment as the mediwitch had gone to fetch a salve for the tears in his back, Viktor having been stubborn enough to stay in the arena to hear his scores, netting an impressive 35, having only been marked down due to the last-minute injury. “How are you feeling?”

“I’ve been better.” Viktor admitted, turning his head from laying on his arms to resting his stubbled cheek on the pillow, one eye peeking up at the younger man. “Fleur’s groupies were in here before, chattering about you using elemental magic on the dragon. Ice, yes?”

“Yes.” Frey nodded, already knowing that he was going to be answering a lot of questions about that from everyone, including his friends. The only ones who knew that he had that in his bag of tricks at the moment being his father and his two dogfathers who had helped him practice during the summer. “It’s a new skill, I wasn’t sure if it would work the way I wanted it to and it fought me all the way but it worked.” He shrugged. “The Vipertooth was deadly but from a warmer climate than the other two dragons. It was as good of a match as I could’ve hoped for. If I’d gotten the Horntail I would’ve sunk.”

“I rather doubt that.” Viktor told him with a shy grin, eyes darting toward the tent entrance as they heard the mediwitch coming back. “See you later, our place?”

“Tomorrow, probably.” Frey said regretfully with a shake of his head. “Everyone is going to want to celebrate.”

“Tomorrow, then.” Viktor agreed, the words a promise to their ears as Frey ducked out the back of the tent, soon to be ambushed by his friends and dragged away to celebrate and go over his performance.

Frey foresaw a lot of explanations and too much sugar in his immediate future.

…

“How did you do that Harry?” Cedric demanded as Frey joined his friends-slash-study group in one of the – formerly – abandoned classrooms in the neutral zones of the castle that lay between the dormitories.

As their group had grown, they’d needed more space than could be found in the library…if they
didn’t want to constantly be tossed out on their ears by Madam Pince anyway.

So they’d picked a spot that was about an equal distance from the dorms, though being on the fourth floor it was a bit more in the Gyrff/Raven sector of the castle but there really wasn’t a place in the castle that evenly split the distances, though the fourth floor came close.

“Elemental magic, mate?” Fred gave a soundless whistle.

“Pretty rare talent, that.” George finished.

“No, not rare.” Draco corrected, eyeing Frey with deep scrutiny from where he was sharing an old chaise they’d moved in the year before with Blaise. “Just hard to learn and harder to practice. You’ve drawn a lot of attention with that, you sure it was wise?”

“Probably not.” Frey conceded with a short nod, shooting an enigmatic look at the cuddling pair as he accepted the butterbeer from Neville. “But hey, it’s not like I’m going to be able to pass under the radar anymore after being forced to compete in the tournament. Might as well make the most of what few secrets I still have left.”

“And the ice magic?” Cedric brought things back around.

“Is one of those secrets.” Frey gave a rakish grin at them before sauntering off to talk to one of the other groups in the classroom. “You’ll have to work it out for yourselves how I managed it.”

Draco fumed a little bit. He knew how he’d managed it. But he couldn’t say anything. The damn idiot was being reckless, taking unnecessary risks. Draco sighed to himself, turning to give Blaise his full-attention, snuggling further into his embrace. The only saving grace was Harry’s father was known in the legends for his control of fire…not ice.

…

Frey beat Viktor to the library by quite a margin, spending the quiet time meditating and centering himself the way Severus has been training him for the last year or so in preparation for advanced studies in the Mind Arts.

He’d moved on to working through his assigned reading and essays for school, having tucked away his golden egg in his trunk, determined not to worry about it. He already knew it was a hostage-retrieval involving the Lake but no details. And with that he had a damn good idea what to do with the egg. But the second task was three months away, he had other things to worry about this exact moment.

Like his continued search for the soul leech inside Hogwarts, whatever-the-fuck Voldemort was planning, avoiding his Headmaster, and controlling himself around Draco and Blaise who seemed to be either snogging or snuggling whenever they weren’t actively studying or in class.

It hurt.

His friends at Hogwarts assumed that he’d done something over the summer but he’d never said a word.

He didn’t want to hurt Draco, as dumb as that seemed now with Draco running around the castle without a care in the world for Frey’s own feelings.

When he’d originally suggested waiting, he’d never thought this would be the result, him pining while Draco ran around with one of their friends.
Frey couldn’t even be angry with Blaise. How could he be? Everyone knew about his and Draco’s agreement, Blaise was just dating someone who hadn’t been officially taken.

Draco was supposed to be his best friend in the Wizarding World.

From what Frey could tell he was either being willfully oblivious to Frey’s feelings or he just didn’t care.

Or perhaps worst yet, Draco did know and not only didn’t care, but didn’t factor Frey’s feelings into the equation at all.

He wasn’t sure which would hurt more if any of them were ever confirmed from the wizard himself.

“Hello, Harry.” Viktor said in German, drawing Frey from his depressing thoughts.

“Hello, Viktor.” Frey smiled genuinely as the handsome Bulgarian took a seat at his side rather than across the table, intelligent dark eyes tracking first over his face and then the open books and parchment surrounding him.

“What are you working on this day?”

“Semester project for Ancient Runes.” Frey waved a hand idly over the texts. “I have the theory mostly figured out, now I just have to make it work in practice and write the essay.”

“That sounds similar to the projects for Runes we do at Durmstrang.” Viktor noted, leaning forward a bit and studying the bit of Arithmancy he’d scribbled out and the diagram below it. “What is this supposed to be?”

“A pocketwatch is all.” Frey said with purposeful vagueness. “Or the skeleton for one. I plan on building on it every semester now that we’ve gotten started on practical work and aren’t just relying on memorization. I might be able to double-dip and use it for Arithmancy next year when we start projects in fifth year…but that’s all based on if I can make it work.”

“A watch?” Viktor asked incredulously as he cocked his head and tracked his eyes over the diagram and equations once more. “This is much more than a simple watch, Harry. And leagues beyond the normal capabilities of a fourth year.”

“I’m supposed to be a genius; didn’t you know?” Frey shot back with good-natured cynicism. “Besides which, so are being the lead champion in the TriWizard and using elemental magic.”

“And yet that hasn’t stopped you yet.” Viktor nodded with a rueful-but-teasing sigh. “Yes, I am aware. My Headmaster had much to say over my performance coming in second to a fourteen-year-old but then…”

“Someone mentions just which fourteen-year-old managed it and he either fumes or backs off?”

“Voice of experience?”

“Something like that.” Frey shook his head, multitude of braids dancing. He’d put in the dozens of tiny braids in with a spell that morning, feeling rather more contrary as far as expectations of “Harry Potter” upon waking, the act chafing more and more the older he became. “Yes.”

They easily fell into their routine of studying with sporadic conversation in a mix of languages, only after about a half-hour spent cobbled together his daring, shy Viktor reached over under the table and gently took hold of Frey’s hand, twining their fingers together, blushing bright-red all the while.
Frey smiled down at his diagram that he was working on refining, giving Viktor’s fingers a squeeze of approval, prompting the other man to speak up.

“There is an event this coming weekend, yes? A visit to the neighboring village?”

“Hogsmeade.” Frey confirmed, casting a flirtatious glance at his handsome companion from under inky lashes. “I usually spend the day there both days, get out of the castle, have lunch with my friends or godfathers, etc.”

“Would you be willing to accompany me for one of those days?”

“I’d love to…I thought you’d never ask.” Frey tweaked him gently over his shyness, then both pleased they turned back to their studies, Viktor conspicuously opening up a tome to a section on partial-human/animal transfiguration using aquatic creatures.

It wasn’t exactly subtle, nor did Frey need the hint, but he appreciated the gesture nonetheless.

…

“Attention students.” Professor McGonagall called out two days later during her Monday Fourth-Year Transfiguration class, Gryffindor and Slytherin. “This year, as part of being the Host school of the TriWizard Tournament, Hogwarts will also play host to a most venerable tradition – the Yule Ball.”

Excited whispers broke out, mainly among her female student, while a portion of the males devolved into groans.

“The Yule Ball.” McGonagall continued with a stern glare over the room. “Is traditionally a night of well-mannered frivolity, a chance for everyone to…ahem…let their hair down. As such it is open to all students fourth-year and above with third-year students allowed if accompanying an older student. It will begin at eight o’clock on Christmas Eve and end precisely at the stroke of midnight. As it is, primarily, a dance there will be lessons offered and the schedule posted in the common rooms of each House.” She studied her students with a gimlet stare as she let out one last final warning. “Pray, keep in mind that we are, as such, hosting international students and diplomats and will likely be joined by high-ranking ministry professionals as well as some nobility. Dress robes are preferred; formal attire is required. Yes, Mr. Potter?”

“Are all students required to attend?” He asked with a sigh. He had a feeling he already knew the answer. At least the Ball itself wasn’t blindsiding him.

“No, Mr. Potter.” The Professor gave him a look over the rim of her glasses. “However, all of the Champions are required to attend with a date and open the Ball with the first waltz.”

“Joy.” Frey muttered under his breath. Not that he minded the idea of a date or anything, even dancing wasn’t bad. It was more the forced-participated that bothered him.

Just one more time he had to be a dancing monkey – literally this time – for the Wizarding World. He would be happy when he finally turned immortal – his philosophical existential worries aside - and didn’t have to break out in hives over the idea of anyone figuring out he was Loki’s son.

…”

In his dreams, Frey walked once more alongside the bank of the Black Lake, waiting for his father to appear as he watched the play of stars that didn’t exist in this universe play overhead.
Strong, wiry arms wrapped around his shoulders from behind, Loki resting his cheek on the top of his ebony head as he relaxed into the comforting, protective embrace.

“I am beyond proud of you, my son.” His Far whispered. “All of Asgard speaks of nothing but you these days when they’re not speaking of Thor’s latest adventure or rehashing victories of old. You are the best thing, one of the only truly good things, I’ve done in all my long life.”

“I know.” Frey told him simply. And he did, Loki had made that clear using similar words all his life. Frey might doubt many things about himself, his purpose, but he has never once doubted that Loki loved him. Loved him enough to risk the wrath of the All-Father to be part of his life, to raise him as a Prince and a future god rather than ignoring him or casting him aside to live forever in a distant universe, never understanding why he didn’t quite fit.

Loki squeezed him once more before placing his hands on his son’s shoulders and turning him to face him, emerald eyes meeting their twins. Someday when Frey became all he was meant to be, his eyes would turn the otherworldly green that was Loki’s in his Aesir form. But for now, Loki mimicked his son’s color, knowing that in time all would be as it should be.

“Now,” Loki asked firmly. “What troubles your sleep this night? Not this tournament? You’ve faced worse things in practice at your Camp.”

And while such tests were rare, they did happen as monsters tested the boundaries of the Camp wards.

The Hydra at the museum was much worse than the dragon, especially due to Frey’s age at the time, both mental and physical.

“No, other things.” Frey said a bit deceptively. The last thing he wanted was for his father to try and interfere in his love-life. Having him know about what he’d gotten up to with his “teachers” as well as Luke and Silena was more than enough embarrassment for Frey, thank you. “I haven’t found the Horcrux in the castle yet…and moreover I haven’t the faintest idea of what is going on with Dumbledore and Voldemort this time.”

“Hmm, you’ll find it in time and time will also make those plotters tip their hands.” Loki arched a knowing brow. “And your mood has nothing to do with a certain blond who seems to be falling under the tempting sway of his hormones?”

The little Malfoy was a matter of some concern to the god.

Nothing good would come of the immature child taunting Frey…nothing good at all.

Frey looked away, frowning and hiding a blush.

“It’s fine.” Frey responded from between clenched teeth. “He’s his own person, he can see whoever he likes.”

“That’s all well and good.” Loki arched a brow. “But I can tell all the way from Asgard that he’s hurting you – moreover, being a Malfoy and the vindictive sort, he’s likely doing so on purpose.”

“But why?” It came out more of a broken whisper than Frey would’ve preferred. “What did I do that…that he needs to behave this way?”

“You hurt his pride.” Loki told him bluntly. “A young man’s and more to the point a Malfoy’s pride, both of which tend to be prickly things, when you asked for time for him to catch up” to you as it were. And that same pride demands he get some of his own back. This is just how he’s chosen
to do it. And you should let him.”

“What do you mean?”

“Let me ask you this.” Loki paced alongside his son as they started their walk around the lake. “Are you still interested in the boy? Or at least want to keep him as a friend?”

“Yes…”

“Then let him appease his hurting pride by flaunting your rather attractive friend in your face.” Loki advised cannily. “He’ll feel vindicated and in time will stop throwing his relationship in your face. In the meantime…” Loki shot a wicked grin at his son. “You are going to take that well-built broomrider for a spin aren’t you?”

“Far!” Frey spluttered at the pun. “That’s none of your business!”

Loki snorted. “As you’re still my child, I rather think it is my business but I have a reason for asking beyond making you flush that particular shade of red. Part of the problem I believe is that you’ve given young Heir Malfoy the impression that you’re waiting for him.” Loki manfully held in a snicker at that idea. “Seeing you dating and doing other things with another might shake him out of trying to be hurtful when he experiences it for himself. Besides which…you are going to need a date for that ball and I have a bet with Thor and the four Idiots that you’ll take your athlete.”

Frey rolled his eyes at his father’s blatant on-going games of gulling the Aesir out of their gold…or whatever else it took their fancies to bet at the time. His Far had told him that he’d won a slave in the form of Fandral for a month over his slay-count of acromantula the previous year. And that was only one of the bets Loki had won in the last several years.

“What are the other bets?”

“Fandral wagered on you asking the Veela, Sif on your friend Cedric and Volstagg with her, Hogun and Thor, surprisingly enough, have both wagered on Draco.”

His son arched a brow. “Were you the only one watching or paying attention when I’ve been around Viktor?”

Loki chuckled with a nod, then talk turned back towards Frey’s ongoing quest for the Horcruxes.

... 

Draco watched with a faint frown as Harry wandered out onto the grounds instead of waiting near the doors to the Great Hall for the rest of their friends to go out to Hogsmeade.

“What’s up with Harry, Draco?” Theo asked, spotting what had caught Draco’s attention. “Not going this time?”

“Not that he’s said.” Draco answered slowly as their group of friends all trickled over, intrigued.

“Ooh la la.” Padma giggled. “Harry’s going all-out today. Those are his best dragonhide trousers and jacket.”

“And I see the edge of his favorite green acromantula silk shirt’s collar.” Her sister Parvati commented, having grown a bit out of her shyness around the Slytherins her twin had bonded with over books and the Boy-Who-Lived.
“Does Harry have a date, Draco?” Cedric asked a bit incredulously, the others with similar glances of shock at the idea.

*Everyone* knew that Draco and Harry were supposed to get together *eventually* even if they didn’t know about their *agreement*.

And while everyone also had expected Draco to date – being a bit of a prat at the best of times – no one really thought it of *Harry*.

Not that they thought less of him for it, sauce for the gander and all that, but it was still a bit of a surprise.

Especially since none of them could think of anyone he’d paid special attention to since returning for fourth year.

“He does.”

That quiet statement came not from Harry’s blond best-friend but from his gentle “godbrother” Neville.

Which since they shared a dorm, wasn’t that much of a shock once they thought about it.

“Really?” Fred asked, wandering over.

“Our sweet Harrykins?” George continued.

“*Are you sure*?” They finished together.

“From the man himself.” Neville nodded, glancing at a shocked (and a bit dismayed though he was careful not to show it in front of Blaise…too much at least) face of Draco with sympathy. “He’s been getting closer to someone ever since this whole mess with the tournament started. And the other person asked him out on Sunday…just for today though, I’m pretty sure he’ll be hanging out with us and having lunch with his godfathers and Professor S-snape” Neville shuddered a bit, still not over his first-year dread though he dealt with it much easier now. “Tomorrow.”

“Who is it though?” Theo asked, head cocked to one side as if the now-closed doors that Harry had exited would give up the secret.

“You’ll need to see it for yourselves.” Neville told them, holding up his hands in surrender as they started to harry him for the answer. “No. I’m serious. You wouldn’t believe it unless you saw it for yourselves. I hardly believe it and I’ve seen them together.”

…

“Oh my Merlin.”

Was the general consensus as the group wandered into the Three Broomsticks after a successful morning of plundering the shops for last-minute Yule or Christmas presents or restocking their supplies for school or leisure and saw it for themselves.

“He’s, he’s, he’s.” Draco stuttered in shock, eyes the size of dinner plates as Blaise gaped beside him, his boyfriend patting his back lightly in absent comfort as he tried to wrap his own mind around the scene they’d walked in on all-unknowingly.

“You’re right.”

“Mate.”

“We,”

“Wouldn’t”

“Have believed it.”

“If we didn’t see it.” The twins said in their irritating way.

And there they were, sitting in one of the darker corner brooms of the tavern and inn, tucked up together on a single bench with Harry’s form almost hidden behind the bulk of Viktor’s, their hands held together between them, and their heads bent together conspiratorially.

“Fucking Salazar’s knickers.” Theo groaned as Draco darted back out of the tavern, brushing off Blaise as he tried to follow. “Now I wish Harry had just dated Cedric like he wanted to last year. This is so much worse. Draco’s going to be impossible until he gets over his “future-husband” dating an international Quidditch star instead of pining after his blond arse.”

Cedric blinked from where he had his arm wrapped around his own date for the afternoon, which was Fred this time, though everyone knew he was really dating both of the twins and only keeping up appearances so no one ratted them out to the Weasley matron.

“Harry wanted to date me?”

Blaise, Theo, and Neville all nodded.

“Fancied the pants off of you, actually.” Neville supplied.

“Which I think was what he was after.” Blaise drawled, eyeing the Hufflepuff lasciviously. “Draco threw a strop though over Harry dating any of their friends.”

“And then he starts dating you?” Cedric asked incredulously. “That’s hardly fair!” He huffed, his sense of fair play riled, his twins petting him to appease his rarely-roused but formidable temper.

“Yeah, well.” Theo commented with a roll of his eyes. “Harry isn’t likely to poison Blaise out of spite.”

“…Point taken…”

…

“They’re still staring.” Viktor murmured to his date causing Frey to hide a smile at the disgruntled undertone in his voice.

“They would be.” He told him simply, swinging their hands between them as they enjoyed the walk back to the school, students eyeing them from in front and behind. “Just ignore it. Eventually the idea of my actually dating someone will wear off and they’ll stop.”

“Why is it such a surprise that you would see someone in this way?” Viktor finally asked. His date had been open with him over his being somewhat experienced, taking away a lot of the hesitance Viktor felt over pursuing someone younger than him. He wasn’t the sort of wizard who got off on corrupting innocents.
“Because I never have…here at least.” Frey told him honestly. “Previously all my…affairs…have taken place at home during breaks from school. You might know that I’m not a fresh-faced ingénue but they don’t. Plus, with both of us being champions in addition to being famous or infamous even outside of all that and it’s news and gossip-fodder. Nothing more and nothing less. They’ll get used to it.’

“I hope so.” Viktor said, then eyed his handsome companion slyly. “Since I’d rather prefer it if they gaped at my Yule Ball date because he’s the handsomest wizard there, not because we’re some sort of circus act.”

“Why Viktor!” Frey gasped with mock-shock. “Is that your way of asking me to be your date to the ball?”

“And if it was?”

“Then I’d say yes of course.” Frey answered before giving the Bulgarian a sly grin of his own. “How else can I slip off to the gardens and debauch you, scandalizing the good staff of our schools?”

…
Chapter Nineteen: Dreamless Depths

If someone were to ask Frey later, what stuck out the most about the time he dated Viktor Krum he would have a simple response: chapped lips, rough hands, long talks, and soft kisses.

After their successful first date ended with snogging in the shadows of the Durmstrang ship, Viktor used to colder weather and cold not bothering Frey at all, they spent the next several weeks leading up to the Yule Ball exploring those four things...thoroughly, with long talks inevitably ending in kisses and exploring hands all out of the sight of the general student body, though they were tripped over every now and again by a random couple looking for a place of their own to do the same as Viktor and Frey.

It was very different than Frey’s other experiences, he had to admit.

There wasn’t much of a build-up with his teachers in this area and Luke and Silena had both been his friends for so long that they skipped all the precursors and jumped into the deep end of them taking (most) of his virginities.

Frey enjoyed the change very much and was rather reveling in it, much to Viktor’s frustration at the teasing nature of the wizard he’d gotten involved with.

Still, teasing and playing aside, both were pleasantly distracted from the drama of the Yule Ball, working easily on school or sitting silently with entwined hands in the library while they each explored their individual preparations for the second Task.

And naturally, when Sev and Sirius were the ones to all-but trip over them while they were snogging – and a bit more – hidden under the branches of a weeping willow on the grounds, neither wizard was all that impressed to say the least...

Honestly, Frey should’ve heard them coming a mile away with how much snarking banter they were trading, but he was otherwise occupied at the time.

…”Godric’s balls, Severus.” Sirius barked with a shiver as they tromped through the light dusting of snow around the school grounds...in the dark...just minutes before curfew.

On a fucking Tuesday.

“Do you really think we’ll find anyone sneaking around outside in the freezing cold?”

“Considering how many of our resident hormonal-dunderheads have been beguiled by our French
visitors…yes.” Severus drawled with a mocking sneer as the mutt rolled his eyes. “Just like you and your wolf were never above getting caught on the Astronomy Tower during seventh year no matter how many times the professors caught you. Hormones are the enemy of any faint resemblance to rational thought in teenagers.”

Sirius opened his mouth to respond only to close it with a click as his hearing – much sharper than most wizards’ due to his Animagus form – caught the faint sounds of pants and soft moans.

“Glad I didn’t make a bet.” He grumbled, ignoring the smug look on Severus’s face as his jerked his head toward the massive weeping willow that was one of the most popular spots for a bit of privacy with someone special…or not so special, depending on the teenager.

They padded softly over towards the willow, easily parting the branches with a wordless spell from Severus.

Only for the pair of them to yelp in near-unison and slam their eyes closed as they saw just who it was under the tree with their boyfriend.

“Pup!”

“Haraldr!”

They yelled, Frey and Viktor wincing at the sound and disengaging ever-so-slowly, which to both adults’ dismay included removing hands from under-and-inside clothing.

Soft whispers came from under the willow as Sirius and Severus waited with ever-increasing impatience, having turned their backs once hands started to remove themselves from clothes and it became obvious just how far the two teenagers had passed first base.

“I’m sorry, Viktor.” Frey whispered, both of them blushing brightly over being caught nearly with their pants around their knees. “I didn’t think they’d check the grounds with the cold.” He fastened up the ties on his pants and shrugged back into his tunic, Viktor having proven to be much less shy once Frey’d made it clear he didn’t mind heavy petting, though they hadn’t yet progressed beyond that or even to full nudity.

“It’s fine.” Viktor gave a rueful grin of his own. “I hope that they don’t tell the Headmaster. He wouldn’t look well on my consorting with the enemy. Bad enough that we’re known to be dating, he finds out about this and well…” Viktor shook his head, a bit entertained at the idea but still not looking forward to what would surely be a bad conversation – for both him and Karkaroff considering the high standing of Viktor and his family.

“Come on, lovebirds.” Sirius called after he’d judged they’d had enough time to get themselves back in order…and maybe sneak a kiss or two more if they were quick about it. “Curfew is in three minutes. Let’s move it. You’re treading close to finishing out the semester in detention as it is, pup and pup’s boyfriend.”

“Goodnight, Viktor.” Frey called out as Severus took over the job of “escorting” the Bulgarian over to the nearby ship, Viktor gaining catcalls from his schoolmates as they all realized what had to have happened, Sirius muffling a barking laugh as he towed Frey away with a companionable arm around his shoulders.

“Goodnight, Harry.” Viktor shot him a wink, not minding the scene as it would only boost his reputation among his contemporaries even if it would get him in hot-water with his Headmaster after all.
“That was real ballsy, kiddo.” Sirius told him companionably as they wandered back to the Gryffindor dorms. “Even I never went snogging – and more if hand placement was any clue – in the middle of December on the grounds. Remy’ll bust a gut laughing when I tell him.”

Frey groaned, burying his face in his hands as the only chance of the escapade not going all around Wizarding Great Britain just flew out the window.

Fucking Padfoot and his big damn mouth.

…

School let out for the Yule break, with almost all of the first, second, and third years going home, as well as some of the fourth years and up who either were completely uninterested in the Yule Ball or didn’t have dates and didn’t want to go either alone or with a group of friends.

Sirius had followed up on his implied threat, Frey having to serve detentions with both of his dogfathers and Sev once each before the break, which ended up being another mortifying round of “The Talk” this time from each of them…though Sev’s at least focused on making sure Frey knew how to brew and prepare contraceptive potions and – this was the embarrassing part – a lubricant that would prevent any tearing or diseases from “idiotic hormonal activities.”

Viktor had shown a great deal of interest in the second potion…after he was done laughing his arse off over “Harry’s” punishment.”

Frey was still convinced that his dogfathers and honorary uncle were evil, vindictive creatures who reveled in his pain and embarrassment when they came en-mass to find him before the Ball.

The females – and fussier males – had all disappeared off to get ready for the ball somewhere around three in the afternoon, while the less-image-conscious females and the majority of the males had waited until around six or seven depending on how complicated their formal wear was and when they were planning on meeting with their dates.

In Frey’s case it was a bit earlier than the other wizards in his dorm, due entirely to the fact that he had the most hair and as a result needed the most time to get presentable rather than some need to preen his plumage.

A quick succession of spells had his hair dry, straight, and clubbed back with an elegant ruby silk ribbon that matched the lining on his formal robes, thanks to the heads up from Remus and Lucius, Frey had ordered his from the Master Tailor at Twillfit and Tattings, which included an enchantment that allowed him to adjust the colors of the lining and embroidery to match his date’s robes. Viktor was supposed to wear the military-inspired formal robes of his school in red, so Frey made the silk lining of his robes red and the embroidery silver, which looked very elegant and still seasonal against the inky black. The embroidery was custom, the same as the robes, with a repeating pattern of crests: Peverell, Black, and Potter, with small flourishes or fanciful loops in between each crest, all along the edges of the hem, cuffs, collar, and lapels.

“Very handsome, cub.” Remus told him, clasping a hand on his shoulder after he studied the effect. “You even have your bowtie done up correctly.”

In red silk with restrained silver stripes, it played off the rest of his attire perfectly.

“Real cuff-links too.” Sirius gave a soundless whistle as he flicked a finger playfully at the ruby-in-silver decorations Frey’s wrist. “Our pup’s growing up so fast.” He gave a fake sob, falling into his mate’s amused arms.
“Mutts.” Severus gave an obligatory sneer at the pair before eyeing his protégé, black eyes gleaming with approval at the sight he made. “You’re turned out very well, Harry. Your mother would be very proud.”

Frey gave Sev a hug, then did the same with his dogfathers who insisted on a picture of him before they lost him for the night. And then another once Viktor came to claim him, looking military-sharp in his pressed red formal wear with shining silver details and white fur tossed over one shoulder.

“Yes, quite handsome.” Remus nodded with approval before shooing the boys off to find Minerva for the opening of the ball. “Don’t disappear into any dark corners, mind.” He warned with a chuckle as they blushed and all-but-ran-away.

“I am never going to live that down.” Frey told Viktor seriously, his date merely laughing as they waited near the great hall doors.

Soon enough, Professor McGonagall was fussing over them, sending a somewhat-startled glance at two of the Champions attending together, and then they were through the doors and the night was begun.

…

They ducked out early, blood hot from hours of dancing and grinding to the Weird Sisters as the rest of the celebrating students did the same.

Frey’s back hit the wall with a soft thud, chapped lips covering his furiously as a probing, stroking tongue sought entrance into his slick mouth, Frey opening eagerly and welcoming in Viktor’s dexterous muscle with a flick of his own.

Hands digging into hair or hips, they kissed what seemed like forever or only a moment, before the need for breath tore them away, Viktor gasping a question into Frey’s neck as he nipped and kissed his way from jawline to the opened collar of his formal shirt.

“Where?”

Pulling back, Frey thought for a frantic second before the answer came to mind. If he were a little less hot for Viktor and not as primed for a romp, he probably never would’ve suggested it, hence hiding under trees and in alcoves. But, needs must, and there truly wasn’t a better place in all of Hogwarts.

“I know somewhere.” He said between panting breaths as Viktor’s strong, clever hands stroked him through the thin silk of his trousers. Thank Yggdrasil for outer robes, because there was no way the majority of the male population of the dance could’ve hidden their collective arousal otherwise. “A place. A secret place.” He emphasized to Viktor, who met his eyes with wild eyes turned black from lust. “If I take you there you can’t say a word, not to anyone.”

“My word.” Viktor nodded then bit softly at the pale-pink lobe of a refined ear. “Promise, I’ll keep your secret, my fiery one. Just lead the way.”

Frey did just that, Viktor watching with interested – and a little amusement – as he paced several times before a blank section of wall, only to arch a brow as a door appeared.

“Coming?” Frey asked with a wicked grin, ducking into the Room of Requirement and leaving the door cracked, Viktor closing it behind him moments later.

Viktor took a brief glance around the room as Frey stared off for a moment, the door melting away to
Viktor’s surprise.

“It’ll come back when we need it…and not before.”

“Excellent.” Viktor smirked, advancing on Frey and backing him up until his knees hit the edge of the massive four-poster bed the room had provided draped in silk and furs, much like Frey’s bed at his cabin-home, though Viktor wasn’t aware of that. “That means this time we won’t be interrupted.”

And that was all either of them said for hours, outside of the occasional direction or moan, Viktor swishing his wooden wand and stripping them both bare with a wicked grin, their fancy clothes stacking and folding themselves onto the chest at the foot of the bed.

A strong arm wrapped around Frey’s waist, as a rough palm cupped his cheek and jaw, the wand set aside, dark eyes staring into deep emerald before Viktor stole Frey’s breath with a deep kiss, his hardened cock pressing hotly into the skin of Frey’s now-bared cobblestone abs.

Frey twined his arms around Viktor’s strong neck, hands cupping and caressing his shoulders and head, acquiescing without protest as Viktor pressed him forcefully back, his soft skin hitting the coolness of the silk sheets with a hiss from between kiss-bruised and swollen lips, his teeth nipping lightly at Viktor’s plump lower lip in retaliation.

Lean, strong legs encircled tight hips as Frey locked his ankles just above Viktor’s muscular ass, their similar heights leading to a pair of hot, reddened arousals gliding and stroking against each other as they explored newly bared territory with seeking hands and wet mouths. Bruises were bit into the curves of necks and pectoral muscles, fingertip points were left on biceps and backs and hips as neither lover worried about hurting the other with their strength, Frey himself only having to rein his in minorly, the tough athlete having proven…obliging to having a strong partner previously. Slick moisture beaded on the tips of iron-hard and heated lengths of lust, easing their continual grinding that kept them on the edge of pleasure but provided no relief.

Blood hot, Frey gave into his own desires, flexing his legs and lifting with his hips and shoulders, flipping and pinning Viktor onto his back, the older wizard giving an aroused gasp at the blatant display of strength, a gasp that turned into a moan as Frey lowered himself down to face Viktor’s pulsing erection, shooting the wide-eyed and watching athlete a wicked smile before licking a long stripe up the underside of the cock that pulsed so prettily for his attention.

“Merlin, Harry!” Viktor gasped out, throwing his head back and grinding his heels into the mattress as his hips shot upwards in search of more of that wicked tongue as Frey nipping and licked and teased, always falling just short of taking him in completely into his hot, wet mouth.

Pumping his own cock once with a hot hand, Frey bent his head and his attention truly to the task, opening his lips and sucking him down in a single fluid motion that was all the proof Viktor needed that Frey’s assurances as far as his experience was concerned were the absolute truth, his cheeks hollowing and throat working as he flicked his tongue and suckled the tasty cock that Viktor cradled between tight Quidditch-toned thighs.

Hands making a mess of Frey’s formerly-tidy clubbed back hair, Viktor buried himself inside his lover’s mouth, fucking up into him with both hands in his hair for control, Frey easing back and going with the wordless demand, one hand dropping to stroke himself in time with Viktor’s thrusts, until the wizard gave a hoarse shout and pumped his spend down a wicked, swallowing throat, Frey’s own eyes dilating and cheeks flushing the only sign – besides the obvious one – that he’d spilled his own seed onto the silk sheets.
Giving Viktor’s softening arousal a last gentle lick, Frey rose to all four and crawled up Viktor’s long, toned body in nothing less than a prowl, a sultry look covering his face as he rested their pelvises together and leaned down over Viktor’s head, weight mostly on his left arm and elbow as he reached over and plucked a waiting vial from on top of the bedside table dangling it over Viktor’s eyes as he felt for himself once more the benefits of having a healthy lover as Viktor’s cock started to harden once more at the sight of the familiar lubricant.

“How do you want to prepare me?” Frey asked naughtily. “Or would you rather watch?”

…

Naturally, everyone had noticed that Viktor and Harry went missing after the Yule Ball.

It was only the intervention of Sirius and Remus, who’d seen them wander off from the Ball while kissing and petting at each other, that kept a search party from being sent out in the morning when a full head-count had been taken.

They didn’t reappear until the annual Christmas Lunch in the Great Hall, to much teasing from the students (and Sirius) and the promise of detentions after the break.

Frey and Viktor agreed it was worth a couple evenings scrubbing cauldrons (for Frey) and swimming laps in the Lake (for Viktor) to have spent the night together, a night that they planned to repeat though in smaller and less attention-grabbing doses.

Of course, it wasn’t all sunshine and roses.

Skeeter had somehow gotten a hold of a juicy story that was ninth-tenths fabrication and one-tenth misconstrued (mostly) bullshit.

…

**Witch Weekly Special Edition:**

**Heartbreak at Hogwarts!**

**By Rita Skeeter**

*My oh my, dear readers, scandal and heartbreak brews at our illustrious school in the wake of the TriWizard Tournament!*

*Champions Harry Potter, fourteen, and Viktor Krum, seventeen, are confirmed to be a couple!*

*How will this affect the Tournament?*

*Can they truly compete against each other?*

*Or is sly Harry trying to get a “leg” up – or maybe over – the competition?*

*But that’s not all, no no, dear readers!*

*Sources say that heartbreaker Draco Malfoy, also fourteen, Heir to House Malfoy and current boyfriend of Blaise Zabini, fifteen, and son of the infamous “Black Widow”, is carrying a tendre for our handsome Champion.*
Is Harry dating them both, or is Draco trying to break up the pair, despite his own significant other?

And what does the dashing Mr. Krum have to say about all of this?

Never fear, dear reader!

This writer won’t rest until she has the answers to all of these questions and more!

Frey groaned in disgust as he eyed the copy of WW that was floating around the Gryffindor table, Parvati having obligingly let him read her copy that morning as soon as she saw the headline and the picture (clearly altered) on the cover of Frey dancing with Viktor while a fuming Draco glared in the background.

Not that Draco wasn’t still on a tear over Frey finally dating someone in the view of both himself and Wizarding Great Britain…because he was.

But no Malfoy would’ve ever shown their hand in public that way, his little melt-down at the Three Broomsticks aside.

Viktor, seeing the look on his boyfriend’s face, stood and came to lean over Frey, studying the article with an amused expression on his face.

“This is a first.” He said dryly. “Usually the gossip rags are talking about how I must be screwing one of my teammates since I never pick up Quidditch groupies.”

...

Term started back up and with it came a spate of detentions for Frey, as whenever he turned around he was being caught snogging with Viktor by either an irritated Severus or a highly-entertained Sirius and Remus.

Since the fuckers had turned it into a damn contest with fifty galleons and a bottle of Ogden’s riding on who could both catch them and assign them the most detentions by the end of the year, the only rule being they couldn’t use any spells or enchanted objects to help and they could only assign one detention per wizard per catch.

It was ridiculous but when levied against them going back to being at each other’s throats, Frey bitched but dealt with it.

And since they seemed to have a tacit understanding of leaving the corridor leading to and from the RoR alone…well. At least they weren’t completely cock-blocking them.

Karkaroff had one his nut, as anticipated, but since Viktor was a) of age; b) a professional athlete he didn’t want to piss off; and c) the Durmstrang Champion that he, again, didn’t want to piss off; he wasn’t able to actually do anything about the now-highly-publicized affair, the first article being only the tip of the iceberg as far as Rita Skeeter’s complete disregard for their privacy was concerned.

She and all of the papers that were publishing her tripe were all in the process of having their arses sued-off by a phalanx of solicitors courtesy of Lucius, Sirius, and Viktor’s PR manager, but that had only seemed to fan the flames as everyone knew that once the suit was ruled on they’d have to keep their sticky fingers off of Frey and Viktor’s private lives.

So they were making the most of it while they could, despite the inevitable retractions they’d have to print.
Then a week before the second task, Frey had an epiphany.

“I’m an idiot.” Frey said emphatically as he paced in front of his father. This time his dream had taken them back to his cabin at Camp Half-Blood, where he felt most comfortable.

“As your father, and the one who supplied over half of your genetic code.” Loki arched a brow as he spoke with his usual sharp sarcasm. “I can assure you, you’re not. Though there’s always that one-percent you inherited from James…”

“Ha ha ha.” Frey rolled his eyes. “I’m serious, Far. It’s so obvious can I completely overlooked it not just for months but for years! Years! I’ve been going up to the Room of Requirement for the last three and a half years and it never even occurred to me once Thanatos gave me my quest that I’m likely not the first student to ever find it!”

Loki chuckled a bit as Frey was clearly in the middle of channeling Loki’s own dramatic tendencies…though he also could’ve gotten it from any one of his other three parents as well. James was notorious for making scenes, and Lily was well-known for her ability to tear someone apart with her razor-sharp mind and tongue, usually in the middle of the great hall or the Gryffindor common room. As for Thanatos…well…in Loki’s opinion Death gods were the biggest drama kings and queens in any universe.

“How many years of dross do you have to sift through now that you’ve discovered the RoR’s Room of Hidden Things?”

“You knew.” Frey narrowed his eyes, growling a bit in his throat. “And you let me search the entire fucking castle! And you knew!”

“I surmised.” Loki corrected, shoving down his entertainment for a good laugh later when it wouldn’t have his son hacked-off with him for months. “And this is your quest, my little prince. It wasn’t for me to volunteer information. You needed to ask.”

Frey hissed under his breath, muttering about stupid rules for stupider rites-of-passage before he perked up and asked:

“So…is there anything about my quest that you know that I should know?”

“No.” Loki shot that down in a heartbeat. “You’re close to finding one of the last soul leeches now, and even I don’t have further information on them. Beyond suggesting that you somehow search the homes and vaults of his followers…there’s not much left to do, since it’s unlikely you’ll be getting a shot at that snake of his anytime soon.”

His son nodded absently already thinking his father’s words over, head cocked to one side in the pose that suggested he was being awoken early by something only Frey could hear.

“Goodnight, Far.”

“Goodnight, my little prince.”

He hadn’t finished trawling through the entire contents of the Room of Hidden Things by the time the Second Task was nigh, though he’d made a dent in it that was certain.
And nabbed himself some items that he was going to be more than happy to pass on to Sirius to be sold in Knockturn Alley or secondhand shops in Diagon.

Frey had set up an area-wide spell, summoning everything that had been left in the Room of Hidden Things in the last seven years to one side of the room and everything older than that to the other.

To no great surprise, the pile that was possibly the property of a current student was much smaller than the other.

Then another set of spell divided that pile up further: clothing (vanished or resale), books (some of which he kept for himself, otherwise he either vanished them or passed them on for resale), furniture (broken vanished including a strange cabinet, others cleaned and set around the edge of the room), weapons (vanished, kept, or sold on), and the biggest piles for sheer amount versus bulk (which the furniture had won hands-down) which ended up being jewelry and brick-a-brac.

Most of which was either cursed in some way or, he would guess, stolen.

Some might argue that anything left in the school that long should rightfully belong to the school and the Board or the Staff given the option of reselling or keeping items…but since Frey was the one doing all the heavy lifting he chose to ignore what “some” might say about him taking a bit of profit for himself from cleaning out the Room which shrank down every time he managed to devote an hour or two to clearing it.

Frey hadn’t yet located another soul leech but as the days passed and he made in-roads into the mess, the oily feeling he’d come to associate with the disgusting things became stronger as there was less background noise from other cursed objects to muffle it.

All at once, the morning of the second task arrived and Frey found himself worrying in circles over Neville.

…

“Did Nev ever come back last night?” Frey asked their roommates frowning at the still-made bed.

“I don’t think so.” Seamus said, trading a look with Dean who shook his head.

“That’s…odd.” Frey said slowly, thinking things over. The task involved retrieving something from the lake, the song had been certain about that. Surely they wouldn’t…no, no that was ludicrous. No parent would agree to having their child stranded on the bottom of the Black Lake. And Dumbledore can’t be so far gone that he’d take a student into danger like that without permission from their parent…wait.

Fuck his life.

This is Dumbledore, of course he would.

The barmy old goat.

That was just the sort of “test” Dumbledore had been throwing at him whenever he could manage it.

And if a student (other than Frey) got injured in the process?

Meh. Who cared. They weren’t that important anyway.

“Firsty came and got him, McGonagall wanted him for something.” Dean told him after waking up
a little more.

“Of course she did.” Frey hissed under his breath, seething.

They had to have just taken whoever they thought would make a good hostage. And since Frey and Viktor were dating, and there was still the whole hullabaloo with Draco going on, Neville was the next closest person to him they could get at. Nev’s Gran was going to have kittens when she finds out they stuck him on the bottom of the lake without even consulting her.

Frey knew they couldn’t have done.

There was no earthly way the Dowager Lady Longbottom would allow the only son and Heir of her precious Frank to be used as glorified bait in a contest legendary for lacking safety measures – both for contestants and bystanders.

Well.

At least there was one bright point to the morning.

Now Frey knew what he had to find on the bottom of the lake.

Even if the thought of Nev stuck down there helpless and in the dark made him want to break out in hives.

…

Viktor and Frey walked side-by-side down to the Black Lake, dressed in nearly-identical wetsuits that Frey had had Luke order for them from the states and ship over with what Frey was going to use for part of the task. Viktor’s simply had the Durmstrang crest on the left breast while Frey’s at the Hogwarts, KRUM on Viktor’s back in orange outlined in red and POTTER on Frey’s in silver with red outlining. They certainly looked better prepared for the task than silly Fleur in her silvery-blue one piece.

“Fleur’s going to freeze her tits off in that water.” Frey commented with a shake of his head, Viktor snorting a laugh under his breath at the vulgar statement, this time in Norwegian which Frey had been helping him with his vocabulary, Viktor’s grasp of the language being a bit rough, when they weren’t working on Viktor’s English pronunciation or Frey’s Bulgarian and Hungarian.

Though apparently Viktor and Frey weren’t the only ones who spoke Norwegian as the nearby Madam Maxime scowled at them and scolded “Harry” for his vulgarity.

Who knew?

“It’s hostages.” Frey murmured under his breath once she’d wandered off, banking on her speaking German as well if she spoke Norwegian – or at least enough to grasp what it was Frey had said.

“Neville’s missing after going to speak to the Hogwarts Deputy Head.”

Viktor nodded grimly, dark eyes searching over the Durmstrang crowd.

“Nadia is missing as well.”

Nadia referring to Viktor’s cousin – a fourth year – who had won the right to attend the tournament with the older students.

Durmstrang had apparently warned their students of the trip at the very beginning of the year and
then held a contest for the right to attend. To many students’ surprise, several younger years had been highly successful, beating students much older than them. Like Nadia, who had won a duel against a dimwitted seventh year – according to her – in order to go and watch who she was certain would end up being her cousin compete in the tournament.

“Doesn’t Fleur have a sister?” Frey asked, craning his head to study the legion of silver-and-blue clad Beauxbatons students and alumni. “And…” he rolled his eyes. “What’s with all the spectators? We’re going to be underwater for an hour. Not exactly a riveting performance for them to watch.”

Viktor pointed to three of large mirrors that were being lowered into place.

“Magical monitoring spells, proprietary to Bulgaria.” He explained. “My father…” The Bulgarian Minister for Magic. “Had the same concerns even if he wasn’t going to be attending any but the last task. We use them to keep an eye on the most dangerous inmates in our prisons and as part of an intermittent-monitoring program on our paroled criminals.”

Frey nodded, an interested expression crossing his face. That sounded like an innovation Britain could definitely benefit from. He’d have to have Lucius research it before submitting it before the Wizengamot to use in Azkaban.

A signal from Bagman had them moving into position on the newly-constructed dock, Frey easily snapping his belt into place with its several compartments, opening each space and checking to make sure everything was in place. Sitting, he shucked off the boots he’d loosely laced over the wetsuit and replaced them with watershoes, putting his cloak over his boots and socks. He was really going to need those back after he got out of the water. The cold might not bother him much anymore, but he wasn’t looking forward to having a wetsuit plastered to every inch of his body in front of three schools, the public, and the media either.

Bagman rambled a minute about the task – hour, hostage, etc. – and their standings – “Harry”, Viktor, Fleur – then raised his wand as Frey climbed back to his feet, exchanging a nod with Fleur before shooting a grin and a wink at Viktor who smiled back before facing the water with his grim “focused” face on.

Frey just rolled his shoulder, taking his wand out of the holster tucked under the sleeve of his wetsuit and took a moment to get his orientation correct for where the dock was versus the mental map he had of the lake’s underwater topography in his head.

Eyeing a nearby tree that had an identifying mark on it that he’d put there just before finding out about the Horcrux in the RoR, he laughed to himself. Well. That made things easy. Dead ahead then.

A bang from Bagman’s wand had the others shooting off to cheers, some of the spectators confused for a moment when Frey didn’t jump into the water, only to roar in approval a moment later as they realized why when part of the lake rose and froze into a solid-disc of ice.

Smirking over his shoulder with a flourish of a bow for the crowd, Frey stepped off the dock and onto the disc, which floated easily over the water as it froze the top of the water. It was a whole new level of control over his elemental abilities, far more refined and taxing than his forced-hibernation of the dragon. It also wasn’t nearly as showy…for the most part.

After several minutes of skimming easily over the surface of the water on his disc of ice, Frey cast a Find-Me spell for Neville, continuing until the wand stopped and pointed straight down.
Digging into the first pocket, Frey pulled out something most wizards have never seen in their lives – a swimming cap. Tucking his hair up under it, he pulled out his charmed goggles and put them in place, then pulled out something that would really confound most of wizardkind – a small emergency breathing set-up that was little more than a mouth piece, regulator, and air tank, used by scuba divers as a back-up to their main systems. It was a lot more reliable than a Bubblehead charm, and less likely to be punctured or destroyed by the beasties in the Lake.

Gear in place – which had taken all of two minutes – Frey tested the air supply and jumped into the icy depths of the Black Lake, the frigid water making him doubly glad that he’d cast a glamor over his body before leaving the castle that morning, lest he turned icy-blue and give Madam Pomphrey a heart-attack with thoughts of hypothermia and frostbite.

Frey dove easily down from years of swimming off the beach at Camp Half-Blood…though granted, the water there was never this clear or this cold.

He grinned around his mask when after a few minutes he heard the sound of singing.

His Point-Me spell had landed him directly above the hostages…way above but still, he didn’t have to course-correct once he was in the water.

“Come seek us where our voices sound,
We cannot sing above the ground.
An hour long you’ll have to look,
And to recover what we took.
But past an hour,
The prospect’s black.
Too late, it’s gone, it won’t come back.”

Helpful, Frey decided, that the mer – not the pretty mer he was used to but their less-attractive icy northern cousins at that – were singing the song from the egg.

And terrifying when you put it in the context of hostages, but he rather doubted that even Dumbledore would let three bystanders die in front of all of the Wizarding World for a game.

Though considering the old goat’s record…

No, not with the world at large having their eyes on Hogwarts.

The mer village was well in-sight at this point, Frey easily picking out the unconscious trio held under some sort of stasis spell and tied to poles in the center of the village, guards standing all around with spears and looking appropriately menacing.

Frey swam right up to Neville, pulling out his dagger from its hydra-skin sheath, the same one he used to slay the same beast years ago, and sawed easily through the ropes binding his god-brother then put the knife away and cast a spell that would return it to the hidden weapons compartment in his trunk, that bag on his belt being solely to hide the sheath until Frey needed it.

Neville was little more than dead-weight under the spell of whatever kind they’d used on the hostages. Frey studied him and then the other two for a moment before taking out his wand and
casting a *Bubblehead* on each of them and a warming charm on the Veela girl. He wasn’t taking any chances on Dumbledore and Bagman when it came to fucking up something basic like *keeping the hostages alive*.

Another muggle gadget from his bags – this time a cuff set up similar to what surfers used to keep track of their boards – had Neville’s wrist tethered to Frey’s ankle, then Frey swam up to the surface of the Lake overhead, using wordless propulsion spells to make it easier since he was hauling another body behind him.

Bursting out of the icy water, Frey took off his goggles and breathing apparatus, then hauled up Nev who started choking and spluttering as soon as his head breeched the surface.

“Easy, Nev.” Frey told him, already hearing the cheers from the crowd at the edge of the lake. “Easy.”

“S-s-s-so, c-c-c-cold.” Neville chattered, almost looking as blue as Frey did in his Jotun form.

“Yeah, sorry about that.” Frey told him, shifting his ice-disc to have handholds then climbing up, helping Neville up behind him and then rocketing towards shore, casting a warming charm on his friend as he controlled the disc and tucked away his muggle devices. “Guess they decided you were one of my most important people. Did your Gran give them permission to use you as a hostage, by-the-by?”

“N-n-not that I k-k-know of.” Neville told him, rubbing at his arms and hands, sitting on a slab of ice wasn’t exactly helping warm him up, though he knew it’d be much faster to reach the staff – and help – that way. “She’s g-g-going t-t-t-tear Dumbledore a-a-a-new a-a-arsehole f-f-for this.”

“I’ll give you a hundred galleons for a pensive memory of it.” Frey told him with a toothy grin, eyes glinting, as they approached the dock. Madam Pomphrey met them there, helping Neville onto the solid surface while Frey agilely jumped from disc to dock before vanishing the disc, taking the offered warmed towels with a nod.

“D-d-done.” Neville said, as the Mediwitch tutted around him, pressing him with towels and Pepper-Up’s.

Frey waved away the potion, not nearly as cold as he should be, just rubbing himself down while the crowd cheered before calming back down to wait on the other contestants.

He had his shoes switched out for socks and was pulling on his boots with his friends gathered around in the competitors’ tent/waiting area, Neville having been sorted out with some drying charms and another round of Pepper-Ups, when a hysterical Fleur flailed to the surface, having failed to make it to the mer village.

Sighing as he eyed the distressed blonde, Frey finished lacing up his boots and tossed his cloak over his now-dry wetsuit, then wandered over to where Pomphrey and Maxime were clucking over the still-hysterical and sobbing quarter-Veela.

“She’s fine.” He told her, voice calm and filled with rock-solid certainty, which got him a better response than Maxime’s assurances that the hostages weren’t in any danger, that it was just to add “drama” and “urgency” to the task.

“She’s iz Veela, like moi.” Fleur gasped out in explanation between sobs. “Cold and water, zhey are not good for us, *tu comprends*?”
“Yeah.” He rubbed at the back of his neck as a light blush ran up his neck at the stares the trio of women were subjecting him too. “I figured. That’s why I cast fresh Bubblehead charms on both of the remaining captives and a warming charm on the little blonde. I figured with Viktor’s cousin, my god-brother/distant cousin, that she had to be a relation. And she’s just a kid so…”

Before Frey could ramble any further into an explanation, he found himself slammed onto his back the sudden addition of a hundred-and-twenty pounds of happy, thankful, ecstatic blonde Veela, Fleur springing onto him and bringing him down in his shock and surprise, before pressing kisses all over his face as she gushed out thanks.

“Viktor’s just broken the water, Har.” Neville chuckled from where one of the best fighters – certainly the one in the best shape – in Hogwarts was flailing ineffectually and trying to free himself from his new blonde-part-Veela cling-on. “You’re going to want to get her off of you now.”

“Trying.” He hissed, narrowing green-eyes at his useless pack of friends. “Some help, please!”

The two older women – who weren’t even trying to hide their entertainment – gently and with extreme effectiveness pried Fleur up and off of him, Maxime giving him a thankful glance of her own, a startling contrast to the scowls and dire mutters she normally cast his way.

“Thank you for taking care of my student, M. Potter.” She told him once he’d regained his feet and Fleur was being fussed over by Pomfrey once more, her grindylow scratches finally getting the attention they needed now that she was calm and letting the mediwitch work. “We are in your debt.”

“It was the right thing to do.” He shrugged, speaking over his shoulder as he moved to grab some warm towels to take to Viktor, his boyfriend nearly to the dock. “And took all of a minute. No thanks needed.”

Viktor gracefully accepted a kiss along with his warmed towels, Nadia snickering a moment at the “love-birds” as she shivered a bit even with the towels, Viktor and Frey escorting her over to a seat in the tent to be seen to, Frey and Viktor making quick work of drying her clothes before turning their wands on Viktor’s wetsuit, one of his friends bringing over his own cloak and shoes, which he’d barely donned before the Champions were called forward to the dais for their scores as a tiny blonde waif as rushed into the tent, shivering all the while, Fleur falling on her with kisses and sobbing apologies as the mer people returned to the depths of the lake after returning the last hostage.

“Excellent Task, simply excellent!” Bagman enthused. “Now, to the scores! Mr. Viktor Krum returned after fifty minutes of time, having utilized a partial but nonetheless effective use of trans-species transfiguration! He successfully navigated the obstacles of the Lake and returned with his hostage within the time-limit! However, he was the second to do so and therefore receives a score of 38 points for this task due to coming in second place! Nonetheless, this gives him a total score of 72 points!”

Cheers roared out from the crowd, Karkaroff crowing and looking smug.

“Next, we have Ms. Fleur Delacour, who returned second!” Bagman frowned a bit in commiseration. “She utilized an excellent version of the Bubblehead charm, however was defeated by grindylows and was unable to continue, failing to rescue her hostage. For this, we award her half-points, leaving her with a score of 20 for the task and 47 overall.”

“I should not ‘ave been awarded any.” Fleur declared from where she was tearfully watching the mediwitch fuss over her sister.

“Lastly, returning first, we have Mr. Harry Potter!” Bagman paused a moment, waiting for the roars
to calm before continuing, not wanting to shout over them even with a *Sonorous* charm. “Mr. Potter used a highly effective form of elemental magic to traverse the surface of the lake, knowledge of muggle devices to dive through its depths, and successfully returned first after rescuing his hostage in a mere twenty-five minutes!”

Bagman was forced to wait once more until the shouts and cheers died down, Frey smiling and waving at the crowd while Viktor stood behind him with his arms wrapped around his waist, smiling down indulgently at the younger wizard.

“But that’s not all! Merchieftainess Murcus has reported to Headmaster Dumbledore that the spells Mr. Potter cast over the two remaining hostages were a fresh *Bubblehead* charm and a warming charm to help sustain the health of the younger Ms. Delacour! For his winning time, as well as his display of nobility and empathy, we award Mr. Potter the full forty points! Bringing his total from both tasks to 78 and gaining him an advantage over the other competitors in the final task this June!”

“Well done, love.” Viktor murmured in Frey’s ear, pressing a kiss onto his cheek.

A moment that inevitably wound up on the cover of every publication in the wizarding world the very next day.

…
Chapter Summary

The end of this chapter is much darker than originally planned.

Lokison

Warning: Character death, violence, gore.

Chapter Twenty – Labyrinthine

Frey put the Tournament out of his mind in the days and weeks immediately following his domination of the Second Task, during which his use of muggle devices had garnered him mixed feelings among the populace with askance looks from Purebloods and Muggleborns alike, while others were fascinated by the “clever” items.

At this point it was rather a foregone conclusion that he would end up being the winner of the Tournament, though he only led Viktor by a six-point margin, as with his “reward” for winning the Second Task, it was extremely unlikely that he would fail to win the Third as well, making him the overall Champion after sweeping all three Tasks.

Which gave him plenty of time to work on clearing the Room of Requirement’s Room of Hidden Things, as he crept closer and closer to the Horcrux hidden there. Frey had found many unique and fascinating things in the Room, as well as disgusting and just plain strange things. Empty vials containing the dusty dregs of love potions or poisons, weapons still with blood on the blades or edges, even a particularly manky wig. All that could be salvaged was in one way or another, or destroyed and vanished if Frey couldn’t repair it or remove the curses upon an item.

Most people assumed during that time – the rest of February and almost all of March – leading up to Ostara that Frey was spending all of his time tucked away with Viktor doing dirty, dirty things to his Quidditch player…or just hiding from Draco’s wrath which had turned icy-cold and formidable in the wake of the picture of “Harry” and Viktor on the front page of every major wizarding paper following the end of the Second Task.

Draco hadn’t quite progressed to poisoning Viktor or hexing either of them in the halls but it was a near thing on some days when Blaise didn’t manage to soothe his savage Malfoy and Frey wasn’t in the mood to pander to his temper.

Banishing the frustrating blond from his mind, Frey sifted through another pile of jewelry, cleaning, inspecting, de-cursing as he went.

He’d nearly finished with the pile of odds and ends, the pulses of darkest magic growing stronger, when his death magic went crazy.

Smirking, eyes gleaming with triumph, Frey stared down at the innocuous-seeming diadem which upon further examination could be none other than Ravenclaw’s own with the mithril metal work and white and blue diamonds. With a flex of wandless magic, Frey flipped it over, laughing out loud as he spotted the infamous motto – and innuendo considering the time it was coined – “Wit beyond
“measure is man’s greatest treasure.”

“Gotta love a predictable villain.” Frey said to himself as he floated the diadem over to a brazier he’d found in the rubble of the “Lost” furniture.

Another Horcrux down, two more and Moldy Voldy himself to go.

…

A few days later, Frey had cause to curse his formerly jubilant mood.

Draco – being his tenacious, infuriating self – had decided to confront him while he was walking back from the revealing of the maze, hauling him down into the dungeon corridor.

That was where things took a turn for the maddening…and confusing as shit.

Apparently, Draco had had *enough* of Frey sashaying around the castle with his “crooked-nose, pigeon-toed, Quidditch arsehole of a boyfriend.”

The fight began with Draco grabbing Frey’s wrist to stop him from walking away after yet another argument over Viktor which lead to Draco’s own behavior with Blaise came to a stalemate, which Frey shakes off with little more effort than he’d use to flick away an annoying fly buzzing around his head.

Draco moved to latch on to him again and Frey tried to squirm out of his reach without hurting him, despite how infuriating Draco is and has been for fucking *months*. Hissing under his breath, Draco gives up quickly on trying to keep Frey in place, going with a dirty trick of a tripping charm and his own body weight to bear the bigger – and much stronger – teen to the floor. Eyes flashing, Frey stopped playing nice, rapid-quick fists burying themselves just under Draco’s ribs though he still moderated his strength. The sounds of their scuffle carried down the dungeon corridor filling it with the rapid fire clicks and scuffs of their shoes against the tile and the grunts and hisses from each landing blows. Frey, fed up, elbows Draco in the side and flips them over, pinning the smaller teen to the rough flagstone floor of the castle.

The blond holds onto Frey with all his strength, forcing both of them to scrap one-handed, and keeping Frey from just walking away – the way he’d been doing for weeks and months, ever since he took up with Viktor.

Some of the one-armed punches Frey shot at the less-experienced fighter are surprisingly blocked by Draco, gaining him a narrow-eyed glare from poison-green eyes.

Draco hauls Frey up to his feet, poison-green eyes shining with rage and body coiled tight to unleash another hit; instead, their lips are sealed and Draco’s tongue sweeps over Frey’s lip to taste the blood from a lucky jab.

Frey’s jaw ticked in reflex as he jerked away again.

“We’re not doing this.” Frey growled, shoving his hands through his mussed hair. “You’re still my friend, I still want to be with you at some point. But *right now*, I’m with Viktor and you’re with Blaise…and that’s not going to change anytime soon.”

Draco whipped around on Frey, fury lending him strength as he shoved the ebony-haired half-blood against the dank castle wall.

“We’re not done.” With Draco’s legs braced apart, his posture shouted that he’s ready and equipped
to use that feline grace his friend had always teased him with to keep Frey there if need be.

“Well, I am,” Frey said a little louder and sharper, shoving himself back off the wall and looming over the shorter wizard.

“I say when you can go. I say when you can quit talking.” Each word is punctuated by the silent stalk Draco made, until they were chest-to-chest. “You don’t get to boss me around because you’re more powerful or who your father is.”

“I won’t forget from now on. I think I learned that lesson well enough over this last school year.” Sarcasm dripped from every word. “But that doesn’t change the fact that when I say I’m done…I’m done.”

Draco reaches up and pinions Frey’s head between his hands as he shoved them back against the wall, silver eyes frantic at the meaning that might be hidden in Frey’s words.

The thumb over Frey’s right cheek stroked the bruises that are already starting to swell, as Frey taking charge for the first time in the fight grabs Draco by the wrists and spins them around, pinning the smaller, lithe form to the castle wall.

Draco ends up with his legs wrapped around Frey’s waist from the lift and momentum, trying to steady himself and gain some leverage while their hands were twisted above his head. He’s working his way up to biting when his shifting rocks Frey forward, driving his crotch flush against Draco’s, and the kicker is that with all the scrapping, furious words, and concealed hurt, they’re both aroused.

All the subtle flirting from the previous years and their past months’ worth of icy detente has exploded into this. Frey bites Draco on the neck leaving a nasty red mark but not for long as Draco cants his hips thrusting up. Draco’s head thumps against the tile and his mouth is open in a silent howl. The friction is optimal and Frey, saying a mental apology to both Viktor and Blaise, works it to his advantage driving his hips harder and faster against the silvery blond. For his part, Draco feels no guilt at all, hooking his ankles together behind Frey’s to provide more leverage as they frotted together.

Sometime before the explosion of orgasm, Draco finds his mouth and as with almost everything else in the last minutes, takes the initiative. Lips plundering and tongue searching, in his mind’s eye, Frey knows his lips are bruised pink, bloody and swelling to slut status. Draco echoes Frey’s earlier motions, biting at Frey’s jaw and neck, breathing like a race horse between every sloppy kiss.

All the anger from months of not talking and barely existing in the same space mixes with lust and surges forth with adrenaline. He bit Draco again, this time on the corner of his jaw as he came with a hiss groan against his elegant neck. Absently he notes that Draco is one of the few people that doesn’t make a ridiculous “O” face when the icy blond followed him to climax a moment later.

Draco leaned against the wall, trying to catch his breath. He felt way more lustful and only slightly less angry with the situation they’d cornered themselves into over the course of the school year. Rasping out a curse, Frey sets him down on his feet and forces him to let loose of him.

“This doesn’t change a hells-damned thing.” Frey told him, even more infuriated than he had been, the orgasm doing little justice as stress relief considering the circumstances. “I have a Task to complete, a boyfriend to apologize to, and another summer to get through before I’m willing to revisit…” He waved a hand between them. “This.” A few spells later, Frey had the mess in his trousers – and Draco’s – vanished and their robes set aright before spinning and finally walking away.
“Oh yes it does.” Draco hissed at his retreating back, too low for the half-blood to hear. “This changes everything.”

For one, he had a boyfriend of his own to apologize to – and confirm that yes, he really did want to date his irritating best-friend next year, Bulgarian Quidditch star fling or not.

…

A week later, Blaise turned around after Draco gave him a kiss and took his leave off to the library for some study time before exams, Blaise needing to send a reply to his mother’s most recent letter, to find an inscrutable Viktor Krum a few feet away eyeing him with a mixture of curiosity and consternation.

“How do you do it?” Krum asked in his steadily-improving English. “Kiss him and smile and all the time knowing that he’s in love with Harry?”

“How did you get involved with Harry knowing that you’d only be together for a limited amount of time?” Blaise asked with a sardonic arch of his brows. “And don’t try and tell me Harry wasn’t up-front about his deal with Draco.”

“I’m no in love with Harry.” Krum shot back immediately. “Simply enjoying the company of an attractive, intelligent, engaging wizard while I am in England. That is not the same as dating a boy in so clearly love with another.”

“You’re right.” Blaise nodded shortly, arms folded casually across his chest. “It’s not. And if I were anyone else I’d call them foolish at the very least. But I’m not anyone else. And I know something you don’t.”

“Really?” Viktor arched a brow. “What’s that?”

“Draco and Harry will be together, that’s a foregone conclusion. But Draco will never be first in Harry’s life. Not in the long-term.” Blaise shrugged. “And if I know anything about Draco Malfoy, it’s that he’ll never accept playing second-place to anyone or anything, whether another lover, another friend, or even the entire wizarding world. He’ll get tired of it eventually. All I have to do is wait and in the meantime: show him that I do put him first. He’ll return to me. I just have to be patient.”

“That’s rather understanding…and conniving of you, Zabini.”

“Slytherin.” Blaise smirked. “What, did you expect some rant about true love and meant-to-be?”

He rolled his eyes and gave an elegant snort of derision for the very idea. Oh, he…felt for Draco, and was admittedly attracted to Harry. However, when push came to shove, it became a simple matter of logistics…and there simply wasn’t a better match for him than Draco. At least, that was what his mother, a granddaughter of Aphrodite, had told him from a young age. And if anyone would know a good match, a possible love match, it was the Black Widow.

“Please. Love or not, Draco won’t stay with Harry forever. His pride and ego won’t allow it. All I have to do is wait.”

Viktor shook his head, not sure whether he was impressed by what was coming out of the mouth of a fourteen-year-old wizard, or incredulous.

“And you’re set on doing so at fourteen, are you? That sure of your future plans and goals and dreams?”
“This is Hogwarts.” Blaise tossed back over his shoulder as he went back to making his way to the owlry. “Unfortunately, being wishy-washy children isn’t really an option when they expect us to have our entire future planned by twelve and we’re judged each and every day based on a loose personality test administered by an eight-hundred-year-old talking hat.”

Disbelieving, incredulous, or not, there was nothing Viktor could really say to argue with that, having heard similar sentiments from his boyfriend for the last six months.

...

In the midst of the drama surrounding himself, Draco, and the Tournament at large, Frey still insisted on taking his end of year exams, though due to the date of the final Task he would end up missing two: History of Magic and Transfiguration.

Which put him in the same boat as the other two Champions, if only due to his own (and his father’s) standards of academic excellence, as since both Viktor and Fleur were seventh years they each would still be expected to take their individual countries’ versions of NEWTs following the end of the Tournament…so long as they don’t do anything ridiculously idiotic…like die.

Or worse, get expelled.

Which would be quite the feat considering there was only one last night before the Third Task and they all entered the Maze.

A night that Frey spent with Viktor, both of them feeling a sense of urgency as with the end of the Tournament came the end of their affair, though they both were determined to remain friends, if only through letters and at a distance save for the few times a year Viktor had matches in Britain.

Honestly, the Quidditch star’s upcoming training and game schedule didn’t leave much room for anything except Quidditch and public appearances set up by both his manager and the team’s PR agent.

Forget having a meaningful relationship, Frey thought to himself, Viktor would be lucky to have enough time to sleep let alone go on dates or even hook up for a one-nighter while he was – rarely – in the country.

A grumble from the object of his thoughts preceded one thickly muscled arm winding itself around Frey’s trim waist, hauling him back and into Viktor’s strong body.

They were in the Room of Requirement for one last night, and had already alternately celebrated the end of the Tournament and mourned the looming end of their affair. It was after that second, slow and heavy round of Viktor thrusting into Frey with heartbreaking gentleness that the broader wizard had fallen into a short sleep, allowing Frey’s mind to roam hither and yon. Frey had arranged for them to be gone all evening and night with their friends who would cover for them, then set up the RoR in an exact replica of the room he’d summoned their first night together.

Sighing softly, Frey turned and rested his cheek against one smooth slab of pectoral muscle, Viktor obligingly wrapping him up in his arms fully and stroking one hand through his hair as he watched his younger lover with soft, sad eyes.

“When do you leave officially?” Frey asked quietly, craning his head up to lock eyes with Viktor’s own nearly-black orbs.

“The day after tomorrow.” Viktor told him gently. “Exams have already been postponed at Drumstrang for the upper years, and the younger ones who came with us must make up their own at
our Ministry’s education department. We’ll have a banquet for the victor tomorrow night and then we leave first thing in the morning, Beauxbatons too.”

“And then you’re off to training camp with the Vultures as soon as exams are finished, right?” Frey asked to confirm as he sat up and moved to straddle the reclining Viktor’s leanly muscled hips, nestling firmly over the Quidditch star’s quiescent manhood.

“Mmm.” Viktor nodded, running his hands over Frey’s gold-kissed skin with delicacy that gave credence to his Snitch-catching skills. You couldn’t be a prized Seeker and be a cack-handed brute at the same time. “What are you doing for the summer? Perhaps I could send you tickets and see you again?”

Frey bit his lip as those devilish stroking hands teased his pale pink nipples, his own excitement rising in time with Viktor’s own hardening member against his downy arse.

“Back to New York once school is out.” He panted out between gasps as Viktor set to his task with feverish purpose. “Siri arranged for me to spend at least August with him and Remy in London, but I might some out sooner depending on how things are with my guardian.”

Read: whether there’s some dire threat or quest Chiron, Luke, Silena, or one of the other younger campers like Annabeth needed his help with.

“Hmm.” Viktor hummed under his breath as he used his cobblestone abs to leverage himself up, nipping lightly at the lip Frey was currently abusing with his Crest-white teeth, setting the taller-but-slimmer wizard back onto his haunches then fully onto his back as he carefully but resolutely reversed their positions. “Perhaps we can see each other again, after all. So long as your Malfoy doesn’t object to me stealing you away for a night.”

“Not my Malfoy.” Frey protested weakly as his brain began to shut down under Viktor’s assault. “Not until next school year, if then with how he’s been the last few months.”

Pleased, despite knowing that they don’t have a future together, Viktor set to work eagerly, wiping all thoughts of Draco, summer, and the Tournament from their minds for the rest of the night.

…

“My beautiful Queen.” Odin greeted Frigga, chivalrously offering her his arm as he joined her on the way to the Viewing Pools.

Much excitement had once again swept through the Aesir nobility over the young seidrmadr who battled monsters and braved great trials, not the least of which was this Tournament that the foolish mortal adults had foisted off onto their young ones. As a result, the royal family had had to become a bit creative when it came to the viewing of the Tasks. Loki, as usual, with help from his mother had solved the dilemma, creating a spell to project the contents of a Viewing Pool up onto a prepared blank canvass.

Thor and his friends had arranged the rest with the servants, helping them set up a dais and rows of benches and seating for the other nobles who wished to watch – and of course wager – the contest.

Naturally, such an entertainment required the presence of the royal couple, despite Frigga’s – and to an extent Odin’s own – distaste for using mere children in such an unseemly manner.

Why, even Thor had had to wait until he’d come of age to battle his first monster and go on his first quest.
And they’d set a youngling up against a dragon no less!

Shameful.

But then, what did one expect from mere mortals?

Even ones not of their own universe.

Odin studied the lovely diadem resting upon his wife’s golden head with a discerning eye.

“He has someone taken to wooing my queen away from my side?” He probed, jesting lightly. “I do not remember gifting you with such a fine piece – mithril and white and blue diamond goblin workmanship, I believe? Nor do I remember receiving what would have been an extravagant bill from Brokk for it.”

Brokk being the head dwarvish craftsman who provided almost all of the weapons, armor, and jewels for the Asgardian King and Queen.

“No,” Frigga waved an airy hand, a soft smile crossing her lovely face. “A tribute from Loki’s young acolyte. It was years ago, but do recall husband, that his mother the fierce Lily was one of mine. Young Harry seems to be set on honoring both of his parents’ patrons, though he seems to favor his own of Thanatos most of all.”

“That is only correct.” Loki commented as they approached the viewing pools where he and Thor – and Thor’s slavishly devoted Sif – were already arranged. “After all, the young wizard is a descendant of Thanatos.”

“A true Warrior-Mage, foreshadow!” Thor pronounced. “And one who I am wagering a month’s horse grooming that will defeat this Maze utterly!”

“I’ll take that bet, my prince!” Fandral, Thor’s cousin shot back. “And up it a week’s kitchen duty! The beauteous Fleur will take the day!”

While a rash of bets were called out and answered, Heimdall noting each down as was his duty, Loki let a glow of pride suffuse his body and gleam in his eyes, avoiding his mother’s curious gaze until he could bring the outpouring of emotion under control.

There was no higher praise for a magic-user in Asgard than that of Warrior-Mage, indeed, it was one that Loki himself had only received most sparingly and not until his second century of life.

For Frey to receive it at not-yet-fifteen, and from Thor no less…!

There couldn’t be a prouder father in all the realms.

Never would his son be subject to the same askance glances and derision-filled comments as Loki had parried and received all his life.

Not with the golden Crown Prince himself championing him.

Loki smiled briefly before wiping the look from his face as the crowd hushed with the Champions’ arrival at the dais just beyond the Maze entrance.

It was about to begin.

…
The morning of the Third Task, Frey watched with no little amount of amusement as his fellow fourth years grumbled and groaned as they filed out of the Great Hall to their History of Magic test, only to be startled when a pair of hands clasped his shoulders from behind.

Whipping his head around, Frey gave his dogfathers a mock glare as they stood behind him smiling smugly – Siri – or contented – Remy.

Though anymore, it was rare for Remus to be anything but content, happy, or joyous considering he had his mate and cub back, he was gainfully employed, and Severus had continued to brew the Wolfsbane.

Two years of not tearing himself to pieces or being caged by silver every full moon had done wonders for Remus’s quality of life, even leaving aside everything else.

“Why are you guys still here?” Frey asks with a suspicious glint in his eye. With the remnants of the Marauders as well as the Weasley Twins in the same castle, being suspicious was the key to remaining safe and unpranked. “Don’t you have exams to proctor?”

“Nope.” Sirius’s smug grin turned devious. “All the Champions get to spend the day with their families. So…”

“Severus and other teachers are proctoring for us today.” Remus told him quickly before Sirius could finish, and likely piss off Harry in the process. “As well as a couple of Board members who are here for the last Task.”

Frey buried his face into his hands with a groan.

Sev was so going to make Frey pay for this somehow.

Sirius being so delighted by the turn of events had made any chance of Frey getting out of it unscathed non-existent.

“He’s going to murder me.” Frey muttered with a sigh, as he glared up at Sirius’s beaming face, the prankster obviously tickled pink over getting one over on both Frey and Sev at the same time.

“Maybe.” Sirius smirked. “But we have a surprise to make up for you oncoming doom.”

In unison, Siri and Remy stepped to the each side, revealing the hidden form from behind them, a petite blonde haired woman who was smiling brightly in her acromantula silk witch’s dress, a light set of robes tossed on top.

“Heidi!” Frey cheered jumping to his feet and pouncing on the sight for sore eyes, swooping his former guardian and long-time companion up in his arms and twirling her around with a joyful laugh, Sirius and Remus darting out of the way before they could get hit with her feet and legs.

Harvestmaiden Heidi Lothbrok reached up and cradled a beloved face in her gentle hands as her little lord set her back on her feet.

“Little lord.” Heidi smiled beatifically. “Not so little anymore. You are a sight for sore eyes.”

“Heidi.” This time it was a sigh as he hugged her tight, cheek pressed to the top of her braided head. “What are you…?”

“Your Remus.” Heidi told him as she pushed him out to hold him at arm’s reach, inspecting him from the top of his ebony head – hair still loose as he had hours before the Task – to the tips of his
dragonhide boots. “He wrote your guardian, who passed on word to my love, and here I am.” She beamed up at his sun-kissed face, drinking in emerald eyes. “You’ve grown so.” The look on her face turned arch and knowing. “Look more like your father every day.”

Frey blinked, hearing the implication loud and clear.

Heidi had put the pieces together; she knew where so many others never even guessed.

“You’re glowing yourself, being with your sisters and love has been good for you.” Frey reached over to her hand still resting on his shoulder, gently grasping it and bring it up for a light buss on the back of it, giving her a short bow, then tucking it into the crook of his arm. “Let me show you where you’ve sent me off these last years…”

…

Hours later, after showing Heidi around with help from Remy and Siri – and dodging a thunderous Severus, Frey found himself in the bathroom of his dorm as Heidi waited for him patiently in his dorm room to walk with him down to the Great Hall where they would rejoin Remus and Sirius, his dogfathers having to go and lock away their test sheets for grading later.

Frey had no idea what to expect from the Maze the way he had for the other two tasks, other than knowing that historically the third task was always a type of maze or labyrinth, and more worrisome, that Hagrid had been involved in stocking it with monsters and dangerous creatures.

But he also knew that monsters and dangerous creatures couldn’t be all of it, likely spell traps and other things of that nature were hiding around every other corner, resting cheek-to-jowl with Hagrid’s monstrous Skrewts or acromantulas.

Which left Frey in a bit of a quandary as he didn’t quite know what to prepare for – other than preparing for any and every thing.

With that thought at the forefront of his mind – and still irritated that his rites-of-passage had made him too large for his basilisk hide armor until he stopped growing and the enchantment his Far had placed in them could be activated so they adjusted to his final size – Frey had decided on his set of graphite-grey dragonhide trousers and tunic, with his wand tucked up his sleeve in a holster and a short gladius with a goblin-forged blade hidden between his shoulder blades in a disillusioned sheath. Basilisk-hide boots were strapped to his feet and lower legs, and around his hips was another many-pocketed belt, this one in a matching dragonhide to his outfit, the belt once more containing anything and everything he thought might be useful including his father James’s Cloak. Per Heidi’s orders, he’d left his hair untouched, his primary caregiver wanting to fix it herself, the same that a mother might have done in Ancient Scandinavia for a son too young to have a lover or wife to see to the loving chore.

And he was right, no sooner than he’d stepped fully-clothed and ready from the bathroom than Heidi gestured him to take a seat on the end of his bed, as she wielded both brush and magic to weave his wild ebony mane into an even wilder array of tiny warrior’s braids which she then twisted back into another thicker braid, creating almost a faux-mohawk on the center of his head to his nape.

“There.” She said at last satisfied, and with little time to spare as she stepped back and eyed him with proud approval. “My little lord, all grown up and fierce. Ready and willing to do battle.” Heidi’s smile was bittersweet. “I find it’s no easier to send you out now that you’re nearly grown than it was when you fought and defeated your first monster. At least then, you had help. It wasn’t until later when you faced that hydra alone that I knew the true meaning of a mother’s fear, whether I was with you as a matter of service and pride or not. You’re as much mine as anyone’s, save
perhaps my lord’s and your own father.”

“I know, Heidi.” Frey smiled down at her as he wrapped one strong arm around her shoulders and ushered her from the Tower. “I know. And I love you just the same as I do my blood-mother. I always will. You were never just a servant or a caregiver to me. You were my family and one of the only constants in my early years.”

She sniffled a bit, waving off his offer of a hanky as she sucked back the tears that wanted to form.

“Well.” Her voice only waved a bit under the upswell of emotion…and the mirth from her now-teasing words. “I suppose with the tales my brothers Hector and Alexios tell that I can’t really see you as my innocent lamb anymore…”

“Heidi!” Frey’s outburst was filled with embarrassed shock as a hot blush crested his sharp cheekbones, his oldest friend cackling a little as they reached the side of Remus and Sirius, the two Marauders eyeing them with interest.

Interest that remained unappeased as Heidi was too busy laughing at Frey’s spluttering and Frey too embarrassed to say a word all the way down to what was the Quidditch pitch and now housed a massive hedge maze.

Joining Viktor as he stood near the dais, they shared a brief kiss accompanied by whispers and the flashes of cameras while bluff Ludo Bagman cast a _Sonorous_ and began the introduction of the Task, Frey’s dogfathers having already departed to the stands with Heidi in tow.

“Good luck.” Viktor murmured, which netted him a slightly-regretful smile from his soon-to-be-former boyfriend.

“I’m afraid I won’t need it.” Frey told him honestly, as he reached into one pocket and removed his Firebolt, a gift from Sirius that he rarely used lest he incite the wrath of Zeus, and with a tap of his wand had it full-sized.

Bagman had just announced that Frey as “Harry” would have five minutes before Viktor was released, and then Fleur five minutes after Viktor.

No matter.

All he really needed was a minute or two and then it wouldn’t even matter.

“But thank you, anyway.” Frey continued, mere moments before Bagman shot off the signal spell. “And likewise.”

At the sound of a bang, Frey took off on his Firebolt, hovering a few feet above the ground but going an hair-raising 150 km/hour, wand pointed at the ground as he rapidly circumnavigated the exterior of the Maze. Coming back to the start, he stepped forward a scant foot and turned so his back was to the Maze itself and his face to the bewildered audience and the other two Champions.

With a jaunty wave, he shot a golden beam at the etched circle he’d cast, activating the wards he’d carved in the weeks since the Maze had been announced, just under the surface of the grass and concealed.

It was rampant cheating.

But _clever_ cheating nonetheless as no one would ever be able to _prove_ when he carved the Runes… and it was a cheat that was more for the protection of the crowd than it was a help for himself, as was shown by his next action, once the glowing golden dome had covered the Maze completely,
including over the top.

“It’s a barrier spell.” Bagman called out. “Champion Potter has raised a barrier spell over the Maze.” The sportsman reached out gamely and gingerly nudged the viscous appearing barrier, deeply relieved when it didn’t shock him or anything otherwise nasty. It simply kept him out. “A clever move from our Hogwarts’ Champion, I daresay! Now Champions Krum and Delacour must bring down the barrier before they can even enter the Maze! Bravo, Potter!”

Sweeping a mock bow, Frey spun and tucked his wand away before slapping his hands flat to the surface of the hedge, breathing deep and steady as he called up the power within him.

…

“What in the worlds?” Frigga asked on Asgard as they watched.

Then before their eyes – and those on Midgard – frost began to pour out from under his palms, freezing every leaf and branch and root it touched.

“He’s freezing the hedge.” Loki breathed out, eyes wide as he smothered the shout he wanted to hurl at his foolhardy son. “That’s why he put up the barrier. He’ll freeze the Maze and bring it down. Releasing all the monsters at once.”

“Are you certain, brother?” Thor asked with a soft frown of consternation. “That seems…foolhardy from such a clever seidrmadr.”

“I’m certain.” Loki said grimly. “And it’s perfectly in character.”

Loki was, of course, referring to Frey’s insistence on hunting and then slaying the basilisk beneath the school.

*I’m going to skin him alive.* Loki swore to himself as he held onto his composure with the edge of his fingernails. *When I get my hands on that boy…!*

…

It was a sentiment shared by many as others began to realize what Frey might be up to, Severus in the lead of the pack.

The ice had picked up speed, and with every coated inch another mind cottoned onto Frey’s ploy, breaking out into shocked and excited whispers.

Finally, after several long minutes, Frey stepped back from the now-frozen-solid hedge, leveled his wand at the Maze, and called out casually: “*Reducto.*”

And down it went, the spell for all its quiet and calm casting, rather obviously overpowered as Frey supplemented it with wordless spells and wandless power, powdering the hedges to dust.

Leaving behind a gleaming Cup, and a plethora of monsters newly freed from containment, the crowd shouting at the sight as the air cleared.

“For Thanatos, Loki, and Frigga.” Frey said under his breath, offering up the monsters he was about to slay in an even split before setting his shoulders and setting to work. The spell of choice one that was impressive beyond measure but beastly to master: a fire whip. Though not *any* fire whip. Not at all. Frey’s was pure white with licks of bright blue and purple, hot enough to melt stone or cut through steal, let alone the carapace of a Skrewt, as he proved within seconds of the hedge coming
down, the nasty cross-breeds charging him at the head of a veritable stampede of acromantula.

“Flagellum ignis maxima!” Was the incantation, Bagman repeating it for the benefit of the audience, many not recognizing the spell beyond its deadly and devastating elegant beauty. “A maximum powered Fire Whip, look at that! Both Blast-Ended Skrewts are down within moments to the Master-Level DADA spell! And now onto the acromantula! The hatchlings don’t stand a chance, Potter takes the first wave out with a wandless Reducto before finishing the remainder with the Whip! Oh ho! Now he’s facing a real challenge! A full-grown acromantula! Word has it that the creatures have a grudge against Potter for him pruning back their territory in the Forbidden Forest and the way that full-grown adult Queen is going after Potter, it must be true!”

For his part, Frey wasn’t paying a lick of attention to Bagman, knowing that he had a matter of seconds to take out the Queen sentient spider before the real horror of the Maze reached him: a Dementor.

They’d chosen three XXXX-classified creatures for the Maze from what Frey’s quick sweep of the area before the Skrewts were on him told him.

A Queen acromantula, which was at that very moment squealing in pain as he cut off all her legs on her left side, a sound cut off as he took her head next; a Sphinx, and worst of all: a Dementor.

Someone really didn’t like him and had done their research.

Frey had had a disgust for the soul-sucking creatures ever since Sirius had been released from his unlawful stay at Azkaban and had revealed what living under the creatures’ dominion was like.

And, well, as Bagman had noted, the acromantula colony in the Forest really didn’t like him following his slaying spree last year that he’d kept up between Tasks and dates and homework, just enough to keep the massive carnivorous creatures from creeping too close to the Forest edges once again.

Not that it made any difference to the nasty things.

It hadn’t made him Hagrid’s favorite person either.

Spinning on his heels as cold and dread began to coast up his spine with chilled, slimy fingers, Frey brandished his wand crying out: “Expecto Patronum!”

“A fully corporeal Patronus Charm, ladies and gentleman!” Bagman shouted excitedly, the crowd roaring in approval. “And what is the form…” He squinted a bit, “…a Stag?”

…

Loki snorted in derision.

“What is it, my son?” Odin asked, leaning over to view the glowing white protective more clearly.

“It’s a male Reindeer.” Thor said, head cocked to one side.

Frigga hummed, knowing that her acolyte Lily had been a doe of a white-tailed deer in her animal form. “Not completely unexpected.” She decided. “It is a symbol of male fortitude, virility, and the search of wisdom. Quite appropriate.”

Loki steadfastly did not look at anyone lest his emotions show on his face.
James had been an Animagus Stag, Lily a Doe.

But Frey’s most common animal form to shapeshift into was a black jaguar.

While *Loki* preferred a male Reindeer with a massive spread of antlers.

His son saw him as his protector, even above James, or Lily, or even Thanatos or Chiron. *Him*, above all others.

“Watch, he’s doing something else.” Sif hushed them, all but dancing on the edge of her seat as she hoped for something, *anything* that would prevent Loki from winning their wager, an all-but-foregone conclusion at this point as her chosen Champion, the other wizard, had yet to bring down the barrier spell, though it seemed he was close at least.

It would just prove to be too little too late.

…

“That’s not Prongs.” Sirius muttered in an aside to Remus, the werewolf nodded slightly, eyes narrowed on the sight of his cub facing down a Dementor, his mate’s hand digging into his arm belying Sirius’s seeming unconcern.

There was little of this earth that rattled Sirius Black.

And even less that truly frightened him.

On the top of that list was losing Harry, just under that was losing Remus himself.

And coming in a close third were the soul-sucking prison guards of Azkaban, the Dementors.

Still, despite his soul-crushing fear, Padfoot kept his arse planted on the hard wood bench, his hand on his mate’s arm, and watched as his pup faced down a Dementor in a horrifying mishmash of his worst-and-third-worst nightmares.

This was his pup, his Harry.

How could he do anything less?

…

Minerva McGonagall watched in horrified pride as her finest student gave a complex motion of his wand, transfiguring a *Dementor* of all things by Godric’s knickers!

She didn’t know whether to call is ingenious usage of elementary transfiguration – animate to inanimate being first-and-second year material – or a horrible abuse of her precious field as the soul-hungry fiend went from a figure in any wixen’s nightmares to a small, round, black marble.

…

A marble that almost no one save a discerning few (Severus, the Marauders, Minerva) saw Frey summon and pocket with an effortless slight-of-hand as he prowled forward, taking his steps measured and slow in an attempt to recharge a moment.

That had been a bit of a stretch of his skills to saw the least, forcing him to finally cancel his fire whip before conjuring the Patronus and then using a twist on animate-to-inanimate to deal with the
Dementor.

Honestly, if the things weren’t mostly mist, hunger, and shabby cloaks, there was no way that would’ve worked using a simple spell for reasons of mass conversion.

Still.

It worked, not forcing him into Plan C (Plan A being it was scared off by the Patronus), setting Fiendfyre to the bloody thing.

As he padded up to the patiently waiting Sphinx, he noted the barrier spell giving a worrisome pulse of magic.

Viktor was almost through, leaving Frey little time to solve the Sphinx’s puzzle before Viktor could take advantage of Frey’s destruction of the maze and its monsters to swoop in and snatch up the Cup while Frey was otherwise occupied.

“You must solve my riddle to pass by me peacefully, or dare my claws and jaws.” The Sphinx told him in a calm and soothing alto that was at odds with – her, he supposed – words.

“Very well.” Frey nodded, and she began to speak.

“First think of the person who lives in disguise,
Who deals in secrets and tells naught but lies.
Next, tell me what’s always the last thing to mend,
The middle of middle and end of the end?
And finally give me the sound often heard,
During the search for a hard-to-find word.
Now string them together and answer me this,
Which creature would you be unwilling to kiss?”

Finished, she sat back on her haunches, eyeing him with patient calm as Frey’s quick, trained intelligence, far beyond that of others his physical age thanks to his father and his childhood training, sorted through the key words and what he knew about the Third Task in general.

“Spider.” He said briskly, wincing as he felt the backlash of the barrier spell falling almost send him crashing to his knees.

They’d be sprinting to the Cup any second.

“Correct.” The Sphinx nodded regally before bounding away to intercept the other contestants and inadvertently buying Frey the precious few moments he needed to run to the Cup.

The crowd roared all around him as he reached it, smiling and waving up at them before gripping one of the handles in his loose grasp.

Then a fishhook snagged him behind his navel and whirled him away.

A Portkey.
The Cup was a Portkey.

A rumble went up from the crowd, growing in volume and confusion as Bagman turned to stare at the other judges in confusion, the bumbling – and soon to be replaced if the polls were any indication – Minster Fudge giving voice to the question burning through the minds of every person present.

“Well?” Fudge demanded, turning on Dumbledore. “Where is he? Where’s the Champion?”

Where indeed.

Frey knew he was in trouble when it took more than an instant for the Portkey to drop him off at the dais.

He hadn’t been certain that the Cup would be a Portkey, but he knew there had to be spell on it to indicate who one so that part hadn’t been a shock or surprise.

But when it didn’t instantly drop him off, he knew that this, whatever it was, was the purpose behind his unwilling entrance to the Tournament.

Portkeys were closer to the Floo that way than Apparating, the longer the distance involved the longer the trip, where no matter what Apparating from one place to another only ever took a moment.

No, he was going to land somewhere much further away than the judge’s dais.

The only question was, what was going to be lying in wait at the other end of his Portkey?

Well…other than Voldemort.

Frey just knew his manky, undead ass was going to be there.

Internally, Loki was freaking the fuck out over his son being kidnapped from Hogwarts, most likely by an undead Dark Lord.

On the outside however…

“A bolt of undyed acromantula silk versus three months of palace duties that 1:” Loki announced, snark filling his tone as he held up elegant fingers ticking off the terms of his bet. “Our young Warrior-Mage lands in a trap. 2: It was set by this Dark Lord Voldemort. And, 3: The lad somehow escapes alive and mostly intact from the confrontation.”

“Loki.” Frigga and Thor chided him in unison for his seeming “lack of empathy.” Odin simply thought it over and gave a nod.

“I’ll take that bet.” The god of Knowledge decided. “Agreeing with your first two points but on the last I must lay odds on him being at last maimed, mentally if nothing else.”

“Done.”

Now all his son needed to do was prove Loki’s words true and he’d have the All-Father himself
covering for him while he disappeared for a season, a season he most desperately wanted to spend unhindered with Frey as soon as possible but that he knew he would need later in his son’s life once he froze into his immortality and had acquired all of his non-godly powers. Frey would need training, unless Loki wanted him to blow like Mt. Vesuvius from the influx, training that Loki wouldn’t be able to supply without a window where he could be missing from Asgard, no questions asked. He just wished that that window wasn’t – possibly – being supplied by Frey getting fucked over by fate...again.

...

While those extra few seconds of time lapse due to the distance between Hogwarts and wherever Voldy had picked as their newest confrontation spot were excruciating, they were also a very bad idea...for Voldy.

Giving Frey time to prepare, even seconds, was always a bad idea...for the other guy.

Something even the Basilisk had learned in the end and that the acromantula colony kept on learning every other weekend.

Frey, like every other demigod in existence, thrived on danger and split-second decision making.

And since he’d taken a Portkey before, it wasn’t a difficult matter to know that he was about to land and roll, avoiding a jet of red light shooting over his head as he hit the ground and took refuge behind...a tombstone?

Yeah.

Huh.

A tombstone.

Voldemort had picked a fucking graveyard for his latest trap.

Whatever, that just meant lots of places for him to hide, run, and dodge.

Thinking rapidly, remembering things in the back of his mind without having them take over his in-the-now reactions to danger, Frey shrunk the Cup and tucked it under his tunic, sticking it against his side with a sticking charm.

He knew it would reset – it would have to – in order for it to return to the center of the now-demolished Maze and carry back the second and third place contestants when they reached it.

It was his ticket away from this fucked-up plan of Voldy’s...whatever it was.

He just had to be patient and wait.

Not his best qualities when it came right down to it, which probably explained why he was holding his wand in his main hand and taking out his sword with his off-hand before peeking over the tombstones towards where the light came from. Narrowing his eyes, he restrained the urge to let out a vicious hiss – followed by an even more vicious curse.

Wormtail.

Motherfucking Wormtail.

Frey had seen the weasely little bastard in enough of the photos Remy and Siri had shown him to
recognize him, even older and much more beat to shit.

“Alecto! Capture the boy!” A thin, reedy voice with a distinct hiss cried out, cluing in Frey that there was at least a third involved in this little party, if not more. The hissy order was followed by an actual line of hisses, the Dark Lord commanding his familiar. “Nagini, scent him out!”

“Yes, Master.” The massive green and black snake responded, Frey eyeing it as it uncoiled from a tombstone near the giant cauldron Wormtail and his – ewww, ugly baby thing – hunched over.

Alecto, who Frey thought might mean Alecto Carrow per Sev’s stories of who were actual Death Eaters who lived for the “cause” and who were more opportunists like Lucius, didn’t respond making Frey believe that she had at least a modicum of intelligence by not giving her position away.

Not that it would help her much, as a quick dive into his belt had Frey swathed in his father’s Cloak. Nagini would still be able to scent him, and someone could feel or hear him if he wasn’t careful, but at least he wasn’t visible to the naked eye. At the moment. As soon as he wanted to fight the jig would be up.

Still.

Time buying.

A very important skill in any demigod that wanted to live to see twenty.

There was slight crunching sound which came from two tombstones over, Frey controlled his reaction to spin, instead turning his head slightly to get a look while he kept track of the slithering-and-scenting form of Nagini.

It was the witch, Alecto, a witch of middling-age who was young during the first Rise, now left with the remnants of her beauty from taking one-too-many Crucios from Voldemort. Her face was lined, her skin tight and a bit leathery, and her shoulders slumped a bit on one side. Frey was sure that if one looked, they would find a scar – curse damage or otherwise – on her left shoulder which caused the witch to list to that side.

A silent snarl was the only tell – though there was no one to see it – as Frey gave a brutal slash of his wand, his Sectumsempra, curtesy of his private tutelage under a pragmatic Severus, neatly severing her wand arm and sending gaping wounds crossing her chest and lower neck.

Alecto was numb with shock for a long moment as her arm slid away, taking her wand with it and sending her into a near-magicless state as her magic attempted to heal the damage before she bled out. Crying out wordlessly she screamed in terror and pain, not even seeing the vivid beam of red that sent her into unconsciousness. Not that it would save her.

Without even sparing a glance for his downed enemy, Frey strode towards the cleared circle of headstones, where the cauldron was still bubbling away, the drag of his long Cloak sweeping the ground the only warning that preceded him.

“Alecto!” Voldemort screamed out in his hissy voice. “Seize him! Wormtail, Nagini, seize the boy!”

Why wasn’t anyone seizing the boy?!

He was only one brat!

“Wormtail, my wand!” He demanded, the rat-like man rushing to hand it over to his master as
Nagini hissed a warning as she darted to coil around her Master in his weakened state, Wormtail setting him down at his imperious gesture. “I shall deal with the brat myself!”

A decision that proved to be too little, too late in the wake of Frey’s usually well-controlled streak of savagery, riled by the prospect of revenge against his parents’ betrayer and murderer, all thoughts of aught else banished from his mind save punishing their wrongdoers.

And he knew just how to do it.

After all, didn’t everyone say that revenge was a dish best served cold?

In an eerie, and vastly more deadly, display of his elemental powers, a wave of ice broke over the prepared ritual space, freezing everything in its wake in a matter of moments: the fire, the cauldron, Nagini, even Wormtail and Voldemort. Though, wanting them to realize to know what was coming, Frey left their heads free. He was a vision of instinctual wrath, all plots and plans and higher thought absent.

Dismissing his sword and wand – for the moment – as he came to a stop mere feet from the almost-entirely frozen forms, Frey lifted his elegant hands and removed his hood, allowing the Cloak to part and reveal him fully as it rested against his back.

“Wormtail.” He said simply, poison green eyes firing with an unholy light. “Tom. Fancy meeting you here.”

If looks could kill, Voldemort would have him flayed, stuffed, and mounted on his decrepit hideout wall.

With a flicker of his fingers, Frey released the ice over Voldemort’s mouth, morbidly curious over what the - homunculus? - would say.

“Insolent child.” The Dark Lord hissed, infuriated. “You will pay for this indignity! No one…”

He was cut off as Frey sighed and replaced the ice, this time wrapping it all around the front of his face, only leaving his ears free.

“I don’t know if you’ve noticed, Tom.” Frey told him with exquisite gentleness. “But I’m not a child. Despite my years, I haven’t been one for ages. You would have done better with trying to convince me to join your side or promised me some empty platitude than going straight for the threats. Still. Live and learn. And you will live from this, Tom.” He added, arching a brow at the clear surprise in the bloody red eyes watching him with equal parts hate, rage, and a growing hint of fear. “Oh yes, you will. I’m not foolish enough to think that you’ll die this easy after you’ve hung around this long. But remember.” Frey smirked. “The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches…” A twist of his wrist summoned his wand once more. “I’m simply not ready to do so…yet. Consider that while you’re floating around the aether searching for some new weak-willed fool to possess, won’t you? Reducto.”

Frey held up one arm, protecting himself from the flying shards of Voldy-ugly-baby and Nagini. He blinked a moment later when not one but two black wisps scattered, one to the four winds and the other vanishing in a flash of death magic that he easily recognized from the Horcruxes he’s cleansed thus far.

“Well, well, well.” Frey cocked his heads as he cast a Fiendfyre to clear the remains of the two small bodies, melting down the noxious concoction in the cauldron while he was at it. He was taking no chances that a piece of Horcrux-snake remained to cause problems later. “Nothing but surprises
tonight. Wouldn’t you say, Wormtail?”

In an echo of his actions a few minutes before with Voldemort, who was even now casting for a new form to take, Frey removed the ice gagging the terrified and sobbing Animagus.

“Now, we’re short on time, that Portkey is going to take me away any moment now.” Frey told him with frightening ice in his voice. “So, we’ll have to pass on repaying you for whatever pleasantries your master no doubt was going to inflict on me. Let’s jump to what I need to know…and maybe your death won’t be as unpleasant as freezing to death would no doubt be, yes?”

Wormtail whimpered an agreement, certain that whoever had raised sweet Harry had twisted and tainted him far worse than even a Death Eater would have managed.

“Who is masquerading as Alastor Moody?” Frey demanded calmly. He knew that had to be the person who fiddled with the Cup. Karkaroff didn’t have access to it as one of the competing school’s Headmasters and Moody had both been rejected entrance to the castle by the Hogwarts wards and in-charge of security for the Tournament.

“A-a-amycus C-c-carrow.”

“Thank you, Wormtail.” Frey nodded.

“H-h-harry, you don’t have to do this, your parents wouldn’t have wanted you to be this…person.” He tried to reason with the youth.

His words were met with an enraged snarl, the Potter Heir’s eyes nearly aglow in the dark. “You don’t get to speak about what James and Lily Potter might’ve wanted for me!” He shouted, losing his grasp on his cold sense of purpose.

In the back of his mind, Frey realized that his cold, his rage and viciousness didn’t seem quite right.

But it was too late for that, his emotions were controlling him instead of him them, a situation that didn’t seem to have relief or remedy in sight.

Taking out his sword, Frey spared one last glance for the whimpering man, then spun in an elegant move and cleanly sent his head tumbling from his still-frozen body. Feeling the Portkey heat up and sensing incoming magic – likely due to his use of several Dark-classified restricted spells in a short time, Frey cast another Fiendfyre, this one in no way controlled, trusting that the DMLE would easily be able to put it out before it reached the distant town. He spent a moment entranced by the roaring flames, then tossed his wand and sword – the only evidence of his actions, into the fire to be consumed along with the bodies of Carrow and Wormtail.

There was work yet to be done – a mole to root out – when he reached Hogwarts and the cause of his dark actions to confront.

But that was a worry for another moment as the Portkey latched onto him and whisked him away as Frey tuckd James’s Cloak away once more.
“…massive blasts of Dark Magic in Little Hangleton…”

“…but they have to have a way to track the Portkey!”

“Let me go Snivellous, I’m going after my pup!”

“Contain yourself you idiot mutt and let those who are actually capable of finding the boy do so!”

To say that Frey’s return Portkey dropped him down into chaos would be understating the matter.

“…aurors deployed to the site of the Dark Magic.”

“The Minsters of Magic safe inside the school…”

“Cub?”

“Pup!”

“HARRY!”

Back on Hogwarts’ grounds, with the safeguard built into the now-cleansed wards, Frey felt a large part of the emotional extremes he’d been feeling dissipate…only to be nearly crippled as the reality of his actions sank in.

Shaking it off as he was dog-piled on by his friends and dogfathers, Heidi and Sev watching with clear concern and other more-official-type people looking on, Frey shoved it away. He’d deal with making himself a judge, jury, and executioner twice over later. Right now there were more urgent matters to see to.

Like the still-present Amycus Carrow in the guise of Alastor Moody.

Frey let everyone have their moment clamoring him, of ensuring he was alive and mostly well, all the while watching the hunched form out of the corner of his eye, the Death Eater obviously shaken by Frey returning both alive and relatively unharmed aside from some dirt, blood, and the rampant sent of scorched hair.

Dumbledore parted the crowd around Frey like Moses through the Red Sea, the movement apparently service as the straw that broke the camel’s back of Carrow’s ability to wait and see, spectators gasping and shouting as “Moody” brandished his wand and shot off a spell at the powerful pair of Dark-Lord-Defeaters.

Still very much in battle mode – and kinda expecting it given that it was pretty clear to anyone who was aware of the trap that “Harry” escaped practically unscathed – Frey reached out and snapped up the closest available wand.

Blinking a bit at the rush of power, he nonetheless shoved the Headmaster out of the way of the sickly-yellow spell, yelling “Death Eater, down!”
An ingrained response to the danger – and likely death – those words implied, took hold of all the adults, everyone hitting the ground and taking the teens with them, all but Severus, Sirius, Remus, and a few of the battle-hardened aurors who hadn’t been called out to deal with the emergency in Little Hangleton.

“The Dark Lord will rise again!” Amycus shouted in Moody’s gravelly voice. “No matter how many times you foil us, the Dark will prevail! Morsmorde!”

 Conjuring the Dark Mark over the remnants of the Maze, Carrow attempted to Apparate away, only to be stymied by a combination of the wards and a slew of spells from half-a-dozen wands, including Frey’s own Levicorpus.

Together with two body-binds, a stupefy, and a few unrecognizable hexes, all present were treated to the strange sight of an insensate and bound – and being attacked by Bat-Bogey’s? – Alastor Moody being dangled in the air by his ankle.

“What is going on!” A witch of middle age – and wearing an infamous monocle – burst out as she climbed to her feet. “Has Moody been Imperioused?”

“I am uncertain, Madam Bones.” Severus said, eyeing the now-bashful Frey who ducked his head at all the attention being lavished on him. “However, I believe our new Tri-Wizard Champion holds at least some of the answers we seek. If Mr. Potter would return the Headmaster’s wand, then perhaps we can begin to get to the bottom of all this, hmm?”

“I am afraid.” Dumbledore said sourly, no sign of his usual twinkle present on his pinched features. “That particular wand is lost to me now, my boy. It is the same which I won from Gellert all those years ago, and has now been won in turn. No matter. I still have my original wand.” So saying, Dumbledore removed the eleven inch, oak and dragon heart-string wand from his sleeve.

The loss of the Elder Wand was a devastating blow, one that Dumbledore was desperately trying to keep hidden from his audience.

He’d felt it break from him when young Harry snatched it from his hand to turn on the form of not-Alastor.

Head heavy and thoughts muddled from all the events of the night – a condition trebled by the influx of power he’d felt on winning a wand of all things – Frey gestured towards Moody weakly.

“That’s not Moody.” He explained, weaving in place a bit as his exhaustion threatened to have him collapse. “It’s someone named Amycus Carrow according to Peter Pettigrew.”

“Peter?” Two voices shouted with a nearly-identical growl. Frey’s dogfathers’ hackles going up at the sound of the traitor’s name.

Frey nodded, giving Viktor a soft smile of thanks as the Bulgarian came to his side and slung Frey’s arm over Viktor’s shoulders, his own arm wrapping around Frey’s waist, thoroughly propping him up.

“Pettigrew, and a witch named Alecto, they were the ones with Carrow who rigged the Cup and tried to trap me.” He shuddered. “Spouted off crazed ramblings about bringing back Voldemort. Then one of them shot a fire spell that was darker than anything I’ve ever seen before at me and the Cup’s Portkey reactivated bringing me back here.”

“And in the process of their scheme,” Madam Bones, the head of the DMLE questioned the weary young wizard gently. “They mentioned Alastor being impersonated.”
"Yes, ma’am." Frey nodded obligingly. "There was a snake there too. They called it Nagini. But I managed to freeze and shatter it the same way I did the Maze. That infuriated them and they bound me to a headstone then started ranting at me."

"Very well, Mr. Potter." Madam Bones nodded, gesturing to her Aurors to take the bound form of "Moody" into custody. "We shall get to the bottom of this matter; don’t you worry about that. Now, I believe the gallant Mr. Krum would be best served by escorting you to the Infirmary."

…

Heidi broke off from the other adults as they gathered inside of Dumbledore’s office, the foreign ministers and important officials had all returned home in a flurry, while the British higher-ups were all trailing along with Madam Bones as she had sent her Aurors ahead to bind Carrow and Severus to retrieve a vial of Veritaserum.

None of that was Heidi’s concern, nor really her affair.

She cared about exactly one thing in this drafty old castle: her little lord and him alone.

So, it was with her unerring memory that she made her way to the Infirmary where Frey was no doubt waiting for the next round of questions from both the adults who were part of his life and the Ministry officials.

At the very least, Frey was certain to need to give and sign an official statement, even if it meant it had to be dictated to one of the younger Aurors the stern head of the DMLE had in her entourage.

A soft smile tugged at the edge of her mouth as she came into view of Frey’s hospital bed, the young half-blood currently holding court – there was no other way to describe it – over his friends, with two in particular having claimed the choice seats at either shoulder, his boyfriend Viktor and his best-friend – despite current difficulties – Draco.

Frey caught her eye with a relief-tinged grin, then shooed his companions away.

“Madam Pompfrey only gave you lot a couple minutes.” He reminded them, shamelessly using the dragon of the infirmary against them. “You better go before she comes back.”

Most of the dozen or so students agreed with varying degrees of resignation, save for Draco and Viktor.

The blond just folded his arms across his chest with a mulish expression, settling back firmly into his chair in a silent statement of stubborn intent.

“Dray.” Frey turn towards him as best as he could with his arm in a sling and tender ribs.

Rolling about in a graveyard to avoid spellfire wasn’t the best situation to avoid things like bruised ribs and sprained shoulders.

“I’m not going anywhere.” Draco told him succinctly. “Not with imposture Death Eaters and who-knows-whom wandering around the castle trying to discover how Carrow managed to change the wards to allow that Portkey to take you off the grounds. No.”

“Dray.” This time it was more of a sigh than a name as Frey reached out with his uninjured hand and stroked the back of one fisted hand gently. “I really do need to speak to Heidi in private. Please. It has to do with my guardians and their reactions to everything.”
Draco scowled at that, knowing full-well Frey was referring to his father Loki at the very least, as well as his patron Thanatos and likely even his actual active guardian Chiron.

Gods trumped best-friends no matter how you really looked at it.

Especially since while Draco could be dangerous in a deviously clever way, he wasn’t about to smite anyone, as proven out by Krum still being among the living after putting his grimy Bulgarian paws all over Draco’s Frey.

“What about him?” He cast a dark look at the Quidditch player.

“Viktor will be leaving in the morning, Draco.” Frey reminded him, ruthlessly suppressing the grin that wanted to break across his face at Draco’s return to near-normal behavior for the spoiled blond. “We’ll say goodnight and then he’ll go back to the ship. He’s not staying but a minute longer than you are.”

Grumbling but appeased – and with plans to sneak back into the infirmary later – Draco finally took his leave, giving Heidi a gallant bow when he came even with her post standing at the end of the bed, moving just fast enough that Viktor’s first words carried to him as he opened the infirmary doors.

“I’m never sure if you’re quite sane for wanting to get involved with him next year or not.” Was all Draco could hear – riling him back up – before the doors closed at his back and cut off the rest of the conversation.

Frey eyed his boyfriend amused, knowing that Viktor had said as such purely for revenge on the blond for making a fuss over Viktor remaining for a scant minute longer than himself.

“Well he’s spoiled but he has a good heart under all that swagger.” Frey told him half-seriously.

“And that he’s a pretty blond doesn’t hurt much either.” Heidi tossed in with a mischievous grin, well-aware of her charge’s on-going on-again-off-again affair with the golden god of a Harvestman Alexios, the pair often joined by Alexios’s partner and longtime lover Hector.

Indeed, after the “lessons” Frey received from Aniki and the two ancients, more than one of her brothers and sisters would be more than willing to join Alexios when the Myrmidon visited Frey.

“Are you sure you’re alright?” Viktor asked, ignoring the woman who watched them. “I could wait in the hall, stay the night with you?”

“No, that’s ok Viktor.” Frey assured him with a soft smile. “It could wait in the hall, stay the night with you?”

Chuckling under his breath, Viktor leaned over and stole Frey’s breath with a heated snog before Heidi’s cleared throat had him ending it with a light blush, brushing his hand lightly down on scraped cheek, Viktor bussed Frey softly on the forehead and took his leave, knowing that come the morning it would be time for him to do so for perhaps the last time unless by some miracle their schedules meshed over the summer.
“He’s handsome.” Heidi said with genuine appreciation as she sat on the edge of Frey’s right hip, gingerly taking one of his hands and stroking her thumb over his barked knuckles from an unfortunate slash of the giant acromantula. “And very much in type for you, little one.”

“I have a type?!” Frey gasped with mock shock. “Since when?”

“Male, attractive, and built.” Heidi said bluntly, taking none of Frey’s nonsense. “Which – if your Draco knew of your other lovers – would do much to explain his insecurity.”

Frey shrugged, looking away from her knowing face with a sigh.

It didn’t surprise him in the least that his former caregiver had been – and likely would continue to – watch over him from Thanatos’s hall.

“Draco is Draco.” He said simply.

“A class of his own?” Heidi arched a brow, a considering look crossing her face as she hummed under her breath. “Now that I could easily believe with the way you used to talk about him before your Rites.”

Heidi had of course returned to Thanatos’s active service, including living in his halls, once Frey had undergone his Rites of Passage at thirteen.

As a result, it had been over a year since the last time they were able to talk without an audience.

“That all aside.” Heidi pinned him with a firm stare, the same one she used often during his childhood, especially when trying to unearth information about his more dangerous adventures.

Like that hell-spawn of a basilisk.

“I know you’re troubled, little one. More than can be dismissed as part of your ordeal as you explained earlier. Tell me.” She studied him from intent eyes. “What really happened tonight?”

Removing her hand from his, Frey reached over and removed a small object from within his belt, the belt itself as well as his new wand and a few other things had been removed from his clothes – which Madam Pomphrey had sent to the elves for cleaning and repair – and piled on the bedside table. It was a small orb, inky black, and emitted a strange and forbidding sensation of ice and soul-stealing cold. Heidi’s eyes shot wide as he offered it to her, knowing the second it touched her skin exactly what it was and where it had come from.

“The Dementor.” She breathed, leaning back from the marble-sized object in her hand instinctively. “You did keep it. I thought you had. Why in the worlds would you ever risk having one near you? You know what a Dementor is capable of, both from my teachings and your godfather’s stories of his imprisonment.”

Shuddering she flinched as she felt the trapped and transfigured being try and reach out to her, effecting her emotions and higher brain functions much like it would in its natural form.

If it could do that in a matter of moments…what effect might it have had on Frey?

And what might he have done while under its influence.

Gasping a bit at the effort it took to set it down on the scrap of raw silk Frey had taken from another pocket and laid out on the bed between them, she quickly wrapped it up tightly with shaking hands, tying it off with the bit of leather that had been binding Frey’s hair before Pomphrey removed it with
a spell to club his hair well out of the way.

“Tell me.” She demanded, eyes fierce. “Everything.”

So he did.

From the moment he felt a qualm over the enchantments on the cup but ignored them, all the way up to and including casting a vastly dangerous and nearly uncontrollable spell as the Portkey brought him back to Hogwarts.

Every spell, every act, every word that he had cast or done or said.

Everything, exactly as she required from him.

First though, he cast a silencing spell that would protect him from anyone eavesdropping save divine peeping-toms.

Feeling emotionally scraped raw and turned inside out – but also, strangely at peace that he’d gotten it all off his heart – Frey waited, every part of him tensed and waiting for her judgement.

There were so many other things he could’ve done, steps he could’ve taken, ways he could’ve brought Carrow and Wormtail in for questioning. But he didn’t. And influenced or not, that would always be on him.

He told her that as well, almost bursting into speech when he couldn’t take the suspense of her castigation anymore.

“So my sweet little one.” Heidi whispered, a tear tracking down her cheek as she wrapped him in her arms, burying his face in her soft chest, Frey clenching his arms around her without care for his injuries as he soaked up the maternal comfort she offered without hesitation or reserve. “I’m so sorry that you had to do all that, that you were put in that position. That you were put in a position to come into contact with a Dementor at all, let alone with your parents’ betrayer and murderer both.” She looked down into his tear-stained face as he stared up at her, feeling punch-drunk, as if he’d gone rounds with all of Ares Cabin. A dozen times. Without breaks in between. “None of that ever should have happened. Bringing a Dementor around impressionable youth, even if two of them were seventeen? Madness.” She scoffed at the very idea. “As for everything that happened after…” She trailed off, thinking hard on how to word her next statements.

It was a delicate thing.

What she said next, especially because of the position she’s always held in his life, could very well dictate his actions for years to come.

As a hero, a prince, and most of all, a future god, he couldn’t afford the insecurity about his decisions that could come if she brushed them off.

But worse, he couldn’t believe that causing death was without consequence either and could be done without hesitation or remorse.

“I think.” She said finally. “That you’ve been bruised and scraped up a bit. You’ve got some mud on your face and some blood on your hands. And you know what?” She leaned away a bit to look back down at him. “That’s a good thing. Next time you’re in a position like the one with Pettigrew, you’ll take an extra moment or two of consideration instead of going with whatever simply feels good at the time.”
“What about Alecto?”

“What about her?” She arched a brow. “Little love, you’re a warrior, not a doormat. She was an enemy combatant who wanted to capture you and use you for Thanatos-knows-what at the end of which you would’ve likely been dead. Murder is one thing. Self-defense is another entirely. And self-defense was exactly what happened when you’re a fourteen-year-old teenaged half-blood up against a fully-grown and dangerous witch. You did what you had to, to survive, the same with Nagini and destroying Voldemort’s vessel. Did you make mistakes? Yes. But they were yours to make and you’ll be better for them. End of story.”

Loki shoved down his horror and worry, allowing only smug pride to show on his face as he turned toward his adoptive father. All of them had remained, watching every moment in the infirmary and interaction in an attempt to decide his bet against the All-Father.

“Well?” He arched a brow. “I believe that decides it. I win, the young one is neither dead nor maimed, not even in a mental or emotional fashion.”

“He’s right, my love.” Frigga agreed with a sigh and a nod. “If anyone has the authority to decipher the young one’s mental or emotional state, it would be the Harvestmaiden who raised him.”

“Oh very well.” Odin grumbled. “Though I would like to know more about that creature they discussed, Dementor? Perhaps I will open up a discourse with Zeus to learn more of them…”

“I wouldn’t bother.” Loki told him dryly, hiding the fear and dismay that the thought of Odin with a pet Dementor did to him. “Dementors are a singular race from all I’ve read and seen. They don’t exist in any other world but that controlled by the Titan-Olympus pantheon.”

Thank Ymir for that.

It was enough to give him hives, Odin with his hands on one of those damned things.

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**Daily Prophet**

**June 25th, 1995**

**Death Eater Disaster!**

**Imposture Infiltrates Hogwarts!**

**TriWizard Champion Kidnapped and Injured!**

**How Did Dumbledore Mistake**

**Death Eater Amycus Carrow**

**For Old Friend Auror Alastor “Mad Eye” Moody?**

**Is This A Sign That The Headmaster’s Tarnished Reputation Has Given Way to a Faulty Mind?**

**An Investigative Report by Special Correspondent Rita Skeeter**
“Do I even want to know what you were thinking, keeping a transfigured Dementor on your person?” Loki demanded fiercely, holding his son out at arms-length and staring down into his face – a bit scraped and bruised even in his dreams.

They’d already been through the smothering-loving hugs, Frey holding onto his Far as tightly as he’d been held in turn by Loki.

It had been tortures of the damned, being condemned to merely watch and do nothing, not even able to truly react as he would under the eyes of the Aesir nobility and elite warriors, as his son was faced with yet another life-threatening situation.

The god of Mischief honestly couldn’t understand how the Olympians did it, sire or bear child after child and then be forced to watch them either rise or fall according to their traditional heroic Trials.

After a long moment of staring into eyes that mirrored his own, Frey finally answered.

“A foolish, selfish desire. Nothing more, nothing less.” He sighed. “In hindsight, at least.”

“Explain.”

“No one knows how to kill a Dementor.” Frey answered. “I wanted to know.”

“You were going to cull them.” Loki said, eyes shooting wide, his genius mind rapidly connecting the dots. “Or wipe them out entirely once you discovered the secret from the one you transfigured… weren’t you?”

Knowing his son, and the close relationship he had cultivated with Sirius, the latter seemed much more likely than the former.

“They’re monsters.” Frey growled, eyes flashing. “They serve no purpose to the natural order. Destroying them would be the right thing to do.”

“The same could be said about goldfish.” Loki told him dryly. “And if you’d cared to ask either myself or Thanatos you would have learned that Dementors did and at time still do have a purpose in the natural order. It was only once the wizarding kind bound them to Azkaban Island that their purpose was subverted and they fell into a starved decay. It’s not their fault that they seem monstrous to you and everyone who has been effected by them or lost a loved one to them.”

“What?” This was boggling news to Frey. How on Earth could soul-sucking fiends serve a purpose in the natural order? Thankfully, it didn’t seem that his Far was going to make him fess up and ask Thanatos.

“They don’t steal souls, my little prince.” Loki told him with gentle care, well-aware that it was a sensitive topic with his child. “They reap them, yes. But the souls reaped – when they were free to roam – were those that were tainted, usually by having committed the most evil of acts. Murderers, abusers, pedophiles, and the like. Once the souls had been reaped – and digested, though processed might be a better word for it – they were released back into the cycle of life and death, completely cleansed and eligible for rebirth.”

“Then…” Frey thought hard on that explanation for long minutes, turning it over and over in his mind. “The Ministry corrupted them somehow? Or since they’re starving they just take whatever
“More the former than the latter.” Loki shrugged. “If you want to do what is right with the Dementors, you will figure out how to heal them and break their bonds to Azkaban. That, my son, would be a far nobler and distinctly kinder act than taking the easy route of causing the extinction of an entire species.”

Frey hung his head, ashamed for the crime he almost let his selfish desire for revenge drive him too, as it had already driven him to crimes this night.

“Heidi took the transfigured Dementor to Thanatos.” Frey nibbled at his lip, ready to do what he could to atone for his actions. “It’ll be hard to find an answer without access to one.”

“I’m certain you’ll manage.” Loki told him with a quirk of his lips. “All that aside, there was something else I wanted to discuss with you, Frey.” Loki folded his son back into his embrace.

“My control.” Frey whispered brokenly. “The Dementor broke it, letting out a part of myself that scares me, Far.”

“That’s what happens when control is rigid.” Loki advised him, speaking from experience. “When immortals of all kinds are young and growing into their powers, their control over their powers and themselves is paramount, especially when they’re raised around those more…fragile than themselves. In your case, I believe that both myself and your other teachers have done you a great disservice, teaching you to suppress your emotions, your darker instincts and inclinations, to the point of rupture. You can’t lock parts of yourself away, little one. Eventually – as happened tonight – your control will fail and you have the potential to lose yourself utterly in a dark rage.”

“The Berserkergang.” Frey breathed looking up at his father with wide eyes. “It grants strength but an inability to differentiate well between friend and foe. That’s a type of what you’re talking about, isn’t it?”

“Yes.” Loki said plainly, with a grimace thinking of his adoptive brother whose ability to fall into the berserker rage was infamous. “It’s no coincidence that those who have to project certain personas are the most susceptible to mental breaks like your vengeance stalk tonight or Thor’s berserker rage. You’re under a frankly insane amount of stress. Something like tonight was bound to happen and would have likely occurred sooner if you didn’t have the ability to, ah, channel some of your suppressed emotions and desires through training and bedsport.”

“Ewww.” Frey wrinkled his nose up at Loki. “I do not want to talk about my sex life with you, Far.”

“Good because I’ve no desire to hear of it.” Loki grimaced once more. “But, the issue of your fragile control still exists. If you had already gained immortality I would simply whisk you away for training until you learned a more flexible way of dealing with emotions and impulses that you can’t always act on. At least immediately. But I’m afraid we don’t have time for that.”

“How much time?” Frey cocked his head to the side intrigued by the prospect of a training trip with just his father.

“Decades.” Loki laughed at the forlorn look on his son’s handsome face. “Oh, what a look! Don’t be so dour, we’ll go eventually and I’ll teach you all I know. It just must wait until you no longer age as mortals do, that is all. In the meantime…”

Frey sighed, then spoke almost in unison with his father, well aware of what his most stern of
taskmasters was going to say.

“More meditation.”

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Twenty-Two: Playing and Politics

Chapter Summary

This is an Uncensored chapter.

**Lokison**

*This chapter has censored (Fanfiction) and uncensored (Archive of Our Own) versions available for your enjoyment.*

**Chapter Twenty-Two: Playing and Politics**

Frey spent the last few days of term with the sense of a looming dread hanging over his head. His godfathers and Sev barely let him out of their combined sight, with Draco – and Blaise by extension – right there alongside them hovering. He had one last goodbye with Viktor, then the Quidditch star was gone – much to Draco’s relief, thought with the events of the graveyard Frey would be in England more often than originally planned, opening up an avenue of them seeing each other – at least this summer – that had previously been very narrow. Heidi and his Far had both had their say, leaving only one person in his life – outside of Chiron and his half-blood friends – who had yet to lecture him or otherwise take him to task.

Thanatos.

He was very much not looking forward to what the Avatar of Death had to say regarding his half-arsed plan for the captured and transfigured Dementor, nor what had come to pass in the aftermath of it…though he knew that Thanatos would be pleased by the destruction of another soul-leech if nothing else.

Still.

It was with no-little amount of relief that Frey boarded a plane for New York, only to shadow-step into the cool comfort of his cabin at Camp Half-Blood once the private jet had taken off to keep up appearances.

His Cloak had become something of an open-secret among the school staff following the events of the Tournament and the Graveyard, so his not being there to disembark would be shrugged off as him utilizing it – if they even bothered to tail him that far.

Dumbledore had tried – and been categorically shot down post-haste – to convince Heidi and his godfathers that “Harry” should be kept “safe” in England rather than return to his summer home with Voldemort once more making an appearance. An argument that held little weight given that the Headmaster still didn’t know where Frey’s summer residence was. He’d managed to pin it down to the States, and was assuming that it was in New York – but had no evidence to support the claim.

Owls went astray, and his actual address seemed to still be hidden by a strange – and powerful – magic.

If the Headmaster couldn’t find him, then he had little hope of convincing anyone that Voldemort
could…and that was very much that…for the moment.

Frey had no doubt that with losing the Wand to his most infuriating chess-piece that Dumbledore would be rather more meddling – and irritating – than normal during the coming school year.

But he had a summer of nominal freedom first…and he intended to enjoy it and recover from the blow he’d taken from his actions in the graveyard.

…

“Do I even need to get into how utterly foolish your actions were?” Thanatos asked icily, arms folded over his chest as he stared – still down, Frey hadn’t quite topped his own height yet – down at his protégé.

“No, thanks.” Frey answered drily, looking up from where he’d been idly sharpening his House Potter sword – the same one he’d used to slay the basilisk and that was imbued with her venom – waiting for Thanatos to appear. He’d sensed him before the deity had manifested in Frey’s cabin, as his ever-evolving spikes of power and growth had warned him of the incoming power that Thanatos carried with him everywhere. Frey’s magical senses regarding all things to do with Death and Darkness had continued to grow since his first power surge back when his Far had broken the bindings on his wizarding power. “I’ve heard just about every version of that song and dance from Far, and Chiron, and Heidi, and and and.” He rolled his expressive green eyes. “And gotten reams of reading and homework assigned along with meditation and Occlumency practices besides as punishment.”

“Good.” Thanatos told him simply, arching an inky-black brow, his normally-cowled head bare in the privacy of Thanatos’s sheltering wards that he’d put up immediately upon entering. The Avatar was a handsome being, quite striking with his dark hair and burnt-gold eyes, but it was a flawed handsome marred by the scars of battles from ages long passed. “Then I won’t. Instead I will skip right to your punishment.” He drawled, smirking as Frey winced. “As well as giving you a reminder of the pact that led to your creation. Where before your quest was without a limit, you now have one: I want the last soul leech delivered to my keeping before you return to school. Thereafter you will have until Lughnasadh of next summer to defeat Tom’s shade. I tire of having him…flitting about.”

Frey restrained the need to groan.

That just effectively put paid to his free summer.

Well…free besides his homework and practices anyway.

Luke was going to be pissed.

To say nothing of Silena and Annabeth.

“Now for the reminder.” Amusement crept into the dark voice. “When I agreed to allow the pact between the Potters and your father to go through, offering up my blood and blessing for the ritual, it was under the oaths of all involved that the wizarding lines that allow my interference in the wizarding world would continue. An agreement that has come to rest on your shoulders.”

“I know.” Frey grimaced, having been informed by his Far during the three years they spent out-of-time to train him after removing the bindings on his magical core. “Far told me. Two heirs, who I will eventually have to leave when I ascend. I know.”

Knew and hated everything about it, especially since all the signs and divinings point to him freezing
into his immortality sooner rather than later.

He was just too powerful not to undergo his Becoming in the next few years, though he could – and would – put off his actual ascension until at least when his children entered Hogwarts…which was probably why Thanatos was bringing up the subject.

The longer Frey put off his ascension, the more dangerous it became.

And no one – not even the Avatar of Death – wanted to deal with the fallout from Loki that would occur should anything…untoward happen to Frey as a result of him delaying his accepting his godhead.

“Three, now.” Thanatos told him, gaining him a glaring pout from his protégé. “Your godfather made you his Heir, making the Black Lines encompassed by the original agreement between myself, James, and your father. And since your dogfathers have no intention of risking Remus’s lycanthrope being visited upon their potential offspring, you, I’m afraid, must provide for the Blacks as well as the Potter and Peverells.”

Frey groaned softly under his breath. He’d been afraid of that. But he had been holding out hope that his dogfathers would get over their hangups and do their duty to the Black Line…but with Sirius as the Black in question that was likely never going to happen.

“I’m familiar,” he admitted after a long moment of silent mental ranting. “With the necessary ritual since I won’t be fulfilling that obligation the natural way. And I have a witch to carry that owes me a life debt so that’s taken care of…but.” He sighed. “I have a Dark Lord to finish first. Any hints as to how I’m supposed to off Tom if he doesn’t manage to get himself reembodied before my time’s up?”

“There are weapons that can trap a soul, young one.” Thanatos arched an unimpressed brow. “I suggest you look into them. And into a second actual parent for your children…as I don’t believe you’ll be so lucky as to live out their entire lives with them before the matter of your godhead becomes critical…”

Reaching out, Thanatos brushed one long finger against the inside of Frey’s right wrist, just below the wand holster holding his gift to Antioch in ages past, the sign of the Hallows appearing in gold-edged black with only the merest hint of pain on the receiving end.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah.” Frey rolled his eyes as Thanatos disappeared in a swirl of gold-edged black shadows to match his new mark – the mark of the Master of Death. “Show off. Also – assisting in the creation of your own foretold master, and making him someone whose life belongs in another universe – that’s cheating.”

He knew who he wanted as his handfasted spouse for a year and a day to make his heirs legitimate, and to donate the other half of their genes beyond that taken from his measly one-percent of James he carried. The ritual would access that fraction and draw out the Peverell, Potter, and Black heritage from it. But he still needed a second actual parent as well to keep the ritual from latching onto his divine heritage to complete his children’s genome.

That was the catch you see…

They had to be fully wizarding, without the “taint” of his divine parentage.

It was the sting in the tail of Thanatos’s agreement.

And a built-in protection against them having to deal with the divine political games that came with a
divine parent…such as being harried by monsters or debates over whether they even belonged in their birth universe.

Still, Frey had hoped he would have a bit more time…for all of it.

But the Fates – nasty bints that they could be – had meddled well and truly with his life before Thanatos had had a chance to put a stop to it.

And they waited for no one.

Not even a god, let alone a mere godling.

The heifers.

…

“Okay, Luke, breath in for me and relax.” Frey coaxed his friend through clearing his mind – as much as a demigod with ADD and a problem with sticky fingers could clear his mind anyway – in preparation for Frey taking a look around his mindscape to see if he could figure out, for certain, what had tried to tamper with his friend. “Good, that’s good.” He praised the older teen lightly, their eyes – bright blue and emerald green – locked on each other, allowing Frey to slip in as Luke focused on keeping himself and his thoughts calm.

Things had been…strange to say the least at Camp ever since they came back from Luke’s failed quest.

Tense.

Anxious.

Like the whole world had taken a deep breath in preparation for taking a blow…which had yet to arrive.

Seekers still went out to find new half-bloods, who arrived in droves this summer, more than any summer before it that Luke could remember. And there were more campers staying year-round as well. He’d come to agree with what he’d heard Frey say more than once – to him and Silena as well as Chiron, the centaur agreeing reluctant as well – something was coming. The signs and portents – according to Chiron – point towards a prophecy being set into motion.

Though whether it was one of the ones surrounding his friend, or another major prophecy like that of the Big Three, not even Chiron knew.

There had been a shift in the campers as well in the last few years.

They were younger as a whole, most of the campers that Frey grew up with were gone, graduated with their monster-draw muffled, able to live out mostly-normal lives that didn’t involve things like running gauntlets in the mornings and swordplay or archery in the afternoons.

None of them had stayed, Frey now being the most-senior camper – as far as years living at Camp goes – with only a handful who were older around, Luke and Silena included, along with Beckendorf from the Hephaestus cabin and an unclaimed named Ethan who mostly sulked around during the summers and didn’t talk much, carrying around a chip on his shoulder not unlike the one Luke had hefted around for more than a few years after arriving, and more than a few before that.

Frey appeared in the center of Luke’s mind’s eye, turning his incorporeal form around as he tried to
orient himself in the midst of what looked like a massive version of Luke’s room in the Hermes cabin, a giant TV on one wall, with stacks and stacks of game consoles under it, and towering bookshelves containing “games” that likely stood for Luke’s memories. It was rather organized, especially for someone with little actual training in the mind arts and only a book given to him by Frey to work off of and Silena to help him.

Luke trust rarely, preventing him from allowing Chiron to assist in this matter.

That he let Frey into his mind was a sign of just how highly the demigod valued him and their friendship.

Having an inkling of what he was – possibly – dealing with, Frey moved to sit on the shabby soft in front of the haphazard arrangement of games, resting idly as if having a visitor in Luke’s mind was an everyday occurrence, and tickling at the curiosity – and hubris – of whoever had set-up shop inside his best-friend, their hooks so deep that even Frey’s amulet against outside influence hadn’t completely taken care of the problem, Luke reporting issues with his temper flaring out of control at odd times or feeling a seething resentment – a lingering grudge – that was out of character for a soul that tended towards bright mischievousness and the occasional theft.

Timeless moments passed, with Frey believing that the being wasn’t going to take his bait and force him to do this the hard way – rooting it out root and stem memory by memory – when a flicker of movement just out of view pinged his consciousness.

Gotcha.

It tested him again, then third time, unaware that with each probe and stab at his incorporeal form that it gave away far more than it discovered, all the while Frey silently set his magical traps in the quiet of Luke’s mind.

The presence gathered itself, frustrated from the lack of reaction from what it knew by now was an intruder, and shot fast and hard at the form.

A mistake, a deadly one, as doing so revealed itself for just a fraction of a moment – but in a timeless place like a mind, a fraction of a moment might as well be an eternity when up against someone well-versed in the mental arts…despite his own recent struggles applying them to himself.

Like a cell door slamming closed, the net of entwined magic and shadows snapped closed around the invader, holding it still as Frey stood – sort of…being incorporeal and all – and wandered over to see what he’d caught.

“A trap was set for a peasant boy.” He quoted, unable to help himself, his sense of whimsy in full-force as a front while inside his own mind he was thinking furiously as he cursed himself for being right. “And ‘lo, I catch a prince!” He smirked cocking his head to one side, crossing his arms over his chest. “Or a Titan rather. Kronus…I presume?”

“The same might be said of yourself.” Frey shuddered on the inside though he gave no sign of it to the fallen Titan King. Even his voice dripped with malice and evil. Let alone his presence. It was no wonder Luke had had problems all year despite the little help Frey had imparted before having to leave for England. “A Greek I thought…but an Asgardian I find, one of Jotnar descent no less! Tell me, giantling, how did one such as you come to be within my realms?”

“Your realms?” Frey arched a brow as his raised his hands, fingers flicking in rapid-fire motions as he began the spell that would cast an intruder – even one this strong – from Luke’s mind, the effort to do so exhausting him before he’d barely begun. But nonetheless, he persisted. Over his dead body
would he leave even the smallest sliver – which this approximation of the Fallen Titan was – within Luke to twist and taint him. He had no doubt – especially with the prophecy hanging over the Big Three – that Kronus would yet make a bid to break out of Tartarus…but it wouldn’t be wearing his best-friend as a cheap suit. “I believe your son might have something to say about that.” He tsked mockingly. “You remember him, right? Beloved by your wife, freed his siblings, cut you up in little itty bitty pieces and cast you into the deepest darkest pit he could find. Zeus? Ringing any bells?”

The shade of Kronus hissed at the blatant mockery from the Jotun spawn.

“When I return…!” He began to rant, only to be cut off, trebling his rage.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah.” Frey shrugged, leaning forward as if imparting a secret. “I was raised by a Harvestmaiden with the blessing of Thanatos big guy. You don’t scare me. Your wife on the other hand…” He shrugged, then with his hands extended out at his sides raised them together in a resounding clap of power, the shade extinguishing as if it had never been, smothered by his net of power.

Shaking his head, weakened considerably from the act – a weakness magnified by having to give a show of being unaffected by the sheer effort and power it took – Frey launched himself back into his own head, his kneeling form wobbling as he fell over onto his side, panting.

“He’s done!” Silena, their spotter for the endeavor, launched herself at him, propping him up as Luke blinked and came out of the trance, feeling – in contrast with his best-friend – energized and more himself than he had for months. Leaping to his feet, the strong seventeen-year-old demigod helped his girlfriend assist their friend to his feet, sharing a loving look over his head as the demigoddess easily spied the change in her lover, the two ushering Frey over to his massive bed and laying him down to rest.

“It’s done.” He told them, weary down to his bones. “And I need Chiron. It’s worse than I thought…”

... 

“What can be done?” The wise old centaur and trainer of heroes asked the godling, Luke and Silena having gone off to celebrate Luke’s newly-cleansed mind after a stern warning from Frey not to remove the amulet.

Kronus had Luke’s mental signature now.

So long as the Titan King was awake and growing in strength, the son of Hermes would never be safe, nor would those around him if he were to falter, such as Silena and Annabeth who still had more than a bit of hero worship for the older half-blood.

Frey moved around his cabin, quick hands reaching for books even as they flew from the shelves at the demand of his magic. He’d rested – for as long as his friends were present and watching him with worried and thankful eyes – then gotten up and started researching the moment they left, one Pepper Up down the hatch all he’d needed for a second wind. Books opened and closed, pages turned, all as if they themselves were possessed as Frey used the inherent quickness of his heritage to process the information in search of what he sought. All of the tomes were familiar to him, all of them having been read before, at times more than once during his education.

He just had to find it...

The tome he was looking for on –
“Wards.” He said, words clipped not out of distemper or disrespect but sheer distractions as he puzzled out the solution to a very massive problem. “Luke was his best bet – one of the oldest, most powerful half-bloods around.”

“And one with a score to settle.” Chiron told him knowingly, one hoof stamping against the obsidian floor of the Thanatos cabin.

“That too.” Frey shrugged. Family drama wasn’t his business until someone made it his business. Thanatos knew, he had more than enough of his own. Still, from Luke he at least knew the bare-bones of the beef the older teen had with Olympus in general and Hermes in particular. “He’ll be looking for another host now, another servant. I have to try and stop him before he makes much – if any – headway.”

“That’s assuming.” Chiron pointed out. “That he hasn’t done so already. There’s no way to tell if my… father,” he bit out with distaste. “Has already poisoned another mind with his empty promises.”

Frey snapped his fingers, pointing at the centaur in wordless concession of the point.

“Wards will at least make it harder for him to take another host the way he was trying with Luke from what I found in his mind and what he’s told me about the last year or so. All of it reeks of an attempted possession, but with my amulet in play Kronus couldn’t make a strong enough connection to solicit Luke’s agreement – and Tartarus-bound Titan King or not, he needed that the same as the rest of the deities in this universe.” Frey looked up at the centaur with burning eyes. “This may be the beginning of a foretold series of events…but the fates have never been high on my list thanks to their meddling with my life. I’ll fuck them over if I can. And setting wards around the camp to stymie Kronus is the best I can do at the moment with having to leave for England and deal with events that are unfolding there as well.”

“Language.” Chiron sighed, shaking his head as he clip-clopped over to the massive doors of the cabin…one of the reasons he was able to come and discuss the matter in true privacy and in his true form. “You’d do it anyway…even if I declined, wouldn’t you?”

Frey just gave him a grim smile and bent his head back to the tome that had found its way to his hands in wordless answer, Chiron tossing back over his shoulder.

“Do it in secret…as best you can. If it were discovered the Council would be in an uproar…especially if your unique origins were revealed in the wake of the discovery.”

…

Two nights later, a pleasantly exhausted Frey stepped back from the Camp archway, satisfied at last with his work.

The whole of the first day he’d spent researching wards that would keep out Kronus…at least as much as possible. In the end, with being unable to ward-out anything Titan, Frey had gone with a ward that would keep outside influences from intruding on the dreams of anyone inside the existing wards, much like the amulet he’d given Luke and the earrings he’d spent most of the year enchanting – with tips from his Far – for Silena, both of which he’d added Notice-Me-Not enchantments to once he’d cast Kronus from Luke. He couldn’t – wouldn’t – count on Luke being the only one Kronus had attempted to get his hooks into.

It was little enough that Frey could do, both for his friends and the Camp as a whole, but at the least it should curb Kronus’s ability to twist the campers into serving him.
Any that had already agreed…well.

The time would come to deal with that issue, with them, but it wasn’t time yet.

Though if his dice were right, it was coming, soon.

Never before had Frey felt so torn between his two lives.

They needed him here, to deal with the threat of Kronus, one greater and vastly more terrible than Voldemort could ever be.

And yet, Voldemort was the more immediate concern, especially with the quest now hanging over his head like a Damocles blade.

Frey couldn’t abandon his friends and loved ones in the wizard world either, any more than he could have left Luke to face the shard of Kronus alone, even if Thanatos would let him. Which left him rather at-odds with himself. Nothing was forcing him to help the Camp, nothing other than his own sense of duty to a place that sheltered him, trained him, and kept him safe for all these years. This wasn’t a prophecy that was his, not like the one forcing him ever back to England.

No, this was his own choice.

He chose to involve himself rather than turn away.

Frey rolled his shoulders then cast the spell that would link the anti-dream interference ward to the existing anti-monster warding and the wards that kept the gods and goddesses of Olympus away from the Camp…except for Mr. D and Hermes who was allowed to come-and-go on official business only…so long as he stayed away from Cabin Eleven and his half-blood children anyway.

Part of his decision to help with the coming upheaval was selfish after all: the fate of Olympus determined the fate of this world.

And his unborn children would be solely of this world.

He wouldn’t let them be enslaved and tormented by Kronus and his cohort.

For he made no mistake: with Kronus stirring that was exactly what was at stake – nothing less than the fate of the world.

“You know.” A deep, silky voice threaded with power spoke from behind him, mere feet beyond the wards – and boundary – of the Camp. “When I came to investigate the surge of power that came from here a few days ago, I wasn’t expecting to find the shade of my very unlamented father.”

As the being – for he knew even without looking that this was no mere mortal – spoke, Frey slowly turned with heavy trepidation to face it, already knowing from the threat hidden in the silken voice that he’d been made as something more than a half-blood.

What he found wasn’t quite what he was expecting, nor even who he was expecting.

The Olympian King didn’t often come down from Olympus.

Moreover, all reports of Zeus fashioned him as a middle-aged male with grey-threaded black hair and a beard, with sparks of lightning crackling in his dark eyes.

This didn’t look much like that…but from the aura surrounding him and the bolt in his hand, Frey knew it could be no one else but Zeus come down from on high to – as he’d already stated –
investigate events at Camp Half-Blood, which as most of the power of the wards Frey had just finished adding to was drawn from the Olympian Throne, the God-King could likely do without stepping one sandal-shod toe over the boundary line.

Zeus – in this affect anyway – was younger than usually portrayed. Late twenties or early thirties if Frey had to guess, with short-cropped brown hair that curled wildly around his golden-laurel crown. His eyes were indeed dark and crackling with stormy power, little shards of light streaking from pupil to sclera through the fathomless iris and back in an endless circuit of electricity. Golden-brown skin covered cut musculature, a creamy tunic edged and belted at waist and one shoulder in gold did more to reveal the perfection of form than it did to conceal it. The face was a bit stern – but still handsome in a classic way.

And rather than a full beard, the barest of goatees surrounded full lips that were currently cocked in an amused smirk.

“I never expected to encounter another surge of power, one somehow familiar to me, let alone find a Jotun of all things tinkering with the wards of the Camp.” A dark brown brow arched in wordless question when Frey’s eyes shot wide with panic, then realizing the issue, an arm clad with a golden bracer waved, its twin with the bolt staying quiescent at the God-King’s side. “You’re not the only one in need of privacy now and then, Frey of Asgard. None can hear or see us…which I imagine is making your father more than a bit panicked at the moment.”

“How do you know…?”

“Who you are?” Zeus laughed, the humor doing much to turn his stern features from severe to gorgeous, Frey finally getting an answer – beyond the attraction of power – for the god’s many affairs. “The wizarding core does much to block it, I’ll own, and Thanatos’s blessing still more.” At this Zeus shook his head, holstering the bolt at his back. “But I remember well your father, Frey Lokison, and you’ve much the look of him and a similar aura – one that grows more powerful by the moment. The time will come where nothing can hide you, not even from the most blind of my siblings, children, and other assorted relations. My two most powerful brothers would know you at a glance, as would my,” here he grimaced, as if the very word pained him. “Wife. For an Asgardian if not for your exact parentage – you need to work on your shielding if you intend to stay much longer. Still, I am curious: just how did one such as you come to be here?”

The “without my permission” went without saying.

“Thanatos.” Was the answer he was given – and indeed, it explained much.

An Elder God, the Avatar and god of Death had little need to seek out Zeus for anything, let alone to do as he willed.

And as Zeus owed this particular godling – and yes, he knew what he was, much like he could tell Frey’s origins at a glance, Zeus was randy, not blind or stupid – owed him a great debt, precluding Zeus from trying anything with the young one who was nearly overflowing with power.

That wouldn’t stop him if he thought the boy an actual threat, but the fingerprints of the Norns – with the barest touches of the Moirae – were all over the young one.

Zeus wasn’t suicidal any more than he was stupid, and fucking around with the fates was a good way to find himself on the wrong side of a prophecy.

“You’ve made yourself an enemy in my father, Frey of Asgard.” Zeus told him solemnly. “For that alone, I would call you my ally, one that I may find myself in dire need of if he is indeed stirring.
My debt to you stands, I will go another step and propose a pact: my help in concealing your nature in exchange with yours against my father.”

Frey nodded, stepping forward and clasping arms with the God-King.

It wasn’t anything he wasn’t already planning on doing anyway.

And if he played his cards right, he might be able to wrangle additional protections for his unborn children and their children, and so on through the ages, much like they would have the favor of Thanatos.

“Come.” Zeus commanded, taking firm hold of the godling’s arm and taking up his bolt once more. “There is much to discuss. I would rather do so over cups of wine and in comfort rather than in the sticky New York night.”

Frey shot the infamously promiscuous god a knowing glance from under inky lashes at that. Oh, yeah. He bet they had loads to “discuss in comfort.”

After all…a handshake was only one way to seal a pact…

... Alexios shadow-stepped into the area where his senses told him Frey was, letting out a laughing snort at the scene before him then speaking loudly, waking the three figures sprawled out together on the massive silk-draped bed in the palatial room.

“You know…” he drawled in unknowing imitation of Zeus the previous night. “When Thanatos stopped being able to sense you, Frey, he panicked a bit, just at first. Only for your aura to come back on-line in Olympus of all places for you to be. So, he sends me to check on you, knowing that of anyone I’m least likely to get faced with one of your rages…and least likely to start a fight with whoever you’re with. Only, I arrive to find you cuddled up with both Zeus and Ganymede…because of course you are. Your Father is supposedly losing his shit per Thanatos…and my love still won’t tell me who that is. Get your peachy behind out of the God-King’s bed before my love comes to drag you home himself.” He finished on a hiss, the figures on the bed having startled awake at his voice, Zeus and Ganymede watching Frey scramble for his clothes with no-little amount of amusement.

Alexios didn’t judge, knowing the story with those two.

Zeus hadn’t chosen to marry Hera, it was forced upon him by his mother, part of the price he paid for both powerful females to back him in the war against Kronus.

But he’d never said he’d keep to his vows to her, taken under duress as they were, and other than Ganymede, he never truly flaunted his affairs…though that didn’t stop Hera from spying on him on a near-constant basis and becoming enraged whenever she found him with another.

Seriously, if she’d wanted a faithful husband, she should’ve married someone who actually gave two shits about her instead of the King of the Gods.

Ganymede was also the only lover of Zeus who was safe from Hera, being protected with every iota of Zeus’s power in sigils tattooed onto his very skin, much like the marks from Frey’s Rites and the newest mark on his inner wrist from fulfilling part of his destiny. Of course, Ganymede was powerful in his own right, serving as the minor god of Homosexual Love and being Zeus’s cupbearer, and being descended from Oceanus. He was sacrosanct as far as payback went, and
like many of Zeus’s picadilloes, not a jealous lover, as proven by him joining Zeus and Frey as they “sealed” their pact.

Once Frey had dressed, shrugging into his dragonhide pants and stamping his feet into his boots, his shirt well and truly lost some when during the night, Zeus reached out and snagged one lean wrist, tugging him back down onto the bed.

Ganymede leaned over first, taking that pretty mouth in a wet, tongue-twining kiss before giving up his prize to his king, Zeus repeating his action only whilst cupping the back of Frey’s ebony head, controlling the kiss while Alexios watched in interest, having never seen – in person at least – Frey with anyone but himself and Hector.

It was just as hot as a pure-bystander as it was as a participant, an opinion which Ganymede’s hot glances and rising arousal gave credence to.

Releasing his captive, Zeus nipped lightly at a kiss-reddened lower lip, as his hand moved to cup his left ear with his controlling hand. A glow – seen shining from underneath the gold-skinned hand – and a pulse of power later and he lowered it, revealing what he’d done, fingering the adornment with thumb and forefinger before releasing Frey entirely.

“My end of the bargain.” The King of the Gods – the Olympians at least – told him, gesturing to the new piercing and ear-cuff that were connected with a fine chain, the cuff a simple circle wrapping completely around the top of Frey’s ear and engraved with Zeus’s symbol while the piercing on the lobe was a lightning bolt, the entire piece made of finest gold. “As long as you wear that, not even the most powerful of gods will be able to distinguish you from any other demigod – albeit a powerful one. You need to learn to conceal yourself without a prop…but this will do until you can manage it.”

“Thank you.” Frey nodded, moving over to Alexios’s side and allowing his sometimes-lover to wrap his arms around his nearly-taller form from behind. “I will do what I can on my end.”

“And I on mine.” Zeus tilted his head as one arm curled tightly around a quiet Ganymede, intending to take care of the problem Frey’s goodbye had left them both with. “You can return at any time Frey…Blessed of Thanatos.” He went with in lieu of revealing the godling to Thanatos’s Myrmidon general.

…”

“Seriously?” Alexios arched a brow as he unwrapped the shadows from around them on the other end of their shadow-step, having taken them directly to the cabin at Camp Half-Blood, where Frey could feel his father’s eyes peered down at him from Asgard and Thanatos from his Halls. “Zeus? Should I have Heidi come and test you for whatever passes as divine STD’s?”

“Oh shut up.” Frey rolled his eyes as he sauntered over towards the bathroom after turning in a circle for the perusal of his peeping-toms. The feeling of being watched faded away, but he knew he’d hear about it that night in his dreams, especially thanks to Alexios’s letting that kingly cat out of the bag. “He’s useful if nothing else…and knows his way around a bedroom.”

“Of course he does.” Alexios scoffed as he stripped off as well. He’d managed to pry Frey away from Olympus faster than he’d thought it would take, helped along by Zeus not kicking up a fuss. That meant that they had a bit of time to play as well…once he decontaminated his young lover. “He’s fucking Zeus.”

me a gift to hide my aura from other gods? Partner in whatever coming upheaval Kronus is plotting? Comes with the most delicious plus-one I’ve met in my life – including you and your lover which is saying something. That Zeus?"

“Ganymede is something special.” Alexios had to concede on that point. It was the reason he’d been snatched away by Zeus in the first place, after all. “I can see the attraction there. But still…” He shuddered as Frey quickly scrubbed himself off under the massive shower then joined the Myrmidon in the Roman bath. “Zeus.”

“Want me to take your mind off of the icky, icky thoughts dirtying your mind?” Frey offered dryly, boxing in the blonde with his strong arms.

“Oh, yes please.” Alexios agreed salaciously, eyes tracking up and down the built body that just kept getting better and better as time passed, as he lifted himself up onto the edge of the pool in wordless demand. “I was starting to think you’d never ask…”

Smirking, Frey teased him, mouthing at cut pecs and cobblestone abs, all the while refusing his warrior what he’d been wordlessly asking for.

Making a despairing sound, Alexios flattened his palms on Frey's back. His arms were quivering with restraint, but his fingers kneaded the warming skin, dragging through the drops of water puddled there, moving down just to the curve of Frey's ass, then back up again.

"So good, feels so..." He twisted, wanting more of that wonderful feeling of Frey's mouth on his chest, torn between needing him where he was and wanting to feel the sensation on his aching cock, which had been hot and hard ever since coming across the demigod splayed between Zeus and Ganymede on a silk-draped bed.

"Yes, Alexios, I'll give you what you need," Frey murmured, his voice a velvety, dark purr promising everything one could imagine. With a final hard suck on the nipple in his mouth, he drew back, allowing his teeth to scrape over the upstanding nubbin, and slowly slid down more, his tongue trailing down Alexios's torso to his navel. He dallied there for a moment, nibbling on the hard, rippling flesh, then moved a little lower. He paused to eye the rigid erection already dripping with precome, and he licked his lips hungrily despite having spent long hours under the attentions of a pair of randy gods.

His expression almost pained, Alexios relaxed back onto the cool tile of the floor beside the Roman bath.

Was he finally... Oh, gods, he was. Biting his lip to keep from screaming when Frey's mouth wrapped around his erection, Alexios gave a muffled shout, at the same time fisting his hands deep into the wild ebony locks, Frey’s typical braids or club having come undone during the previous night, the demigod not bothering to put the heavy mass back up when he’d been anticipating a bath…hopefully with company.

Frey hummed with pleasure at Alexios's reaction, prompting another cry of pleasure. For a time he concentrated on the head, nibbling gently, licking and sucking, then gradually, so slowly that at first Alexios didn’t realize what he was doing, he began to swallow more of him, more and more until Alexios’s full length was inside Frey's mouth, the head in his throat as he swallowed him whole, the training of two years ago having been refined and sharpened under the attentions of his lovers since – Alexios included with Hector joining them much more rarely not being as overly hedonistic as the blond lover he shared with both his Lord and now his Lord’s protégé.

Alexios whimpered, lost in the overwhelming sensations. He thrust up blindly, wanting to bury
himself in the warm, sucking wetness, to lose himself and never find his way back because it felt so right whenever he was with Frey, though missing a certain emotional connection he enjoyed with Hector and their Lord and love Thanatos. He felt his body tighten and tried to gasp out a warning, but it was too late. Giving a bellow muffled by the arm he managed to throw over his mouth, Alexios came, the ripples of Frey's throat muscles contracting around his erection when Frey swallowed drawing another round of tremors from him.

Frey eagerly swallowed every drop, sucking until Alexios had nothing left and was whimpering softly at the continued stimulation of his sensitized flesh. Only then did Frey release him and setting his hands on the tile, lifted his body from the water in a show of effortless strength to take his mouth again, letting Alexios taste himself while Frey rubbed into the cradle of his sprawled thighs, desperate for his own climax.

“Let me.” Alexios whispered into Frey’s hot mouth, tongue seeking out every last drop of his own taste on that naughty tongue.

Those words made Frey shudder and groan as he stilled. "Oh gods, yes, please, touch me, Alexios." He pressed against him, moaning throatily as his arousal sparked through him.

The sight of Frey's straining cock hit Alexios like a blow to the stomach, and he bit his lip again before deciding on a plan of attack, maneuvering Frey until they’d switched positions and the demigod sprawled on the cool tile of the floor while the shadow warrior slipped into the heated depths of the bath.

Leaning in, he stroked his hands over Frey's chest, following their path with his lips, getting lost once again in the feel of Frey's skin.

Frey shivered, feeling Alexios explore his body, with the sure hands guided by familiarity even as Alexios sought out the new brand on Frey’s wrist or the new scar on his chest curtesy of recent battles.

"You taste so good," Alexios whispered, hardly aware that he was speaking as he worked his way lower, brushing his lips over Frey's nipples before moving lower, grazing over his ribs.

He trailed off when Frey groaned, almost asking if Frey was all right, a bit of worry over Zeus remaining, before recognizing the sound for what it was - need.

Sliding down, shifting so that he was truly between Frey's thighs, Alexios licked his lips, took a deep breath, and dipped his head downward, the next sweep of his tongue moving across the silky-smooth skin of the head of Frey's cock. Flavor exploded over his taste buds, and he groaned, able to taste the sheer power contained in that still-growing body. It was like nectar and ambrosia combined – no wonder Zeus gave him an open invite back to his bed – it also made him easy to scent out as a becoming-god if you knew what the signs were, like Alexios certainly did.

Frey's eyes fell shut again, the pleasure overwhelming him as Alexios seemingly tried to eat him whole. The butterfly sensation of his skilled lover's lips moving along his shaft nearly made him scream, and a strangled moan did force its way past his lips when Alexios reached the head and began to push the tip of his tongue into the slit.

"Gods, Alexios, gonna come..."

Pausing, Alexios looked up at Frey again, taking in the clenched muscles that showed just how tightly he was trying to keep himself in control.
Frey's hands suddenly released the sides of the bath and combed through Alexios's slightly long, blond hair, clutching the curling strands as he stiffened and arched upward, crying out Alexios's name as he exploded. His universe narrowed to the hot, sucking mouth enclosing his cock and the white-hot ecstasy tearing through his entire body, radiating outward from his center to his very fingertips and toes.

“Seriously, Frey.” Alexios broke the afterglow to snark. “Zeus?”

“Oh, shut up. Like you’ve never taken an ill-advised lover, Achilles. At least I’ve nabbed Zeus’s protection and help to ease the inevitable consequences of mine. How’s your heel holding up anyway, do I need to get you a brace…?”

“Hey!”

...Sirius yelped and darted out of the way when the overpowered *Accio* had his pup summoning an entire shelf of books instead of just the one he’d been meant to summon.

Well.

At least it was progress.

When Harry had arrived from England – with a glow he did not want to know the cause of – he’d accidentally summoned half the library before canceling the spell and staring down at his wand – taken from Dumbledore a couple weeks before and rarely used since – in horrified fascination.

Remus had taken one look at the mess and decreed that further diving into the mental arts could wait until Harry had gotten mastery – and subsequently control – over his wand.

Which brought them to the current state of affairs – Harry only summoning a shelf of books instead of an entire library, but still massively overpowering his spells.

“Better.” Severus decreed, a smirk edging his mouth at the sight of Black jumping out of the way like an idiot. His help had been enlisted by the wolf to get Harry’s power under control. For some reason, he wasn’t surprised that an already powerful wizard was having problems controlling what he’d found out through a few discrete listening charms in Dumbledore’s office was the legendary *Death Stick* or Elder Wand. That he’d gotten away with his spying was both a testament to his skill and Dumbledore’s hubris. “But still disgraceful for a wizard of your age and ability. Again.”

Frey grumbled under his breath and flicked his wand, the silent casting – which required increased concentration from the caster – putting the books back in their proper places with ease.

He had gotten better, Sev was right about that, but his verbal casting was still all over the place unless it was a spell that required a surplus of power to work in the first place like the Patronus or Fiendfyre…and yes, Severus had tested him on both, knowing that he was definitely capable of the former and likely capable of the latter, the white-washed story he’d given the Aurors after the graveyard having been met with nothing but skepticism by the spy.

Thankfully, neither the Aurors nor the Wizengamot were as canny as the Potions Master…which was good since he still had to give his testimony of events before the Wizengamot in a couple of days.

Time in a cell wasn’t exactly on Frey’s agenda for the summer, though he could easily shadow-step out of Azkaban, he’d rather not be a wanted felony while searching out both the Cup of Hufflepuff
and a weapon capable of killing a shade.

Which in light of recent events, might be even more useful than just for taking out Voldemort as Thanatos demands.

“Better.” Severus repeated when this time his charge’s Accio only pulled down the targeted tome. “Now – do it again.”

“How many times?”

“Until you’ve done it perfectly every time without fail – or I tell you to stop.”

Frey groaned, cursing vindictive honorary uncles who were punishing him for Frey frightening him with his little trip to Olympus. Apparently, Heidi had been sent to check on his connections in England to see if he was anywhere to be found there. When he wasn’t…well. They’d all worried.

And Sev did not handle worry well, especially when told that the cause of it had been a glorified booty call…though he’d not been told with whom.

Yeah.

The rest of Frey’s summer was going to suck…though Viktor was due in England soon, and his lovers – both old and new – of the immortal kind were more than capable of coming to visit him…or summoning him to visit them.

So there was a bright spot on the dreary English horizon.

...

Dowager Lady Augusta Longbottom, Chief Witch of the Wizengamot in the wake of Dumbledore’s disgrace in previous years that ended with him being slapped with severe sanctions and fines, only hanging onto the position at Hogwarts by the very tips of his fingernails, struck the gavel against the wooden base at the precise stroke of noon on the Twenty-Fifth of July, Nineteen Ninety-Five.

“A reminder for both our officials and the audience.” The severe witch announced, folding her hands with sedate grace before her on the wooden ledge of the Chief’s seat. “That this is a mere inquiry, wherein we will be hearing from both investigators and the victim,” a gimlet eye ran over those in both the Wizengamot gallery and the auditorium seats who might try and turn one of her inquiries into a sideshow or witch-hunt. “Regarding the events at the Little Hangleton Graveyard, Twenty-Four June, Nineteen Ninety-Five.”

A few of the more fractious members of the Wizengamot shifted, particularly those such as the sitting Minister Fudge and his toadies who were most anxious to dismiss all the claims made by both young Lord Peverell-Potter and the investigating Aurors.

However, the Grand Dame had seen the reports of all involved, including the investigation done by the Department of Mysteries, and the evidence to support the Young Lord’s account were most compelling.

Though granted, the report from the DoM hadn’t gone any further than her own desk, the Lady using it as her ace-in-the-hole as it were against the more imane and sheep-like members of the governing body.

She might despise Dumbledore with every breath in her body, but even Augusta Longbottom wasn’t above using one of his favorite tricks – knowing something no one else did – when it came to
making the veritable children of the Ministry behave...since many a time that was exactly how they behaved.

As particularly annoying and stubborn children.

“At precisely Seven Thirty-One in the evening on the night of June Twenty-Fourth, Nineteen Ninety-Five,” August read off the synopsis of known events that were not in question. “One Harry James Peverell-Potter-Black,” she arched brow as the crowd – both Wizengamot and audience – erupted in startled murmurs at the sound of the “official” name of the Peverell-Potter Lord and the Black Heir, Sirius Black having finished pushing through the paperwork with both the ministry and Gringotts to designated the Young Lord as his official Heir the week prior. Many forgot that James Potter’s mother was Dorea Potter neé Black. Augusta Longbottom was not one of them. “Lord of the Houses of Peverell and Potter and Heir of House Black, was transported from the grounds of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry via a Portkey. Three minutes later, a massive wave of Dark Magic registered to have been cast in the village of Little Hangleton, with an epicenter of the local graveyard near the abandoned Riddle Manor. Two minutes thereafter, the wounded form of Mr. Peverell-Potter-Black was returned to the grounds of Hogwarts via the same Portkey, whereupon he was attacked by who has been confirmed as the now-confirmed Death Eater Amycus Carrow.” She took a deep breath, face schooled into implacable lines. “These are the facts of record and are not in question. The purpose of this inquiry is to ascertain – without question – the source of the Dark Magic cast in the graveyard of Little Hangleton, the method of a Lord’s removal via Portkey from a ward-protected space, and the truth of the charge that not only was wanted wizard and Death Eater Peter Pettigrew present in said graveyard but also the missing and presumed dead Alecto Carrow, assumed Death Eater, as well as the shade of the Dark Lord known as Voldemort, known to this body as the half-blood Tom Marvolo Riddle.”

Another roar of gossip – and denials – swarmed through the auditorium in the bowels of the Ministry at that last revelation, one of those secrets that Dumbledore had long hoarded like dragon’s gold, forgetting perhaps that he wasn’t the only one who knew Tom Riddle.

“Now to the stand to give testimony regarding this inquiry the Wizengamot calls Lord Harry James Peverell-Potter, Heir Black.” She announced, setting off a new round of titters, the Dame barely restraining the need to either roll her eyes or sigh.

Such children.

…

Frey was ushered into the packed auditorium, it wasn’t a courtroom despite it being on the same level, rather a large open oval-bowl shaped room with the Chief Witch – in this case Nev’s grandmother – or other presiding official at one point even with the first row of seats, while the witness or presenter was directly below them in a wooden railed-in on three sides seat that put them a head shorter than the Chief. Galleries on either side of the elliptical room contained either the Wizengamot or the audience, while at the point opposite the chief and witness were the auditorium main doors. The Chief and Wizengamot seats each had their own doors, separating them from both each other and the gathered crowd at large.

The seat Frey took was spelled to be comfortable, and was only one of several in case there was more than one person called to present before the Wizengamot at a time, such as a team of Aurors or Unspeakables.

And there wasn’t a shackle or Dementor in sight.

“Lord Peverell-Potter.” Lady Longbottom began. “Please narrate the events of Twenty-Four June
of this year for entry into the record, beginning from the moment you reached the Triwizard Cup until the moment you were safely ensconced in the school’s infirmary, if you please.”

Here Frey had to be careful, drawing on his training in the mental arts to recall precisely what he’d told Madam Bones, Dumbledore, and the other assorted adults and spectators upon his return to Hogwarts that night.

“Yes ma’am.” Frey nodded politely to Nev’s Gran. “As soon as I took the Cup I knew something wasn’t right. I’d taken Portkeys before, and knew that for as short a distance as from the – former – center of the maze to the podium the travel should have been nearly instant. So, when it took several long moments – I couldn’t say how long, I was very tired from dealing with the Final Task – I knew something wasn’t right. When I landed, I was a bit disoriented, I think that I had either hit something during landing – like one of the tombstones – or I’d been injured while battling the maze monsters.”

Here Lady Longbottom held up her hand to pause him, reading off from a long roll of parchment before her.

“Let the record show that Lord Peverell-Potter’s examination by one Mediwitch Poppy Pomphrey following the events of interest included a head-wound consisting of deep bruising and a possible concussion from a strong blow to the head. Continue, Lord Peverell-Potter.”

Frey drew in a steady breath, eyes clear and face calm, then did as he was bid.

“Almost at once – less than ten seconds I’d say – from landing a red streak shot passed my crouched form on the ground. A high, thin voice was shouting orders, whoever it was didn’t sound pleased that – what I believe was a Stunner – failed to strike me. It told ‘Wormtail’ and ‘Alecto’ to ‘seize the boy’, to which two voices – one male the other female from what I could tell – responded ‘Yes, My Lord.’” Frey looked off, blushing a bit as if shamed of what came next. “I was exhausted…I…it didn’t take them long to catch me and bind me to one of the tombstone. There was a short, fat man that answered to Wormtail that the witch – she was holding a wand – called Pettigrew, who was holding a very ugly baby-ish thing, that looked like it was part snake with red eyes and slits for a nose. That was what was giving the orders and yelling at the others.”

There was a sharp sucking in of breath from both the Wizengamot and the audience, many of those present remembering – indeed it had been ground into their collective psyche – what the creature calling itself Voldemort had looked like during the years of turmoil in the late sixties, the seventies and the beginning of the eighties.

Frey paid them no mind, continuing on with it, making his voice tremble and shake convincingly, playing to his audience – knowing that only the veracity of his performance and the heft of his Name were the only things standing between him and either having to supply memories for review or undergoing truth serum.

“Pettigrew, and Alecto, they were started arguing and rambling once the ugly baby-thing had been placed in this massive cauldron, paying no attention to the magic it was giving off, they were the ones with who they called either Amycus or Carrow who rigged the Cup and tried to trap me from what they said, that according to Pettigrew Carrow was playing Moody, but that the castle wouldn’t let him into Her because of his Mark.” He shuddered. “Spouted off crazed ramblings about bringing back Voldemort – the ugly baby, but one of them was supposed to give ‘flesh of the servant’ to do so. Then one of them shot a fire spell that was darker than anything I’ve ever seen before at me and the Cup’s Portkey reactivated bringing me back here.”

“The homunculus was added to the cauldron first, is that correct Lord Peverell-Potter?”
“Yes, ma’am.” Frey nodded obligingly. “There was a snake there too. They called it Nagini. But I managed to freeze and shatter it the same way I did the Maze. That was what infuriated the homunculus and distracted me enough that they bound me to a headstone then started ranting at me.”

“Very good.” Lady Longbottom ticked something off on the parchment in front of her. “Now, what happened once you reached the school?”

“I was nearly incoherent from shock.” Frey reported. “I’d just been through the Maze, and used a lot of power, then was kidnapped by a crazy duo and what I had reason to believe was a misshapen Voldemort.” He gave no sign that the shudders in the gallery – either gallery – bothered him, smirking a bit over the fear of a name. Unless Tom had somehow become a god in the time he’d been a shade, he couldn’t do anything about those using his name. Not unless/until he was reembodied and was able to put a taboo back on it anyway. “I was clamored by my godfathers and Uncle Sev. Moody – the impostor Moody – was on the fringes of the crowd that included several Aurors, the Minister, and Madam Bones. But it was Dumbledore that set him off. He shot a spell at the two of us and I – well I’d just been in fear for my life, hadn’t I? – I grabbed the first wand I saw, since I’d lost mine when I’d been captured.”

“Let the record show.” Lady Longbottom halted him once more to enter facts into the official record, seamlessly adding to the veracity of his statement. “That analyses of the site have confirmed that several wands were destroyed in the fire which consumed much of the graveyard of Little Hangleton. Continue, Lord Peverell-Potter.”

“Right.” Frey blew out a breath, taking a minute to put on an act of marshalling his thoughts, the way any normal nearly-fifteen-year-old would need to in the same situation. “That’s when I grabbed the nearest wand, which turned out to be the Headmaster’s and shouted for people to get down. I think I hit him – Carrow – with a body-bind but I just used the first spell that came to mind so I could be wrong.”

This time Lady Longbottom barely had to lift her hand before he stopped for her to enter the scan taken of his wand – the Elder Wand, though that wasn’t entered into the record – which confirmed that he had used a body-binding spell on Carrow, then gestured for him to once more carry on with his tale.

“After that I told Madam Bones what had happened, what I could remember at the moment at least, and Viktor helped me to the infirmary along with several others after the Headmaster confirmed that his wand had been “won” by me when I took it away from him, causing it to switch allegiances. We tested it the next day to check, but he was right the first time: it was my wand after that.”

“Thank you, Lord Peverell-Potter.” Lady Longbottom nodded to her grandson’s best-friend genially. “You may step down. The Wizengamot calls Aurors Shacklebolt, Tonks, and Williamson to give testimony regarding the events of Twenty-Four…”

…”

In the end, Frey’s story was “verified” at least as best they could given the massive damage done to the sight by his Fiendfyre curse.

The ace-in-the-hole, the Department of Mysteries investigation, confirmed the magical signatures of three wizards and one witch as being present that the graveyard, as well as evidence that confirmed the confirmable parts of his story: the cauldron with the remains of a homunculus being one such thing confirmed.

“Harry’s” magical signature was found, and written off for being as saturating as found due to his
use of elemental magic to freeze Nagini, while the DoM confirmed that the other signatures belonged to Peter Pettigrew, Alecto Carrow, and Tom Riddle.

Frey had had no idea that the DoM was capable of using magical signatures in such a way, and was beyond relieved that he wasn’t warming a cell in Azkaban given their capabilities.

Pettigrew and Alecto were considered “missing, presumed dead,” while Amycus had been *Veritaserum’d* to within an inch of his life, which convinced the public – if not the Minister – that he at least believed the homunculus to have been containing the shade of Voldemort.

Amycus Carrow was given the Dementor’s Kiss the very next day.
Chapter Twenty-Three: Advanced Dueling and Defense

“Presents!” Sirius Black barged into his pup’s room at the Black Manor, the reappearance of Voldemort convincing the obstinate Animagus to move house to a place more secure than his beloved penthouse.

And Moony was happier with having more “territory” to roam, which in turn made Remus happier, so everyone was happy.

Most importantly, dreary realities of why Harry was spending so much time with them this summer, their Harry-pup was there with them and it was his birthday, and Sirius had pulled off one hell of a sneaky political maneuver to get his pup a gift that he knew would go over well.

He didn’t know the full story, and he didn’t want to know, but his pup had been trying to find a way to get his hands on a certain artifact…and old Padfoot had come through by taking shameless advantage of the Ministry of Magic seriously owing his arse after throwing him away without a trial all those years ago.

“Presents! Presents!” He chanted, jumping on Harry’s bed to wake him fully before darting back out of the room to avoid a nasty hex, having learned from experience that some pranks were not worth the punishment when it came to the revenge Harry could think up. “Presents! Cake! Ice cream!” He finished shouting and chanting from the safety of the hall before thundering back down the massive and ornate staircase to the “family” dining room where they were set up for a sugar-high inducing breakfast with presents before some of the pup’s friends came over for a joint Harry-Neville party, the first year they’d managed one with the amount of time Harry tended to spend in the States during the summers.

Frey groaned and rolled over, rubbing his eyes.

Seriously.

Morning people.

... Whatever negative thoughts or feelings Frey had had for his abominably perky godfather for waking him up at the unholy hour of dawn for sugared breakfast and presents, was washed away when he saw just what Sirius had managed to acquire for him…saving Frey the hassle of trying to figure out how the fuck to break into – and out – of Gringotts.

Sitting innocuously on a bed of raw silk – to dampen the waves of Dark that wafted off of it no doubt – inside a now-open wooden casket was none other than the Cup of Hufflepuff.
Looking up with wide eyes at his godfathers, Frey wordlessly demanded to know how it was managed – or even how they even knew about his quest or what it entailed.

“We’re not stupid, cub.” Remus told him, a bit amused at the age-old ability of children – even those like Harry – to believe their parents and/or guardians to be completely oblivious regarding their activities, those they work to keep secret in particular.

“Occasionally idiotic and foolish.” Sirius added with a smirk for his mate, gaining himself a smack to the shoulder for his efforts. “But not stupid.”

“Right.” Remus rolled his eyes. “Anyway. We know you’ve been charged with some sort of quest by your family Patron. The texts you’ve been searching, the items you’ve researched, even your new tattoo all speaks to it.”

With that one word, Frey felt the breath leave his lungs, the world stopping for one endless moment.

They knew.

He didn’t know how, or worse how long they’ve known, but if they could put together him having a quest – and at least part of what it entailed – from just keeping track of what he was reading and researching then there was no earthly way they wouldn’t recognize his markings…especially being acolytes of his Far.

“How long have you known?”

He didn’t bother to deny it or try to dodge the implication.

They’d found him out, and honestly, as much time as he spent with them it was a wonder they hadn’t done so sooner.

Only the wizarding world being unaware – for the most part – of what his Far looked like had kept the knowledge from being commonplace, he barely looked like James after all, mostly just in the jaw, while his resemblance to Loki on the other hand was striking, especially following Laufey’s claiming of him during his Rites.

“The whole time.” Sirius told him simply. “We just didn’t know how…present he was in your life.”

“Very, as much as possible.” Frey jerked a shoulder in a very-teenaged gesture even though by his count mentally he was already turning twenty. “It’s…difficult.”

“I imagine it would be.” Remus hummed understandingly. “With what we know about…those in your situation, a quest wasn’t much of a logical leap to make. And while we know we can’t actively complete it for you…there was nothing stopping Padfoot from laying claim to Bellatrix’s Vault through a series of legal maneuvers having to do with breach of contract – her marriage contract specifically as she failed to provide an heir within the specified time.”

“And if I want to give my godson who enjoys artifacts a unique one that was found in said vault…” Sirius gave a roguish wink. “Well, that’s my business, now innit?”

Shaking his head, mind blown over the secret they’d kept – even from him – for all these years, Frey moved to the bar, leaving the Cup alone for a moment as he gathered what he was after.

His godfathers had done the legwork, it was only right they got to see what he was going to do with the fruits of their endeavors.
An unopened bottle of Sirius’s best firewhiskey, an empty crystal punch bowl, and his pouch of herbs later Frey was once again seated facing his godfathers with the cleared-off coffee table between them, on which he set the bowl, then filled it with the entire contents of the firewhiskey, much to Siri’s consternation, though a warning look from Remus kept the Animagus from voicing his protest. The proper herbs for cleansing the Cup went on top of the offering to Thanatos – which wasn’t required but with his Patron being less-than-pleased with him at the moment was a good idea nonetheless – which Frey leaned forward and set fire to with a click of his fingers, the herbs and whiskey going up in a whoosh. Handling the silk-wrapped cup with all-due-care, Frey tossed it into the cheery flames, saying the words in Ancient Greek to give the soul leech to Thanatos…and the Cup he kept, placing it back in the wooden chest once the flames had gone out with their customary flamboyance.

*Well done,* whispered once more in his mind, and where the Cup had been in the center of the bowl a heavy tome that *dripped* with menace appeared in a swirl of black-and-gold mist.

Through all this his godfathers remained silent, even as Frey closed the hinge on the small chest containing the Cup and handed it back over to Sirius.

“I think this belongs on display in the school.” He said, giving no explanation for the scene or the book, though they could safely assume that both had to do with his quest. “Don’t you?”

…

The return of the Cup of Hufflepuff to Hogwarts once more had “Harry” on the front pages of the wizarding news, as Sirius and Remus had turned the priceless artifact over to the goblins for authentication, stating only that they’d found it in one of the Vaults and that “Harry” had insisted that it belonged on display in the school rather than moldering away in a Vault.

A tizzy was thrown by the Smith family, as the last known legal owner of the Cup was the late Hephzibah Smith, who was killed by her House Elf – supposedly – and the two prizes of her collection were thereafter found to be missing, against supposedly the Cup of Hufflepuff and the Locket of Salazar Slytherin. The problem became that while the current Head of that House could provide documentation to confirm legal ownership of the Locket – which was still “missing” aka, hanging around Loki’s neck – none could be provided by the Lord regarding the Cup. In which case, “Harry’s” suggestion won the day, as while Sirius couldn’t prove how Bellatrix LeStrange came to be in possession of it, neither could the Smiths prove that it was their rightful property.

Draco called him a noble-headed-ninny and all manner of other epithets when he heard of what he did with the kingly-gift from his godfathers, having no knowledge of his quest and therefore unknowing that Frey had already gotten what he needed from the Cup.

Now his search turned towards a weapon such as the one Thanatos had spoken of, though hindered by the rapidly approaching Fall Term.

And time turned onward.

…”This year, students.” Dumbledore beamed out over the shining – and not-so-shining – faces of the returning and new students of Hogwarts. Inside he was seething over somehow being outstepped by *that boy.* Once the Cup had been ensconced in the tightly-warded – by the goblins nonetheless – display case in the Hogwarts entry hall, he had taken the opportunity to examine it for Tom’s taint…only to find no such traces, any more than he had found them on *that boy.*
Which all made no sense to the follower of the *Moirae*, Clotho the Spinner in particular.

When he’d examined the child on that Halloween years ago, a shard of Tom was already at work latching itself onto the boy, and giving Dumbledore notice of which method the Dark Lord had chosen to anchor himself to life, also enlightening him as to some of the meaning to Sybil’s prophecy.

But then…

The boy reappeared, nothing like Albus had planned, and worst of all without so much as the faintest hint of Tom’s soul shard.

It was nothing less than maddening.

To have what he’d been certain was another Horcrux turn up empty…well.

It hardly improved his sour disposition that had been the norm underneath his twinkling façade ever since that boy had won the Wand from him.

Though there was a chance, perhaps, to win it back with the end-goal of the announcement he was in the process of making.

“Our Professors Black and Lupin,” and wasn’t that a kick in the ass? Sirius Black had managed to beat the curse on the defense post…which likely had similar origins as the castle refusing to allow either Karkaroff or imposter-Moody entrance…not that Albus would ever admit to either thing having anything to do with the now-mandatory power donations to the Hogwarts ward stones…ever. “Will be hosting an Advanced Dueling and Defense club for those fifth-year and up to help prepare you for your OWLs and NEWTs. Sign-ups will be posted in the common area of each dormitory, along with more information. Now, chop chop! Off to bed!”

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“First Years.” Neville called out in his calm and gentle way, the formerly-shy teen having been chosen as the Gryffindor male Prefect with Parvati Patil as his counterpart.

Other prefects that were new this year included Draco Malfoy and Daphne Greengrass from Slytherin, Padma Patil and Anthony Goldstein for Ravenclaw, and the pair of Ernie MacMillian and Susan Bones from Hufflepuff.

And based on the way Draco was eyeing up Frey’s latest growth spurt, the blond already had dishonest intentions regarding the combination of the password to the Prefect’s bath and his stated desire to finally bag himself his Harry.

Frey smirked challengingly at the lean teen, his own eyes dragging with heated intent over his own new-and-improved physique thanks to his magical inheritance and resulting physical changes, the trials of the summer having done much – along with his dalliances with a handful of others including Viktor as well as his immortal lovers both divine and shadow warriors – to cool Frey’s irritation with the blonde’s antics from the year before.

Matching cocked eyebrows in blond and ebony stated one thing as their looks clashed from across the vast Great Hall:

*Bring it on.*

Their joint friend – and this year’s Head Boy – Cedric Diggory was one of the few bystanders to catch the exchange, the “Hufflepuff Hottie” snickering all the way to his meet-up with his still-hidden (from their parents anyway) lovers: the Weasley Twins, while the “wronged” party in the
situation, Draco’s newly minted ex-boyfriend Blaise, just rolled his eyes and leaned into the
consoling arms of the beauteous Daphne.

After all, as he’d told Krum…they would have their affair, whether for a couple of weeks, a month,
or a year or more, but in the end, Draco would tire of sharing…and Blaise would be waiting with a
comforting kiss and eagerly-spread thighs.

“Twenty galleons says they’re shagging by Samhain.” Severus muttered to Sirius, his low words
catching the attention of the Head Table.

Sirius snorted in response. “As long as they’ve been holding out on it?” He arched a brow,
countering: “Twenty on a month, tops.”

McGonagall echoed her protégé’s snort, having caught onto the gist of the bet. “Please. Potter and
Malfoy?” She shook her head. “Twenty and a bottle of Ogden’s on week.”

“Done.”

“Done.”

“You’re supposed to be educators, you realize.” Remus said sardonically. “This isn’t exactly setting
a good example.”

“Please.” That derisive chorus of snorts came from none other than Pomona and Filius, with severe
Aurora Sinistra providing commentary. “We work in a boarding school. Betting on whose shagging
who – and how loud the Howlers from their parents will be when they’re caught – is one of the few
joys that come with the drafty locale and a sub-par stipend.”

The Howler, naturally, referred to the ongoing – and at this point long-term – affair between Diggory
and the Weasley Terrors.

Though even the meanest of the staff had to admit that in recent years – pretty much since Remus
and the Heads of House joined the Board, funnily enough – the pay had improved and was no
longer a mere pittance.

“You’re all going to Hel.” Remus declared with a sigh, then added: “And I’m going with you.
Twenty and a bottle of cognac that Draco hauls Harry off and one or both beds are found empty
during the night.”

Now that was a daring bet indeed.

“And how do you intend to prove your wager?” Sinistra leaned forward with keen interest.

“My dear, Aurora.” Sirius smiled with his normal roguish charm. “Have I ever told you the tale of
the Marauders Map…”

…

Frey was remarkably unsurprised when he failed to make it all the way to Gryffindor Tower, a quick
hand reaching out and snagging his shirt, pulling him into a shadowed alcove not far from the Room
of Requirement.

Honestly…he’d kind of been asking for it, teasing Draco all during the train ride, with a shirt that
kept riding up to showcase tight abs and dragonhide pants that clung everywhere, he’d had the blond
whipped into a froth before they’d ever sat down to the feast.
He was a bad bad godling…and what’s more…he enjoyed it.

In his opinion, Draco rather had it coming given his behavior the previous year, which had culminated in their indiscretion in the dungeons whilst both of them were otherwise entangled.

But if he knew the gorgeous blond as well as Frey thought he did…Draco wasn’t going to stand for his teasing much longer…especially since from a certain perspective one could say that Frey had been teasing Draco for years…and vice versa due to their agreement to wait until Draco had hit his magical inheritance to do…anything really, above and beyond friendship.

Though his recent pact with Zeus was going to make for a much tenser discussion to move them from friends and into something more than he could have ever thought three years ago when they’d made their original agreement.

Frey had goals, he had a realistic view of the danger both he and his future children would be in once his true parentage was revealed and a plan to defray it as much as possible, and both of those things would be best served by keeping Zeus…sweet.

Well.

As sweet as it was possible to keep an immortal god-king anyway.

And while Zeus was often ephemeral in his affections, he rarely left his lovers – past and present – in trouble if his help was sought.

Granted, not many ever sought his help or favor, but it would have been available nonetheless, even from his own wife, as he’d protected the mother of Heracles and many of his other half-blood children, most recently Beryl Grace with whom Luke had confided that Zeus had had two children, Thalia in his aspect of Zeus, and Jason in his aspect of Jupiter. Hera had wanted Beryl’s head, only to be stymied by Zeus’s intervention and naming his son Jason after Hera’s favorite hero. According to Ganymede, Zeus had been enraged to discover that Beryl had betrayed him by offering up their son to Hera as a “peace offering” and vowed to never show such favor to a mortal again.

Which wasn’t to mean that he wouldn’t still have mortal lovers…after all, Zeus was pissed, not a hypocrite.

When the woman had died earlier that year, Zeus had been vindictively pleased, though he hadn’t had a hand in it, nor had any other gods or goddesses as far as Ganymede knew.

Lean, elegant arms wrapping around his waist and neck pulled Frey back to the present and away from the contemplation of just how badly the conversation he and Draco needed to have could go.

“Yes?” He asked with a smirk, the faint glow of a candle-sconce throwing soft light into the shadowed alcove – one of the hidden ones that were covered by heavy draperies and hid entrances to the secret passageways nonetheless, which was likely how Draco made good enough time to surprise him – the light gliding Draco’s aristocratic handsomeness. “Did you need something?” He leaned his bent arm against the wall, leaning down into Draco’s space as the heat of him had the blond catching his breath.

“Don’t play with me, Frey.” Draco whispered, using his real name, silver eyes flashing with inner fire. “You’ve made me wait for years. Don’t play around now. You know what I want.”

“And what is that?” He leaned in further, dragging his nose and lips up the silky length of Draco’s neck, exposed so prettily by Draco’s titled head.
His hot breath on the alabaster skin had the other teen shivering in arousal as Draco pulled Frey’s much larger – both in height and breadth – body into his own lean and elegant frame.

“You Frey.” Draco said, with a hint of self-deprecation and more than a hint of exasperation coloring it. “It’s always been you.”

Emerald eyes stared deep into silver-blue, an ebony head nodding after Frey found whatever it was he’d been searching for in the bright, nearly feverish depths.

“Then come with me.” Frey told him, linking their fingers together as he stepped towards the darkest shadows, wrapping his power around them. “Don’t be afraid.” He whispered when Draco shivered again, this time with titillated fear at the touch of Frey’s cold-tinged power. “I won’t let anyone hurt you…not even me.”

…

Frey kept his promise, the shadow-step not even tarnishing a hair on Draco’s silvery-blond head, and Draco found them stepping out of the shadows near a familiar tapestry, Frey having shown him the fantastic room on the seventh floor back in third year when they’d needed a new place to spar and duel.

A quick trio of paces by his – his! – soon-to-be lover had the door appearing, and Frey once more held out his hand, Draco coming to his side and taking it without even a moment’s pause.

Many would call him a fool for trusting Frey so readily – especially as Draco knew the truth (most of it anyway) of who and what he was.

Draco didn’t give a flying fuck.

This was Frey.

And Frey was everything he’d ever wanted, even before he was old enough to realize all that want entailed.

The Room was large, with a massive four-poster bed draped in light, gauzy silks in ivory and gold, a fire in the fireplace on the adjoining wall painting it in golds and oranges and reds. Opposite the wide silk-draped bed was a massive sunken tub, larger even than the one at Draco’s mansion home, the tiles gleaming silver in the firelight. Deep, soft rugs were piled three and four deep, creating the softest of cushions in their elegant motifs, and candles floated overhead, making the crystal of the wine decanter and stem wear on the low-lying table before the fire glisten.

It was as beautiful a scene as any Draco had ever seen.

He loved it from the largest piece to the smallest detail – he would have loved it no matter if all that the Room had done was present a simple bed and candles. Frey made it, imagined it. So Draco loved it all the more, and felt his heart soften another measure – if it was even possible for him to be any softer towards Frey than he already was – at the thought and care the other had put into setting the scene.

An other who even as Draco inspected the room had stripped himself bare, skin glistening gold in the firelight, with only the barest of thin white silk robes hiding all of him from seeking silver eyes.

“Come, Draco.” Frey said, standing before him and his strong, steady hands helping him over to the side of the bed, another piece of his shielding school uniform vanishing under sure hands as they moved. “I’ll take care of you – I promise.” Frey eased him down onto the silk sheets, the covers
being pulled back enticingly. “But you have to let me know if I’m going too fast for you, or do something you don’t enjoy.” Strong hands urged Draco to recline on his stomach, the same plucking up a bottle of massage oil from the bedside table and opening it with a soft pop and the intoxicating scent of sandalwood. “You’re my boyfriend.” Draco felt a deep tingling thrill at the words, rivaled only at the sense of victory that came with them. Frey wasn’t hedging, hesitating, or fighting anymore. Draco finally had what he’d had his heart set on since he was eleven – Frey.

“I’m not a total innocent. There was Antony, before Blaise.” Draco admitted, lashes lowered as Frey heated the oil between his hands and started with his boyfriend’s massage, sure hands finding every bit of tension from the train ride and soothing it. “He was foreign, the son of one of Father’s business partners. We…played, a bit.”

“But you didn’t…?” Frey stroked one hand down Draco’s quivering back in a gentle, calming gesture.

The young man shook his head, eyes wide.

“And oral?”

Draco shook his head again. “Not with Antony, either way.” He admitted. “I wasn’t sure about that…not yet. Blaise,” he blushed harder. “Helped keep my mind off what was going on with you and Viktor last year…”

“Mmm.” The more experienced teen hummed as he kept stroking him, gentling him not unlike they would a nervous filly, eerily reminiscent of his first threesome with Alexios and Hector where the lovers had to gentle him every step of the way.

“How far do you want to go tonight, Draco?” Frey asked against his lips, ducking down to give him a soft kiss. “We have plenty of time. We’ll take it at your pace.”

“All the way.” Draco replied breathlessly, arms coming up to twine around his broad shoulders as Frey pressed against his back, the bigger man’s cock branding the taught curve of his buttocks through his silk robe, clever and elegant hands busily working to bare all of Frey – as Draco was already for his easing massage.

Frey didn’t ask him if he was sure, didn’t advise him that maybe waiting would be better, instead he just nodded his head and went right back to pleasuring Draco, questions answered satisfactorily – for the moment.

Kisses and small nips to his belly as Frey pushed him back onto the bed, had Draco writhing and wriggling before hot green eyes, making small noises that were devoured by Frey.

Draco was hauled upwards and his neck whiplashed with the unexpected movement, but Frey’s hands quickly cradled the back of his head as Frey pulled him to lean against his front.

Frey nipped and suckled his way down Draco’s lean chest and cut abs while Frey alternated between deep, tongue-dueling kisses and nipping and suckling on the golden-ivory curve of the young man’s neck and collarbone, hands stroking and searching out sensitive points all along the long line of Draco’s body.

“Ah!” Draco nearly choked, eyes rolling back as a hot, wet, suction covered his burning-hot cock, hands finding and burying themselves in long golden hair as Frey gave him a refresher on just how amazing a hot mouth on hotter length felt.

Frey nipped once at his thigh before growling something out in a language Draco was familiar with.
but for the life of him couldn’t understand while he had a beautiful man trying to suck his brain out through his cock. A large, broad hand palmed one downy cheek of his arse, squeezing lightly as he heard the sound of a lid being removed from a jar.

Draco jerked and was about to ask what the hell was going on when a smooth, lubricated finger pressed into his body. His head fell back with a breathy moan, he tried to move on that finger as it caressed his inner walls, but Frey’s arm wouldn’t move.

This. This was new.

And wonderful.

Oh. Yeah. With Frey’s arm pinning him in place and one of his fingers working his inner walls while he simultaneously showed him what deep-throating was, Draco was getting a whole new appreciation for his sexual orientation.

Draco moved restlessly as one finger became two and he moved insistently to get those fingers deeper.

“Please.” He begged. Damn it to the hells but that felt good especially when he found that little walnut-sized gland.

“You need to be properly prepared.” Frey told him stiffly, lifting off his shaft to speak, his voice rough from his activities.

Another finger joined its brethren and Frey scissored them inside of him, stretching him as much as he could. He wasn’t a small man, as his other lovers could attest. Crawling back up the bed, he gently lifted Draco up, fisting his hands in the now-tangled blond locks and stealing his breath with a kiss.

Draco was jolted as his hips were gripped and he was pulled down on top of Frey’s hard shaft, the cock slipping inside of him slowly as his insides gripped at it tightly, Frey giving no quarter as he worked at ingraining himself deep into Draco’s body. The time would come when he wasn’t there for Draco anymore, when he wasn’t welcome in the blonde’s bed. But that wasn’t tonight. And tonight he was intent on making certain Draco, never, ever forgot him.

Frey clenched his teeth and cursed in his prime language of Old Norse as he lowered Draco down until there wasn’t enough space between them to fit a wisp of silk. Draco turned and twisted, trying to get used to having Frey within him, but those swordsman’s hands wouldn’t leave his hips. Frey lightly bit at the hollow of his throat and Draco gasped, rocking in his lap, which caused Frey to let out a muffled shout of pleasure.

He lifted Draco slowly and carefully from his lap, before letting him slip back down, Draco crying out at the blissful sensation and placing his hands on Frey’s shoulders and experimentally moved himself down onto the large shaft. Frey’s hands on his hips still controlled the majority of his movements, but Draco didn’t care as Frey finally found his prostate and stroked over it.

“Frey!” Draco moaned as he shifted his knees deeper into the mattress, arching back into Frey’s body, finding the hot length of the other teen’s aroused body with his own, making himself buck up again at the duel sensations.

They set a fast and furious pace ready to bring their release as quickly as possible with the impatience native to young men, unable to stand the gut clenching coiling much longer. Draco released first helped on by Frey, who was fisting his hard cock. The alternating speed of Frey thrusting into him
hard and fast and using firm, slow movements had Draco screaming his pleasure to the ceiling.

Hot seed flooded into his body and Draco let out a soft moan as Frey slowed down his movements before stopping completely holding Draco to him with gentle pressure.

Before he could relax in Frey’s strong arms, he was turned around as Frey’s arousal failed to quiet, even with the climax.

Frey kissed him with wanton desire, Draco kissing him back, arching his body as a hand slid between his legs palmed his renewing erection. Two fingers were pressed into his stretched and leaking entrance and Frey gasped in pleasure and shock.

His body quivered as Frey moved him to lay back, legs wrapped around trim hips as Frey sank back into his slicked passage, having been dislodged by turning Draco onto his back. Draco had no control at all in this position as Frey held his hands down on the mattress and stole his breath with his kisses while he pumped into him in a rapid pace, grazing his prostate almost constantly. The weight of Frey’s body kept his lower half pinned while he occupied his hands and mouth.

He let out a keening moan as he wrapped his arms around Frey’s shoulders and let himself be moved, there wasn’t much else he could do in this position except to feel and feel he did.

Frey’s thrusts started getting harder and deeper, rushed, and Draco knew now, after being through this once, that he was close. Draco had a hazy thought tingle through him and clenched, bearing down on the prick moving inside him, earning him a primal growl. Draco looked into deep, lust filled green eyes before a mouth claiming his had his full attention drawn to the rising tension between them.

Draco quivered and arched as the tightening sensation in his gut coiled tighter and tighter, he felt his body tense as he never looked away before his orgasm took him over.

“Frey!” Draco managed to scream before his mouth was seized once again by the ebon-haired teen, who gave out a muffled groan and emptied himself into Draco, his release joining his previous offering.

…

“I win.” Remus said smugly to the rest of the Head Table the next morning, to a chorus of groans as the two lovers parted with patent reluctance, each head for their own table.

Little did he know, in both Asgard and Olympus a similar scene of winnings being announced and paid out were happening just the same, Loki as usual raking in the favors and gold while on Olympus, Zeus paid his own forfeit to Ganymede – the pair the only Olympians capable of spying on Frey thanks to Zeus’s gift – though it was much more pleasurable a penalty than bottles of alcohol or being relieved of chores for a set period.

…

With the drama – mostly – settled between him and Draco, Frey found the school year progressing rapidly.

His classes were as boring as ever, his Far’s tutelage and expectations had never gotten easier on him and he was far and away the top student in his year – if not the school. The only real challenge he had anymore it seemed was the Advanced club that his dogfathers were hosting, often with help from a grudging – but excellent dueler and Dark Arts instructor – Severus. The lack of challenge from the Hogwarts curriculum was in many ways a good thing, as it gave him time to focus on a
much more pressing – to Frey – matter: that of finding what he’d managed to pin down as a “Cursed Blade.”

In other words…a blade that could trap or reap souls, also called a “Reaper’s Blade.” The latter name Frey found to be fallacious as he knew reapers, several quite personally, also known as shadow warriors or Harvestmen, and none of them had a blade that could capture or trap souls. However, any time one starts looking for a specific item that happens to be a weapon, whether in lore or texts, it became like trying to find a specific color of silver needle in a haystack of similarly colored silver needles.

Tiresome in the extreme.

And frustrating as hell.

Especially since the only one of the kind of weapon he was looking for that had any kind of veracity or history that stood up to scrutiny was known as the “Dragon Blade” and had disappeared from a Chinese monastery centuries before.

A dead end.

If it wasn’t for the lost blade, Frey would almost believe that Thanatos had sent him on a snipe hunt in revenge for his thoughtless actions the previous spring.

Gods knew that the Avatar of Death was vindictive enough to have done so, regardless of how much he still favored Frey.

When he wasn’t chasing dead-ends through pages and pages and feet and feet of texts, tomes, and scrolls, he was trying to puzzle out what was going on with Dumbledore, the elder wizard being odd…even for him, but his oddness was tinged with a hint of desperation and panic…not the best combination in Frey’s opinion or when not occupied with that – or concurrently at times – he was being an attentive boyfriend…as demanded by his very-much-more-demanding-than-Viktor boyfriend or trying.

Though Frey did draw the line at rampant displays of public affection, having been on the other side of said displays and having no desire to hurt Blaise…who seemed to be attempting to work his way under each and every skirt from fourth-year on up. Blaise, it seemed, was a one-wizard wizard. But not a one-witch, wizard.

Draco rather than getting mad and throwing a wobbly the way Frey half-expected, despite Draco being the dumper and Blaise the dumpee, and being happily coupled up with Frey himself, had been instead viewing the entire spectacle of Blaise’s sprint through the various female-occupied beds of Hogwarts with nothing less than patent amusement…and by brewing a massive batch of contraception potion in one of the spare potion labs.

Samhain passed, and Yule was almost upon them when Frey had a breakthrough in his research…a maddening breakthrough…but a breakthrough nonetheless.

…

The twins and their sister were uncommonly animated that morning over the copy of the Prophet that Lee had – as usual – passed over to his best friends once he was done with it.

This year being their NEWT year, Fred and George were on-track to begin their pranking business once they were seen as “fully-fledged and capable adults” as proscribed by Wizarding Britain – a requirement including having passed at least three NEWT courses each with a grade of Acceptable
or better – mainly to belay any attempts at lawsuits that might be levied their way by the populace…

especially considering the results of some of the pranking items that were currently being tested on

their cash-poor house mates, including the Firsties.

A quick glance up at the head table when Harry felt a flash of worryrageirritation that hammered

through his mental shields showed that the trio of redheads weren’t the only ones hopped up by the

headline of the day. In the case of the gingers, their father’s friend being severely injured while

attempting to do something, which no one seemed keen to release even to Rita’s ever-dangerous

antennas, while apparently under the Imperius curse in the Department of Mysteries where said

father’s friend was employed.

If it wasn’t for the emotions pouring down on him until he snapped his mental shields back into place

– a constant state whenever he was within so much as a hundred miles of the Headmaster – Frey

would have thought it was a play by Dumbledore to get him interested in whatever his scheme was

this time, as it included a friend of a friend sort of situation that he was sure to hear about via the

twins, if the headline wasn’t enough to catch his attention on its own.

Which meant it was likely the work of the other meddler in his life – though Tom would likely be

enraged by the description – and the idea of the Dork Lord in possession of anything from the DoM

gave him the bad-tinglies.

Finding a Cursed Blade had just become that much more important.

Thankfully, the twins didn’t only give him even more pressure to complete his quest that morning, they also gave him inspiration on a different avenue to explore as he was chatting idly with them once the uproar over one Mr. Gumboil calmed down.

Cedric had come over to see what all the fuss was about, and was just in time to watch as one of their experiments went wrong on one of the younger years who turned an alarming shade of green – literally – before grabbing his stomach and bolting for the nearest bathroom.

The twins had muttered to themselves, whipped out a notebook with a floating quill that was taking

dictation, and were prodding a piece of candy with what looked like specially engraved tools such as
tweezers, a probe, and a scalpel.

Hogwarts being Hogwarts – and the twins being thankfully on their last year of tormenting staff and

student alike (or so was the common thought anyway) – no one even batted an eye at the strange

sight.

“I don’t know how you do it.” Cedric commented, eyeing up the tools. “Finding the tools you need, no matter how specialized.”

Fred snorted softly, even as a Quidditch-callused hand threaded through first his then his twin’s hair

in a soft caress.

“Didn’t find them.” George said. “Studied the ones Snape uses to grade potions or identify shoddy

love potions or whatnot.”

“Can’t afford the like.” Fred put in his two cents. “Especially the caliber that we’d need for our

work.”

“Made them instead.” George smirked up at his – their – Hufflepuff hottie. Talking about their

innovative spirit as Ced put it always got their boyfriend hot for them. A closet sapiosexual, that’s

what Cedric was, once he stopped chasing bints because that’s what Amos thought he should be
doing. Their smarts – though used for pranking and not homework – always turned his crank.

“Snog?”

Frey tuned out at that point the words *made them instead* ringing through his ears as he closed his eyes with a soft curse in Old Norse.

Of course.

What had he done when he realized that nothing like the watch he was *still* tinkering with and adding to existed?

He’d decided to make one.

What to do if you had a soul to trap and no more patience to try and hunt down ghost stories about mythical weapons?

*Make one.*

After all…how hard could it be?

…

Staring down at the list of ingredients that went into making a Cursed Blade, Frey cursed his flippancy.

The answer?

Not hard at all.

The problem?

Getting the shit he’d need to actually *do* so.

*To make a Cursed Blade:*

*Ingredients:*

*The Blade:*

*Metal –*

*Equal parts: Stygian Iron, Celestial Bronze and Stolen Dragon’s Gold*

*Quenching Liquid –*

*1 Dram: Unicorn Blood – forcefully taken*

*1 Ounce: Dementor Essence*

*1 Fluid Ounce: Basilisk Venom*

*The Guard:*

*Metal –*

*Equal parts: Purest Silver and Mithril*

*Quenching Liquid –*
1 Dram: Unicorn Blood – Willingly Given
1 Ounce: Phoenix Ash

The Grip:
Metal –

Equal Parts: Purest Silver and Celestial Bronze

Quenching Liquid –
1 Dram: Dragon’s Blood
1 Ounce: Crushed Basilisk Scales

Unicorn Tail Hair: Enough to Wrap the Grip in its entirety

The Pommel:

Equal Parts: Purified Gold and Celestial Bronze
1 Unblemished Onyx cabochon

The Sheath:
Basilisk Hide
Dragon Heartstring

Instructions:
Forge blade, guard, and grip using Fiendfyre and a pure Stygian-Iron hammer and anvil, add ingredients for quenching liquid to a basin carved from pure onyx filled with neutral potion base. Shape pommel around Onyx. Engrave all metal pieces with runes, wrap grip with braided unicorn tail hair soaked in solution of Phoenix Tears and powdered unblemished amethyst. Stitch sheath from basilisk hide, using dragon heartstring for thread. Allow blade to bask under the light of a new moon and a blood moon before and between use(s).

Funnily enough some of the rarest parts he already had access to thanks to his slaying of the basilisk several years before.

It was the rest of the extremely rare and hard to come by – especially when you were supposed to be an innocent little darling of a wizarding Light child – that was the problem.

Hells…Frey even knew how to forge thanks to his time at Camp Half-Blood and could control Fiendfyre thanks to his Far’s tutelage.

Speaking of his Far…

He hoped he visited soon because now that he’d found a solution to one problem, he’d run into another, one that his Far being Loki might have an idea of how to work around.

He hoped.
Because honestly…stolen Dragon’s gold?

Unicorn’s blood – both willingly given and forcefully taken?

What the fuck had the original maker been smoking when he’d come up with this thing?

At least a good two-thirds of the process was making sure that the handle of the knife or sword or what have you protected the user from the effects of the blade.

Seriously.

Someone had to have been high as shit when they came up with this thing.

No other explanation came even close to making sense to the godling.

Though with the ingredients…he could see why he’d found the recipe in one of his oldest Peverell Grimoires and not one of the books available for broader distribution.

Zeus – or any god really – would flip his shit if he ever found out that his lover was plotting to create a weapon powerful enough to kill anything and then trap its soul.

Quite literally anything at all.

…

Loki arched a brow at the list of – impressive – but very deadly substances or very rare substances that his son needed to get his hands on to finish the quest without letting Voldemort regain a body.

Frey was at a turning point.

If he managed this, then once he had children – likely with the pretty blond if he knew his son – all of Frey’s obligations to the Wizarding World as well as the pact that gave him life would be finished.

Over.

There would be nothing – save Frey’s rapidly expiring mortality – tethering Frey to this universe anymore, other than the bonds that Frey allowed himself to have instead of those placed upon him by others.

And wasn’t that an exciting prospect?

“T believe.” Loki said with all-due-seriousness after a moment of considering how to word his advice so that it didn’t infringe on the requirements of the quest. “That you know – and have given great service to – someone who has a father who might be able to…acquire things that are rare or hard to find…”

Frustrated green eyes lit up without even a moment’s hesitation as Loki smirked at his son and heir and handed the list of soon-to-be-stolen items back over.

It probably wouldn’t be the most difficult list that Hermes had been tasked with finding over the course of the last millennia, but it would likely be one of the more eyebrow raising ones.

Loki half-wished he could be there when his son called in the debt that Hermes owed Frey for averting what had been foreseen as a most gruesome future for one of his favored – and favorite – children.
“I have to go, Draco.” Frey’s flat voice cut through the near-tantrum the blond was throwing after hearing that he would be disappearing for part of the Yule break. “I don’t have a choice.”

Not if he wanted to pin down his contact that his Far had reminded him of to get what he needed to make the Cursed Blade…and keep the whole thing low-key and under the radar of Olympus.

Hermes owed his ass.

Luke’s future prior to Frey’s intervention was…less than pretty.

Now he was happy with Silena – albeit with being tied to Camp until the Kronus-issue was settled. Luke of all half-bloods was far too vulnerable without the wards – both original and added by Frey – around the Camp. Kronus had nearly gotten him once.

It wouldn’t do to let him try it again.

The problem was keeping the Cursed Blade out of sight-and-mind of the rest of Olympus, Hermes was enough of a rabble-rouser that he would probably find his father’s newest acquisition running around with a dieumort entertaining as all hell…though to be honest, if Frey wanted to take out anything short of a disembodied shade, he probably already was capable of doing so without going through the trouble of making and using a Cursed Blade.

What made it a true dieumort wasn’t that it could kill a god, but rather that it would prevent them from reforming…the way Kronus had – likely – pulled himself back together enough after Zeus scattered him into pieces and cast them into Tartarus, by capturing their souls or divine essences instead of simply destroying their current vessels.

Frey had worked too hard at allying suspicion – both in Olympus and Asgard – to stumble in sight of the finish line because of being impatient.

None of which he could explain to Draco.

All the blond knew was that his boyfriend and lover was taking off for New York on the Winter Solstice to attend a “meeting” on Olympus, one of the few times of year half-bloods were allowed in the divine space.

Combined with Frey’s open admittance of his ongoing – if very sporadic and rare – liaisons with Zeus and his cupbearer and…well…

Draco was hacked off.

“To spend one of the most important holidays of the year with your lovers.” Draco shot back, voice and eyes as cold as the arctic tundra in January. He folded his arms over his chest, sneering. Frey had to “attend” an important meeting on Olympus…riiight.

And Draco was born yesterday.

He was well aware that this was a fight he would never be able to win – nor did he really want to as such a victory would likely put both Frey and him in the negative books of the lightning-bolt-hurling King of the Gods.

Still.
He wouldn’t allow either Frey or Zeus to just push him aside easily – even for just one day a year.

“Hey.” Frey softened a fraction, moving over to his boyfriend who was standing before the fireplace in what had become “their” version of the RoR. He gently placed his hands on tense shoulders and rubbed lightly, easing the blond with his delicate affection.

That was something Draco alternately loved – and despised – about his Frey.

He always took such care with him…but he knew that at least part of the motivation behind his gentleness was a genuine fear of breaking Draco with his superior strength.

Frey never really let go with Draco, not even in their hottest and most heated moments together.

Draco hated that Blaise was right.

He was happy with Frey…for as long as he could stomach the clear divide both between them as mortal wizard and soon-to-be-immortal godling, and that between their two lives: Draco’s as a pureblooded wizard and Frey’s as a “half-blood” with “wizarding heritage.” He snorted to himself. Even Frey’s cover was as strange to him as the dark side of the moon, let alone his real life as a future god.

Draco loved him.

But it was an unequal love, more that of a supplicant than a lover – or at least, that’s how Draco saw it now that he had what he’d thought he’d always wanted, Frey both in his life as his “partner” no matter how unequal the partnership was, and in his bed.

Emerald green eyes that had begun to shade towards Loki’s impossible bright green as he aged and grew were solemn and serious as they stared into despairing and almost hopeless dark silver.

“I didn’t want this, Draco.” Frey told him honestly. And that much was true. No matter what, he’d never sought to become who he was. It was Fate…hateful creature that she was. “I never in a thousand years would have thought that Zeus would put me in the position he has. I entered into our agreement in good faith, never imagining that things would become so very…complicated.”

“Will you ever be just mine?” Draco answered him after a long moment of silence, pale alabaster lids fluttering closed to shield eyes that even he knew gave away too much to a careful observer. The question was half amused – knowing even as he asked it that it was a rather hopeless thing to ask – and half broken…because it was a hopeless thing to ask of someone who had caught the romantic interest of the King of the Gods…especially one in as delicate a situation as Frey.

“Yes, Draco, yes.” Hands moved from narrow shoulders that hadn’t broadened by much during their magical inheritance to cup cheeks that had taken on an adult – and distinctly aristocratic – hollow sharpness. Draco’s prettily-elegant face was still as baby-soft as ever, Malfoy’s apparently didn’t do facial hair, but it was a softness sharply offset by the edges and planes of a young man and not a growing boy. Sometimes the difference between Frey and others – both physically and that of his augmented mental growth – was startling when he sat down and thought about it. In time it wouldn’t be a challenge anymore to overcome. What was five years advanced acceleration in mind compared to a hundred years of life? To a thousand? But when your body was fifteen – albeit a large and mature fifteen – and your mind twenty…that five years made one hells of a difference. Frey took up hands that had grown to match their father’s elegant length, pressing heartfelt kisses to the backs of each in turn. “We’ll handfast this summer still, and even Zeus will have to respect that bond – if only for a year and a day. I’ll be yours – only yours – for that time. You won’t have to share me, not with anything even Olympus. I swear.”
In a previous chapter, I put down or implied Loki was half-Jotun and half-Aesir – which was the plan (I think) at the time or just an honest mistake. He’s a full-Jotun, as his heritage is explained in this chapter as well as his kidnapping from the perspective of his birth parents.

Also, this was originally going to have a threesome smut scene between Zeus/Ganymede/Frey but it didn’t fit well with the rest of the chapter and was just a distraction so I cut it out. I’ll post it up later in the next week or two as a stand-alone one-shot in the Frey of Asgard universe on Ao3.

Chapter Twenty-Four: Divine Debts

“Hello, lovely.”

Frey turned his head from the proceedings taking place during the Olympian council just a fraction to meet the smirking – but still so handsome – face of Ganymede.

Proving the that Cupbearer himself wasn’t without power, it took only a split second for Frey to note that none of the other half-bloods around him who were likewise watching the Winter Solstice gathering – many with hopeful eyes that their divine parent will be able to at least acknowledge them once everything was over – had heard Ganymede nor could they see him as he stood far too close to Frey for mere acquaintance or even vague interest.

Ganymede continued when he saw he had Frey’s attention.

“He’s…excited you’re here you know.” Ganymede said, propping one bared shoulder against the column Frey was likewise leaning against, paying no heed to the rather awkward position his half-blood lover had to keep his head in to maintain eye contact. That didn’t keep him from pouting a bit when Frey turned back to watching the Twelve argue over one point of law or new proposition or whatever they were droning on about this time. Leaning forward, he whispered into Frey’s ear, his barely-clothed body in its soft silk kilt and golden armbands and torq brushing against Frey’s back and sending spikes of heated arousal through both of them. “Not that he’d ever show it. He’s been a bit more foul-tempered than usual ever since you came to…visit, this summer.” One golden-skinned hand twined and burrowed into ebony hair, flexing and gripping just a bit to tip Frey’s head back in a sensuous pull that had Frey biting back a very – under the circumstance – inappropriate moan.

“Can’t say I haven’t missed you either. You’re much…more than I would have thought you’d be.” Ganymede chuckled darkly, shivers tingling up Frey’s spine at the sound. “If you were a god or even an immortal, I’d be terribly jealous.”

“I think you’re safe there, Ganymede.” Frey said with remarkable calm considering he had a half-threatening, half-enticing, and all-aroused god at his back, pulling on his hair and stroking a knowing hand over whatever bit of Frey he could reach. “I’ve no designs on your position in the Olympian court. I’m not even really here to see you or him for that matter. It’s just a handy byproduct of my actual business.”

White teeth nipped at a still-flexed neck as the Cupbearer hummed under his breath at that.

“We’ll keep that between us.” He decided, chuckling a bit at the thought of the temper tantrum Zeus was likely to throw if his ego was so abraded – to his face. “And you will come to see us after your business is complete…won’t you, Frey, Chosen of Thanatos?”
“Of course.” He agreed easily, even as he mentally apologized to Draco. He knew that Draco was expecting him to have to...entertain Zeus and his lover, but he'd been hoping nonetheless that he might get out of it this time. Stay under the radar as it were. No such luck, if as Ganymede’s very presence with him suggested that Zeus already knew he was here. “After I’ve spoken to who I need to, I’ll come find you. I think I remember the way.”

“Good.” Ganymede released the half-blood and stepped back, mission accomplished. “See that you don’t get...lost. Zeus’s temper is a terrible thing to behold.”

In the wake of Ganymede’s proclamation, Frey mentally cursed, rearranging his plans.

His window of opportunity to pass of the partial list of items he needed to fashion the Cursed Blade had just been truncated significantly.

At least he didn’t need Hermes to track down and...acquire the entire list.

That would’ve been one hells of a giveaway of what he was planning behind the collective backs of more than one pantheon.

He didn’t need the metals thanks to the stores collected over the centuries between his wizarding vaults and his father’s travels, or the basilisk parts, or even the onxy cabochon. What he did need Hermes to hunt down were the unicorn odds and ends, the phoenix ash (since he couldn’t just strut into Dumbledore’s office on Fawkes’ burning day and help himself), Dementor essence, and the stolen Dragon’s gold. Dragon parts at least were available – if expensive – through an apothecary, the same with the unicorn tail hairs. Hermes would know he was making something powerful, or several somethings, but the most telling ingredients such as basilisk venom, Stygian Iron, and Celestial Bronze were already in hand.

It curtailed the risk from involving a third-party...but it didn’t erase it, leading to the secrecy he was trying to employ, which Zeus’s – and Ganymede’s – apparent focus on him was threatening to shatter.

Frey had no intention of becoming Olympus’s – or Asgard’s, or Othrys’s, or or or – most wanted because he failed to utilize a modicum of security around a weapon no one was supposed to possess, let alone have the audacity to create outside of the most ancient and powerful beings such as Lady Death or Lord Chaos.

Not that the Primordials had genders per se...but those were the way those two among them at least were described, the same with Lady Magic or Lord Time, though to his knowledge Life and Necessity among the six Primordials had never been given a gendered appellation.

When the power rose as Zeus began to adjourn the Council, Frey took his chance, sending out his own power and magic under the cover of Zeus’s own to ram through the protections surrounding a divine being.

We need to talk, was all he sent, not even giving his name.

There was no need as, now dismissed, Hermes immediately reached for his Blackberry that contained any Iris messages or other communications the busiest of gods received, arching a brow then looking over towards Frey, a flicker of the god’s devious eyes the only recognition Hermes gave.

It was all that was needed as Frey melted back out of sight, wrapping the shadows of the pillars near
him around his form, seeming to disappear if one wasn’t looking for him.

Another half-blood seemed to hedge out of sight, snagging Frey’s attention for a split-second before Hermes’s steady movement towards him reengaged it.

Whoever it was trying to avoid the spot-light of being around the gods and goddesses for whatever reason, that was their business not his, Frey not giving it another thought, as he knew full-well how strictly enforced the security of Olympus was.

Even the most devout of mischief makers – such as the Stoll twins who were under the gimlet eye of Chiron at all times – would have a difficult time making trouble here.

No, Frey had more important things to focus on.

Like how he was going to convince a god of Mischief – among many other things – to honor the debt owed…and in an honest manner rather than engaging in a bit of fun with him for daring to call it due.

Somehow he had a feeling that his puppy-dog-eyes-of-doom would be markedly less effective on this god of Mischief than it would the other god of Mischief in his life.

Still…hope blooms eternal.

“You rang?” Hermes said mockingly with more than a hint of devilment in his eyes when he finished greeting and speaking with his half-blood children who had been allowed to come see him this Winter Solstice.

Luke – a remarkably not-angsting or angry Luke at that – among them, practically glowing every time his eyes found those of a daughter of Aphrodite from across the Council chambers.

At least he had good taste in women as his taste in friends was currently suspect given the sheer audacity that Frey – parentage unknown, but favored of Thanatos nonetheless – had shown in daring to summon a god.

If he were a less curious god, Hermes would’ve cut the bullshit and smote the little blighter there and then.

But he wasn’t, say his brother Ares, and part of him honestly was impressed by the kid’s sheer brass balls if nothing else, daring to summon a god under the noses of an entire pantheon at that.

Frey inclined his head to the side, then clapped his hands once in a gesture Hermes knew was familiar but that he couldn’t place – come to think of it that went for a lot of things about Frey – and a privacy bubble formed around the duo even as the shadows created a barrier between the corridor they were half-hidden in and the greater Council chambers.

Hermes quirked a grin at the absent – but if he wasn’t mistaken, intentional – show of both power and control, unusual to say the least in a half-blood, even one of strange wizarding descent, more certain than ever that there was something hidden just under the surface of Frey, favored of Thanatos, that had nothing to do with the Death god’s patronage and likely everything to do with his parentage.

This wasn’t an ordinary half-blood.

But then…an ordinary half-blood wouldn’t have captured his father’s attentions as this one has, let alone be able to ward off the machinations of his dearly departed – ish – grandfather.
“You, child.” Hermes said quietly, doing his own part to prevent drawing unwanted attention to their tête-à-tête. “Are interesting.”

Frey restrained the urge to grimace at Hermes’s unknowing imitation of Zeus’s interest in Frey. He hoped this encounter ended differently than that one did. He didn’t think Luke would ever forgive him if he climbed into bed with his dad.

“Still.” Hermes changed tones abruptly, turning serious. “You did summon me. What can the Messenger do for you, favored of Thanatos?”

“There is a debt between us.” Frey spoke slowly, choosing each word dripping like honey from his lips with the greatest of care. “As great, some would say, as that owed to me by Zeus himself, as the fate I saved Luke from – the fate written for him and now undone – was perhaps greater an evil than the mere death which would have befallen Thalia without my intervention.” He smirked a bit. “Playing meat-puppet for Kronus isn’t a fate I would wish upon anyone, let alone a half-blood with the possibility to do as much good as Luke.”

“How do you mean?” Hermes asked – stalling and he knew it – giving himself several long moments to think furiously. The brat had him dead to rights – and what was worse was that he knew it. Someone had taught Frey Haraldr far too well. He couldn’t remember the last time a half-blood – any half-blood – called out a god or goddess on the implicit debts owed them. Though it did at least explain a portion of Zeus’s interest in the young one. If Frey had pulled a similar line on his father as he was on him…well. Zeus did like shiny, unique toys to play with.

At least he hadn’t broken this one yet as he had so many before him, save Ganymede and a rare few others.

Though granted, Zeus wasn’t the only god or goddess guilty of failing to restrain their abilities in the bedchamber with a mortal lover and breaking said lover’s mind.

It happened more often than many would care to admit, especially when they were young and lacking in anything resembling restraint – a virtue few of them claimed even to this day.

“I don’t know Luke’s fate now that I’ve changed it.” Frey told the god honestly. “But I do know some of his plans. He wants to stay at the Camp and help guide and train the younger half-bloods, even after his monster-draw fades in the next few years.” They never knew when it would fade, any more than a godling would know when they would freeze into their immortality. Just a general guideline, which in the case of a half-blood’s monster-draw was anywhere from sixteen to their early twenties, but rarely later and not often sooner. “Marry, settle down, give you a cabin’s-worth of half-blooded grandchildren. That plans of a young man in love. None of which would have happened if I hadn’t cast Kronus from his mind.”

“He would have died a hero.” Hermes said, voice soft with grief even as it was firm with certainty. Luke’s mother might have gone mad from her visions of Luke’s future thanks to Hades’s curse, but that much of her ramblings remained unwavering.

“He would have died.” Frey snorted rolling his eyes. “That’s the key there – Luke’s original fate had a certainty of heroism but just as certain was that it was a dark path with nothing but an early death at the end of it. I am owed for averting it, Hermes.”

“You are.” Hermes set his jaw, affirming the debt to matter how it grated on him. “And today was the first time he’s been willing to so much as glance at me in years, let alone speaking civilly. Something else I owe you, Frey?”
“Nope, I can’t claim that one.” Frey negated with a snort and a smirk. “That was all Silena.”

“I do like that girl.” Hermes sighed, shrugging and leaning back against a pillar negligently. “So what do you want? That’s the purpose of all this, yes?”

Snapping his fingers, Frey transported the edited list of ingredients to his hand and gave it over to the god of Thieves.

“Some items I don’t have the time to hunt down myself that I need for a few magical workings.”

“I’ll say.” Hermes gave a snort of his own as his brows rose. The list niggled at something in the back of his mind, but whatever it was wasn’t clear or present, being easily dismissed as unimportant in the face of such an easy out for what had the potential to be one pain-in-the-ass of a debt to owe. Especially to a half-blood that clearly knew how to use a divine debt in his favor.

Tricky little bastard.

Made it hard not to like him.

“When do you need all this?”

“Ostara.” Frey told him. “But the sooner the better. I don’t care how you get them, I’m no fool. I just don’t want any attention drawn to it. Bring me the items on that list, in utmost secrecy and discretion, and our debt is done.”

“Done.” Hermes echoed Frey’s translocation with a snap of his own fingers, the parchment getting sucked into the Blackberry tucked in the front pocket of the simple cotton shirt he wore with jeans for the Council.

A nod for the god of Thieves and Frey pulled the shadows around him once more, the privacy bubble going with them and leaving Hermes standing alone half-in and half-out of the corridor, no sign of Frey’s presence lingering, not even a hint.

“Interesting.” Hermes murmured, eyes bright before turning back to the Council chambers to bid his children and the other campers who’d come for the rare visit goodbye. “Very interesting indeed.”

…I will never be okay with this.” Loki told Frey firmly, arms crossed over his chest, as his son finally fell asleep in the heights of Olympus and visited his dreamscape, which Loki had set up to be a mirror of his study in the Golden Palace of Asgard. Considering the topics under discussion – or soon to be at any rate – the god thought it rather appropriate.

Frey sighed, running one hand through the length of his now mid-back hair as he threw himself with his typical predatory elegance into one of the comfortable arm chairs that were placed before the study fireplace, Loki in the facing chair with a tafl set on the low table between them.

“It’s not my place to decide who you may or may not invite into your bed, little prince.” Loki continued, watching his simple cotton-clad and barefooted son in clear concern. “It never has been, not from the moment you gave your first kiss to your beloved blond-haired wizardling or when you took shadow warriors or half-bloods or even gods into your arms. But…” He trailed off meaningfully, arching a brow when his son finally deigned to look up from contemplating the flames with a ruddy blush high on the cheekbones he inherited from Loki himself. The shape of Frey’s eyes were Lily’s, the same with their mortal color that Frey kept in place with a glamor more often than not these days as his body changed in ways great and small as it began preparing to transition into
immortality.

His son was officially entering his *Becoming*, the stage which could last a week or a decade or more depending on the immortal in question…and how they either hastened it or slowed it down with their power.

“But.” Frey echoed, inclining his head to the side in a repeat of a motion of concession he’d learned from Loki himself. “This time the ones I’ve allowed to…enjoy intimacies with me are not ones that any parent would approve…if they were aware of the underlying *issues* they brought with them.”

“To say nothing of your already precarious situation, child.” Loki added with exasperation. “I understand – more than most would frankly – what you seek to gain by…keeping *him* sweet to you and your unique situation. You’re on the razor’s edge, Frey.” Loki leaned forward, bright green eyes piercing and intent on his son’s ever-maturing face. “*One* misstep and…” He bit off further cautions, knowing that nothing good would come of voicing them.

He’d done too good a job, together with the other involved in raising Frey, of making him an intelligent and more an *independent* creature. Loki wasn’t saying anything to him that Frey likely hasn’t already thought of himself. And as there was no information he could impart, no long-held secret he could divulge or dirty deed Zeus had long kept buried, there was no point in continuing in this vein.

Frey knew what the risks he was courting were…and he’d allowed himself to be taken into the Olympian King’s bed anyway.

Loki had to *hope* that Frey had a plan for getting himself back out of said bed when the time came.

Reaching out, Frey clasped his hand gently over his father’s, the two of them nearly equal in length and breadth as Frey rapidly approached his sixteenth – physically anyway – birthday.

“I know, Far.” Frey told him, voice calm and sure. “I know. But I’m advancing too rapidly, and have yet to complete both the quest Thanatos has given me or the pact between you. I *cannot* be discovered beforehand or else the punishment that I court from both Thanatos and the Primordials could be *unfathomable* in its brutality.” He quirked a knowing half-smile. “Those who meddle in things like a child’s birth – or a godling’s for that matter – tend to…*dislike* having their gifts squandered. And that’s exactly what would have happened if I’d encountered a different god with a different agenda, one not so focused on the endgame and more concerned with an *Asgardian* or a *Jotun* floating around their universe uninvited…so far as they’re aware.”

“Speaking of which.” Loki sucked in a shaky breath. *He* was uncertain, even afraid, of what he was about to impart…let alone that he had no idea how his often inscrutable – even to him, who knows him best – son was going to take it. “You need to clear your calendar for Ostara.”

“But…” Frey’s eyes went wide with shock. His father *knew* that that was when he was planning to go back to Camp Half-Blood and use the Hephaestus cabin forges to make the Cursed Blade. What could possibly be more important than that?

The thought had barely crossed his mind when Loki enlightened him.

“Your grandparents have gotten in touch with me.” Loki waved his hand at his son’s sudden worried look, the change abrupt considering the consternation that had been on his face a moment before. “It was…strangely peaceful of a message, and rather elegant in its delivery…not what I would have expected at all.”
“Well…” Frey noted with a wry arch of an ebony brow. “You were raised to consider your bearer,” from what Gringotts had been able to tell them, Laufey was Loki’s bearer, not his sire as Loki had assumed when Frey originally informed him of the results of the inheritance test. It had been risky for Loki to visit the bank himself, but this world’s goblins were better as such blood-magics than most species Loki knew of – and much more willing to keep silent than any other…for the right price. “The monster under the bed. I imagine most anything Laufey would put in place to see you at this point would be a surprise from an Aesir’s perspective.”

“Point.” Loki sighed. Undoing several thousand years’ prejudice and engrained racism wasn’t exactly easy. But all it took was one glance at the hidden cache of pictures he kept in his quarters under his strongest magics, pictures of Frey from infancy to the strong warrior across from him, including more than one where he’d turned blue while working ice magics, to set his mind back to staying the course. He could no more despise his son for being half-Jotun than he could tear out his own heart. Which made making peace with his own Jotun status – and acceptance of their Jotnar relatives – of vital concern. “Regardless. They have made contact and wish us – both of us – to visit at first opportunity. Ostara would be best as you were already planning to be in New York, the arrangements for you to be gone have already been widely aired. And the Spring Festivals are always a time where Asgard is much too busy with other affairs to bother watching over a single hero in a distant universe. There quite literally will not be a better time, especially if you do indeed slay your enemy and gain true heroic status in the eyes of the Aesir.”

And that was before they toss in the complications Kronus’s rumblings were sure to make for Frey, as Loki rather doubted that his son would leave his half-blood friends to face that danger alone.

So the Wheel turned.

“Okay…” Frey hummed under his breath, eyes narrowed with thought. “Okay. I should be able to still do what I need on Jotunheim I would think, even if the two of us have to completely fabricate a forge from scratch, it’s not a complicated forging just expensive in materials and magic. This doesn’t have to derail what’s already in motion. I passed off a partial list, everything else I’ve already collected or have sent out orders to the various suppliers. Everything should be here in time to leave for Jotunheim…so long as he comes through.”

“He will.” Loki waved an elegant hand. “In many ways, Hermes is my own counterpart. And while both of us often are discounted among the more blatantly powerful gods and goddesses, that often works to our advantage.”

“Gee.” Frey snarked, already knowing that that ability to be underestimated wasn’t something he was likely to inherit from this father once his heritage and parentage is public knowledge. “That must be nice.”

“It is.” Loki chirped with mock-cheer, smirking at his disgruntled offspring. “Thank you.”

They shared a laugh before Loki turned serious again, unknowing that Frey had just plotted a new addition to the presents he was going to send to his father’s chambers in Asgard.

“It isn’t only the Olympian pantheon that is starting to undergo a Turn of the Wheel, little prince.” Loki warned him, his own worries for Frey mixing with his worry – and his duty – to and for the peoples of Yggdrasil. “Things are starting to occur, little things, small portents but…” He shook his head, nibbling a bit at his lower lip – though whether he’d picked that telling gesture from his son or his son from him it would be hard to say. “I worry that you will no sooner come out the other side of Olympus’s turmoil than become embroiled in that of Asgard.”

The Wheel – every universe and each realm of reality had one though it was known as different
things in each.

It was a system of checks-and-balances that ensured neither mortal, immortal, or divine life outgrew the abilities of their universe to support them, an important measure when you look at the numbers of lives populating a human-populated Earth or the vastness of the half-blooded children produced by Olympus every year.

Some universes called them apocalyptic events, others cataclysms, Loki’s people dubbed it the Wheel, and the worst of them Ragnarok, when the Wheel no longer sufficed to keep the Yggdrasil universe in check, wiping the slate clean and starting over again.

One particularly interesting universe called it the Ascension, and ran it like a war with one faction defeating the other for prominence during the next lull between Turnings of the Wheel.

They came at different intervals – Yggdrasil hasn’t had one since the Jotnar-Aesir war, the Asgard-Svartheim war coming before it during the reign of Bor Burison.

In others they were every fifty years – or fifty thousand – or only had one, a true apocalypse, every cycle of life.

The universe controlled by Olympus was currently in the upswing of a Turn, things being set in motion as the Wheel turned faster and faster and events were sent into motion, though what the outcome might be often not even the Fates were certain.

Though that didn’t keep the nosy parkers from spouting off about it through their Seers, now did it? Bitches.

Worse, interfering bitches, who took far too much interest in the lives of Loki and his children.

“Is it Odin you’re worried about?” Frey asked. Growing up, even before the depths of Odin’s treachery were discovered, Odin had very much been an ominous figure, more a stern deity than a loving father to his own or a potentially loving grandfather, especially given that Frey’s presence hiding among the wizarding world and the Olympian half-bloods was specifically to keep him safe from said false-grandfather. So it was an expected question to come from Frey, as his father had spent years engraining caution when it came to his father – and then once he knew the truth, the King of Asgard – into his son.

And that was before you took into consideration that as one of Asgard’s main diplomats and ambassadors, Loki had spent century after century trying to keep his “father” from laying waste to whatever world he’d sent his eye on within their universe at any given time.

There were more worlds than just the Nine Realms that were accessible from Asgard after all, they were just so small as to be insignificant when speaking to anyone from the Realm Eternal.

“Worse, Thor.” Loki joked a bit, though he wasn’t really joking at all. At least Odin had some semblance of control after living for millennium after millennium. Thor had yet to reach that state of caution and control, his temper as the Thunderer often just as feared as Odin’s wrath. “As in the time since the last Odinsleep, both of us have gained enough years and experience to be eligible Crown Princes to serve as King Regent while Odin sleeps, rather than Mother taking up the position or one of Odin’s brothers. I fear the damage he might do, the wars he might usher in, even if Odin merely sleeps for a week or a month rather than the year or more he is capable of…”
The next morning, after sending his belated Yule gifts to his son – due to Frey being gone they’d decided to exchange gifts once he returned to England, which ended up falling on Christmas Day – he smiled and then laughed uproariously at the simple cotton T-Shirt his son had added to the parcels of small tokens he normally sent, often a picture of the two of them, or something he’d fashioned with his magic or hands.

Rarely was it store-bought, but given their recent conversation, Loki could definitely understand what had driven his son to send this present to him.

The shirt was a simple black, and on the front across where his pectorals would be once worn in Loki’s signature bright green that matched his eyes were the words: Underestimate me. That’ll be fun. Written in Frey’s elegant script.

Grinning, Loki tucked it away along with his many other treasures to do with his son, and prepared himself to once more join the winter revels taking place in Asgard’s Golden Palace.

…

Draco batted absently at whatever was tickling across his lips.

He was aware enough as he came slowly awake on the cold winter’s day that he didn’t freak out or think it was a spider or other creepy-crawly, but not awake enough for the sensation to really register.

A low chuckle caught his attention – not the least of which was because no one really came into his rooms at the Manor, not even his parents.

No one that is…except for Frey.

But Frey was still in New York, screwing his way through the Greek Pantheon – at least he was in Draco’s uncharitable first-waking thoughts.

A thought that he quickly retracted when he cracked open an eye and saw the subject of it leaning over him with brightly dancing eyes that were crinkled at the corners from his brilliant smile, the tickling sensation explained as quicksilver eyes darted down and spied the simply gorgeous white rose held loosely in one pampered-but-callused hand, Frey using the petals to dust lightly across his lips and ease him from sleep.

“There you are, love.” Frey said, his voice still vibrating with his good humor. “I thought for a moment there you’d never wake, Sleeping Beauty.”

“Would you have kissed me awake, then?” Draco asked, his voice gruff from sleeping…and maybe a few nights crying himself to sleep because of where his lover was…and what he was likely doing. Frey had been out of contact ever since arriving in New York, which hadn’t helped Draco’s very fertile imagination over what the godling was involved in.

Reaching out he sat up, the sheets and comforter slipping down and exposing his bare torso to the fire-warmed air, the sound of crackling flames reaching him from the wide fireplace across the room.

Frey must have lit it whenever he arrived.

Draco held in a gasp as he finally saw what had been hidden by Frey’s large palm:

Wrapped around the rose stem was what might be the prettiest necklace – for a male – that Draco had ever seen.
A simple mithril chain that had been engraved and faceted to look like sparkling diamond, coming to a point from which hung an emerald of dazzling clarity and size, much bigger and unblemished than any Draco had ever seen. The green stone often came in large sizes but often had inclusions and other issues. Ones of perfect clarity and cut were rare, and often hoarded, being rare than most diamonds save for the rare red or purple stones.

And glancing up at the eyes that Frey never needed to glamour when they were together, an emerald that was a dead-ringer in color as the color of his lover’s eyes.

“This doesn’t get you out of trouble, young man.” Draco told him, aping McGonagall’s stern lecturing tone. “I’m still very wroth with you.”

“I know, love.” It was as close to an apology Frey could bring himself to utter over how abominably he’d treated Draco thanks to Zeus’s... affections towards himself. He was doing what he had to. That didn’t mean he had to like the toll it took on someone he’d loved before he completely understood what that word even meant in the context of someone he was also attracted to. “I know. And it’s not a bribe, I’m not trying to buy my way out of trouble. I...ah...had it commissioned last year when I was still rather hacked off with you, on the off chance you’d still want me after you’d dated Blaise for a year.” Clever hands had the chain unwrapped from the rose and the pendant settled against Draco’s breastbone in a matter of moments, one hand cupping it and shielding it from view, a lean, elegant hand of Draco’s coming up to link their fingers together over the gem as silver eyes stared intently up into those that matched the jewel. Frey’s voice became a broken whisper. “He can give you so many things I can’t, promise you things I never will...”

“He’s not you.” Draco cut that line of thinking off. Or tried to anyway, Frey was a stubborn ninny when he wanted to be. “And he never can be, either.”

“No.” The corner of Frey’s mouth ticked up a bit from where it’d settled into seriousness. “He won’t. But he’d be able to stay with you, really bond with you not just handfast for a period of time that seems far too short. Be your one and only. And I...”

He couldn’t.

He couldn’t do or be any of those things.

Not to or for Draco.

Someday he hoped he might be that for someone...but he wasn’t trying to fool himself or Draco into thinking it would be for him.

A soft kiss stopped whatever declaration or denial Draco was going to try and spout, Frey shaking his head in mute negation of the mere attempt.

He knew who he was.

More importantly, he knew who he wasn’t.

And among those things he wasn’t, was Draco’s one and only, something he was slowly coming to terms with now that it was being shoved in his face and riding his conscience, rather than being some murky issue to tackle someday.

Someday had come, and it couldn’t be put off any longer.

“I can only give you little pieces of me, when you deserve the whole thing.” Frey sighed, brushing one finger lightly over a piece of flyway blond hair, Draco being spectacularly untidy upon waking...
for a person who was always conscious of being well turned out the rest of the time. It was a sight he never got tired of. Draco in the morning.

“Hey,” Draco reached up with his free hand, catching Frey’s own and bringing it down for a soft kiss to the knuckles. “I’m happy with what we have. I may not be satisfied with it, but I am happy. Happier than I think you understand. You never lied to me Frey, I knew what I was getting into, being with you. And I didn’t hesitate to jump in with both feet, not even for a moment. I love you, Frey.” Silver eyes had turned stormy with fervency. “I love you. And I’ll keep saying it until you start believing it. Not some imaginary dream of you, some perfect prince or epic hero. Just you. The same boy who bought me perfect dragonhide boots after knowing me a matter of months or who went out of his way to befriend my friends so I wouldn’t be the lone Slytherin in our study group. You’re even nice to Blaise, haven’t even given him so much as a glare or a snarky comment when you know what I’ve done with him. I’m not a child anymore, Frey. I know you’re not perfect. And I love you anyway. Just like you love me despite my shitty behavior last year or that at time my whining gets on your nerves, or that I’m never as sweet to Neville as I am to you. You except me and love me for my flaws, why are you so insistent that I can’t do the same for you?”

“Okay, love.” Frey breathed out heavily. “Okay…does that mean you don’t want the rest of the presents I got you?”

Draco snorted, arching a brow.

“I love you…but I’m still a Malfoy. Gimme.”

…

Frey had never been so glad for his father’s insistence on Frey following an advanced schedule of magical studies than in the time between Yule Break and Ostara. With so much else on his mind, it was a relief not to have to worry about burying himself in masses and masses of revision as the professors heaped piles and piles of essays and readings and revision booklets and worksheets on them. He and Draco spent less time alone in that period and more time with their group of friends, some of whom were in the same boat as them while others older and younger just watched the frantic pace of OWL – and in the case of the seventh years like Cedric and the Twins – NEWT study-fever overtaking their lives.

The Twins were the most cavalier about it all, but even they were sucked in more often than not if only to help soothe Cedric’s worries over both their and his own NEWTs results.

Fred and George already had made plans for their business and were in the middle of testing many of their products, while Cedric tended to vacillate between taking the job at the ministry his father was pushing on him or pursuing another career like professional Quidditch or teaching.

Molly Weasley had been vocal – to anyone who’d listen – over her despair for the Twin’s prospects, which of course meant that all of Wizarding Britain knew that the Twins had categorically refused to “give up that nonsense joking around and take a proper position that the Ministry” as one letter from the woman had put it.

The morning edition of the Prophet – often filled with codswallop as it was – became of a morning one of the few reliefs from the daily grind of revision, revision, helping others revise, and oh, yes, more revision.

Even Frey’s initial investigations into the Dementor situation was just another form of research, not exactly the most restful thing he could be doing with his time.
Indeed, other than his mandatory (as dictated by him) workout and the occasional duel or spar, the Prophet or once a month the Quibbler was all the break he was afforded from the humdrum of OWL prep…aside from the few times a week he could sweettalk Draco into going to “their” room with him…not that the blond usually needed all that much convincing.

Focused or not…Draco was still a teenage boy with a teenage boy’s libido and a willing lover.

“That’s odd.” Said blond commented one morning as he browsed through the paper, Frey taking breakfast with his boyfriend at the Slytherin table, the two of them tending to alternate days at either Slytherin or Gryffindor, both Houses just shrugging it off as another idiosyncracy of either their “Prince” Draco or the “Golden Boy” Harry.

“What is?” Frey asked, glancing up from his plate of eggs, tomatoes, and mushrooms. He’d gone for a long run that morning and was feeling rather warm and loose…of course he hadn’t entered into the battery of that day’s round of: “Mr. Potter, explain Gamp’s…” or “When one mixes aconite and…”

“Another Ministry worker’s been hospitalized.” Draco summarized for his audience, which with his words grew to envelope most of their yearmates at the table, and a few of the upper and lower years as well. “Again in the department of Mysteries.”

“That is odd.” Theo Nott allowed with a wrinkle of his nose. “You rarely ever hear about the DoM, now here we’ve had them in the papers twice in six months for hospital visits.”

“Who was it, do they say?” Frey asked, a glimmer of something tingling in the back of his mind.

“No one I’ve ever heard of.” Draco shrugged. “It does say that the reason for this…Madam Doggett to be in the DoM is unknown. The witch apparently worked in International Relations.” Draco shrugged, not really interested beyond the sheer oddness of it…or at least he wasn’t until he saw the considering look on his boyfriend’s face. “Harry? What is it?”

“I’m not sure.” Harry drawled slowly, eyeing their rapt audience for a moment before flashing a smile at Draco. “It’s just odd, and bothering me as a result I suppose. What in the world could be going on in the DoM, after all, that has had two people going to St. Mungo’s?” He posed the question rhetorically. “Still…we don’t even know if they were found in the same section do we? The two instances could be completely unrelated.”

“That’s true.” Blaise agreed with a shrug. “I know my mother says that they work on all manner of things down there. There’s even supposed to be a Hall of Prophecy and a Death Room and all sorts of things. Very odd…but not at the same time.”

Frey just hummed, a calculating look in his eye.

Yes, they studied quite a few things in the Department of Mysteries.

And he was sure that more than one was likely to be of interest to a disembodied shade of a dark lord.

The only question was, what was Tom looking for?

Following that, who or how was he managing to get random workers to search for whatever it was?

Perhaps it was time he spent some effort trying to track the shade…after all, soon enough he’d have a weapon capable of capturing him.
It would be handy indeed to have an idea of where to look, as he rather doubted Thanatos was going to pop in anytime soon to give him a location or some such thing…

…

“It was a dark day.” Laufey’s voice carried throughout the halls of the Winter Hold, where Loki had transported both himself and his son under the protection of Frey’s rather remarkable Cloak. With the power of the Master of Death – something which Thanatos had yet to fully explain to either of them – even Loki had a problem piercing the veil of the Cloak’s power, a necessary precaution until they reached the royal enclaves of their…family in the northern climes of Jotunheim, one of the few placed in the Nine Realms which was shielded not only from Heimdall’s gaze but the intrusions of Odin’s pet parrots…er…ravens, his pet ravens.

Laufey was not the massive Jotun warrior of Asgard’s tales.

No, not at all.

But a relatively diminutive invidja, magic-user, of the Royal House, standing a mere seven-feet-tall in his Jotun skin, was not the monstrous Laufey of Asgard’s tales the spoke of a warrior twenty feet tall – or even taller – a massive general and King who was broken and defeated by Odin’s might.

Yeah…

About that.

The Jotnar were oppressed by the Aesir, that was true.

But they weren’t defeated, and they most certainly weren’t broken by any measure.

Laufey, the King’s mate Farbauti who was every inch the massive Jotun warrior that Laufey was said to be instead of the “dainty” Jotun maiden – which was laughable as Frey had yet to meet anyone who met that description on Jotunheim, not even the smallest or slightest Jotun could be described thusly – and his younger sons Helblindi and Byliestr, even Byliestr’s mate Thrym and their own young children had welcome their strange Aesir-skinned relatives with open arms and welcoming hearts.

It was awkward, but somehow warm even in the frosty spring chill of northern Jotunheim.

Of course, the first thing they were coached on, after all had been introduced, was on how to shed that Aesir skin and switch at will between their natural Jotun forms and that of whatever other race they chose to don. It was a skill apparently inherent to Jotnar invidja, skin-changing, and explained a lot about both of their shapeshifting abilities.

If most of those from his early years on one of the worlds controlled by the Olympic-Titanic pantheon were to ever see Frey in his Jotun form, none would likely recognize him much like the Aesir would have difficulty seeing Loki through the guise of blue skin and ruby eyes. Their features were both much the same, with Loki having more of a sapphire-blue skin and bright ruby eyes while Frey was lighter, more aquamarine with the same dark ruby eyes as his grandbera – Jotnar being intersexed (which had led to much hilarity on the parts of Frey’s new uncles when he had a minor freak-out over his new genatalia) and not using most gender-specific nouns or pronouns – Laufey.

Etched into their skin was the other difference – and similarities – between the two. For while both had markings declaring them of the House of Ymir, and an almost-crown-like marking on their foreheads, their lines denoting family were otherwise different, Frey’s showing that he was simply the child of Loki child of Laufey while Loki had familial lines for two sides: Laufey as his bearer and
Farbauti of the North, Farbauti the Far-Striker as his sire.

It was an impressive lineage to be sure.

Shockingly, one of the smallest differences between their marking was the most vital.

Where Loki had five small dots above his crown markings, Frey was mark-less, which was the subject of Laufey’s current tale. That of Loki’s kidnapping. And Odin’s silence on the matter leading to Frey’s mark-less state.

Honestly, that Loki had them at all was a miracle, that Frey didn’t was solely due to Odin being a lying, kidnapping, asshole.

What Odin would no doubt try and spin as abandonment of a “runt” Jotun should he ever be confronted with the truth of the matter, was actually a time-honored tradition to test the abilities of a Jotun child whose parent – or parents – claimed direct descent from the first Jotun Ymir. And a requirement for any Jotun of the House of Ymir to be eligible for the throne. Loki had completed his – five nights survived on the icy Casket of Ancient Winters. One made a Jotun capable of surviving the climate, two a warrior, three a royal, four an invidja or sorcerer, and five a King or eligible heir. They were watched carefully, monitored by the priests of the temple. If a child born into the House of Ymir cried out during the traditional – and frankly religious – nightly trials, they were marked with the number of dots corresponding to the night they cried out. Loki had completed his fifth and was thusly marked, the ceremony barely completed before the Aesir forces laid siege to the temple and killed the priests who’d been charged with his care.

But Odin never told Loki of his heritage, never told him of the ancient history and traditions of his rightful people. Of his throne and house. And as a result his son and heir was not the heir of Jotunheim for all that he was their prince in truth.

It was rare that a Jotnar child born into the line of Ymir went unmarked – but not unheard of. Odin himself was one such, the proud Aesir King didn’t even have a Jotun form the way his adoptive grandchild did.

It pissed both Loki and Laufey off to no end that Frey would have to be set aside from the line of succession for the Jotnar kingship all because Odin was a lying twat, hence Laufey’s opening of old wounds to discuss that day.

“When the armies of Asgard came down from the Rainbow Bridge, some of our lords rejoiced.” Laufey continued. “We had tried for Midgard, not for glory, but for the Tesseract which had haunted my dreams, calling out to me, never ceasing until I tried – and failed – to obtain it. Odin claimed that our small incursion force was a full-invasion.” Laufey shrugged. “Odin was as ever a liar when it came to getting what he wanted. In this case, to sunder an enemy and live up to the appellation of “Bor’s son”, he who had destroyed the Dark Elves for a similar offense as attempting to conquer another world. But never could I have imagined what the Tesseract’s call would cost me, cost all of Jotunheim.”

Farbauti, seated next to Laufey, laid one hand on their mate in comfort, his light blue skin, a similar shade to Frey’s own much as Frey had Laufey’s eyes in his Jotun form, Loki taking after his bearer in skin tone with deep his deep sapphire shade, making a lovely contrast against the bare shoulder. All of them, from oldest Jotun (Laufey) to youngest (Byleistr’s child Loptr, named for his lost sibling who was now seated at their bearer’s side) wore simple kilts fashioned of fur or leather, the cold weather not bothering them a bit in the Winter Hold despite the lack of a fire. After all, what need did those of ice and snow have for things of heat and fire? They were born for this land.
needed nothing else, thought the beauty of the crystal palace that was the Winter Hold could not be overstated.

“But that day…” Farbauti took up the story, as their mate was too overwrought, even with their missing prince at their side, and Loki’s child at Farbauti’s, to continue. Such things were painful for all of them to discuss, but none so much as Laufey who had carried Loki under their heart for months before a birthing in the midst of war, and a marking that ended in tragedy. They had both mourned for their missing – thought dead – prince. Mourned long and for many centuries, even after they’d been blessed with Helblindi and Byleistr.

Until, that is, one day when Laufey felt a tug at the family magic of the Blood of Ymir, and followed it back to a newborn babe, held in it’s mother’s arms on a faraway world, with the second-born (or so it was thought) prince of Asgard standing watch side-by-side with a wizard with haphazard hair and one of the most fearsome Avatars of Death in any realm.

A bit of investigation – and more than a bit of spying – had unearthed that Loki Odinson was in fact the missing Loptr Laufeybarn, Crown Prince of Jotunheim and his son – as he was raised in a divided-gendered world – Frey Lokison, prince of Jotunheim and Asgard.

Calling Loki, Loki, tugged at their hearts more than a bit.

But better to have them back – even if Loki was Loki and not Loptr, and wary with it – than to have them been tossed to the ice wolves as had originally been thought of their oldest child.

“The Aesir armies managed to punch through our lines.” Farbauti said, as a wave of Laufey’s hand had figures and armies forming out of light motes and frost on the air. “Every Jotnar who could fashion sword or spear was called up, even my Laufey who had given birth mere days before. They came without warning, without fanfare, and crushed whatever resistance we managed to drum up. The army had retreated to Utgaard to guard Laufey during the labor and watch over the new prince as our child underwent the rites of Ymir. We pulled them back from the temple, never even thinking that of course the grasping creature that is Odin would want the Casket.” Farbauti shook their large head mournfully as they wrapped their arms around a shaking Laufey and was embraced in turn, Loki and Frey, not to mention the others, watching this all with wide eyes and weeping hearts for the pain the couple had undergone. In one move, Odin had stolen both possibilities of future from his own blood, taking away not only the heart of Jotunheim but also its powerful newly born Prince and invidja whose powers might have helped delay the slow, inevitable decay of their homeworld.

“The priests were slaughtered.” Laufey spoke in a shattered tone, still horrified thousands of years later. “Our child was gone, the Casket taken. In all our history, only the betrayal and murder of Ymir was a worse day for Jotunheim – and that a crime of which Odin Borsson is guilty of too.”

“There is no understanding for the pain losing a child causes you.” Farbauti told them gruffly, gently cupping the back of Frey’s head in one massive palm. “None. It broke something in us, for a long time. It wasn’t until Helblindi’s birth that my Laufey began to heal, to be the King they once were.”

“Though.” Laufey admitted with a sigh and a shake of their head. “One good did come of those dark days. After that, the Tesseract left me be. I don’t know who it calls for now…or whose fallen into its tricks and traps in the intervening years, but I am gladdened that whoever they are…they’re not of Jotnar blood.”

…

*Crash!*
Frey half-groaned and half-laughed as he and his father collided mid-ice slide.

Laufey, being the only other living invidja of the House of Ymir other than Bylestr’s youngest who was still a child, had taken it upon them to teach Frey and Loki how to use their ice powers, or use them more effectively since both of them had been working on the power ever since Frey’s Rites of Passage at thirteen. Frey was more comfortable with it than Loki, his Far having spent centuries honing his abilities with flame finding the switch more difficult than his son who didn’t have nearly the years of habit to break that Loki did. The current objective was to create sequential platforms of ice, not unlike the one Frey had used during the Second Task of the Tournament, and basically skate from one to the next, high above the rougher terrain of Jotunheim, such as the more mountainous areas to the south.

It wasn’t going well, as the collision mid-air between father and son could attest.

They weren’t working solely on their magics either, Farbauti and Loki’s siblings – two of the elite warriors of Jotunheim, as Farbauti was the current General – training them in the Jotnar way of combat, which included forming weapons of ice to use in either battle or what the Aesir called holmgang, honor duels as Frey knew them.

That was going marginally better than their lessons in invidja ways, thought when Loki and Frey were allowed metal edged weapons such as Loki’s spear and daggers or Frey’s sword, they held their own against the Jotnar warriors, a fact which filled Laufey and Loki alike with pride in their child/grandchild and Laufey, Farbauti, and Loki’s siblings with pride in their Crown Prince.

Which was another thing that had shocked Loki after the first rush of getting-to-know-yous. Helblindi and Byleistr had willingly stepped aside as the first and second heirs to the throne, allowing Loki his place in the succession – the place he was born for – without even a moment’s hesitation.

Their reasoning was simple: neither of them was a true invidja as either the King or Consort of Jotunheim needed to be, a common issue among the Nine Realms other than Midgardr. It was also the reason why many thought Odin took Frigga as his war-bride. Odin was a seidrmadr, yes. But the Aesir preferred their Kings to be warriors, not blatantly sorcerers, so Frigga’s place as a Van queen married to Asgard’s King placated any naysayers over Odin’s own magical abilities. More to the current point – Bylesitr’s mate wasn’t an invidja either, and Helblindi simply wasn’t ready to court anyone despite being older than his wedded sibling.

In that way, Loki was better prepared to rule Jotunheim should anything happen to Laufey.

Those of the Jotnar who were – as it were – “in the know” about Loki and Frey were glad to have them there and visiting if only for their abilities as invidja, powerful invidja, Loki easily being more powerful than Laufey for all that he didn’t have his bearer’s years of experience with ice magic while it was anyone’s guess how powerful Frey would end up, though common sense given the nature of his birth pointed towards him being potentially more powerful still than Loki.

They breathed magic into the very air, magic and power soaked into the ice under their feet as they walked, they used it as absentmindedly and regularly as Frey used a quill at school – constantly and without thought – they were magic to many who observed them.

And their very presence helped breathe life back into the dead land of Jotunheim that was undergoing a slow and cruel decay in the wake of having their heart, their Casket of Ancient Winters, stolen from them by a power-mad King of Asgard.

For that as well, many would be glad to seat Loki upon the throne of Jotunheim, not just his own
blood.

There was another reason as well, which was explained to Frey during one of his private discussion with his grandbera, discussions which had begun on his first night there when Laufey pulled him aside to explain about the Rite of Ymir – and the significance that Frey’s unmarked brow played in the succession.

As things stood, it was only if all of Frey’s Jotun relations were dead that Frey could ascend the Jotnar throne, as of the current living direct descends of Ymir, only himself and Odin were unmarked, and Frey’s claim coming through Laufey was stronger than that of Odin through Bestla.

Laufey and the others had taken Loki and Frey’s explanations of his needed to borrow a forge – while they preferred ice for weapons, there were other things made of the various mineral-rich deposits Jotunheim boasted that required smithing, not the least among them their highly-sought-after jewelry, Jotunheim diamonds and other gems second to none in any universe – with an arch of a brow and an agreement that on their next-to-last day and night the two would be left alone to forge… whatever it was they needed to forge.

The night before the two were set to go into seclusion in the forge, Laufey set the others ahead to have one of his “chats” with his grandchild.

“Your sire has been many places and seen many things over the years.” Laufey began with a non-sequitur. “Has Loki taught you how to shift from place to place as of yet?”

“How does he do?” Frey shook his ebony mane of hair. Farbauti and many of the other warriors boasted shorn, bald heads, but unlike what was “known” in other realms, not all Jotnar were bald, both Frey and Loki keeping their dark locks in their Jotun forms. Hair that they’d apparently inherited from none other than Laufey, but the Jotnar King began shaving their head during the Jotnar-Aesir war to make identifying them among the other warriors more difficult for their enemies, a habit never cast off afterward. “No, not yet. I can apparate or shadow-walk but I think he was waiting to teach me how he does it until I freeze into immortality.”

“That would be wise of my child.” Laufey nodded, thoughtfully. “Time can be…strange in the in-between places, and can differ greatly between universes that aren’t anchored together the way your presence and my child’s visits there – either in person or through dreams or some other method – anchor your universe and Yggdrasil together. A second can be an hour, and an hour a century if one isn’t careful. It wouldn’t do for you to leave for a brief adventure in a distant universe and return to your current home only to find all you care for dead and gone.”

Frey blinked, taken aback at that bit of sagity, which brought up a concern of his own.

“Once I come here, when I’m not there and no one from here is watching me, does the time between the two begin to separate without that ‘anchor’ as you call it?”

If so…that could be a massive problem if he ends up gone longer than the week for Ostara break.

“A little, not much.” Laufey told him after casting his magic in a brief probe to check on the state of things in Frey’s home world. “Your presence there is still too strong, even with you physically here. Once you spend less and less time there, or are gone for longer periods, then the two universes will begin to slowly – but surely – uncouple once more and go on their separate paths.”

“How can you know, grandbera?”

“Because I, like you and your sire, and mine before me, am an invidja of the Blood of Ymir.”
Laufey smiled down at their grandchild. Still so young, so much to learn despite the lengths Loki and Frey’s other caregivers have gone to over the years to teach and train him. “That isn’t merely a title, young one. It’s a privilege, one that brings with it great power – the power to walk between worlds, to explore those in-between places. As I did in my youth, and your sire still does on occasion. So will you in your time and young Aurvandil in theirs. Odin, while of our blood and having some of our gifts, murdered Ymir and as such is cut off from their great gift. A gift that was purchased in their blood and murder. Can you guess what it is, little prince?” Laufey asked, borrowing Loki’s pet name for Laufey’s grandchild, one finger brushing over the sigil marking Frey’s breast over his heart, what Loki had identified at the time as Laufey’s sigil but what that of the House of Ymir.

Ymir, Ymir. Frey thought quickly, searching his memory for everything his father taught him about the legend of Ymir, and Odin’s murder of the firstborn among the giants – either frost or fire. Ymir, who was used…

“Ymir’s limbs and bones were used to fashion Yggdrasil.” Frey spoke in slow and measure sentences as he tried to cobble together what his grandbera wanted him to understand. “In a metaphysical sense, Odin used that sacrifice to lay the paths which connect the Nine Realms to the mythos-centric universe of Yggdrasil, all of them came into Yggdrasil wholly, except for Midgardr which remains half-in and half-out. If that’s true…then…because we’re of Ymir’s blood and bone we can walk the paths that Odin made?”

“More than that, young one.” Laufey beamed down at their grandchild. “Much, much more. Odin used Ymir’s murder to cobble together the Nine Realms into a functioning universe of their own, that much is true. He owes us a debt that can never be repaid, one which the House of Ymir will never forget. But there was much, much more power released through the murder of one of the first creatures of this universe’s creation than what was needed for that working, Odin’s spell simply gave it a…template if you will.”

“We can walk between worlds, and in the in-between.” Frey breathed out, the pieces connecting. “Anywhere where Ymir’s sacrifice laid a path, no matter how small or hidden, we can walk, can’t we?”

“Yes, young one.” Laufey smirked. “Yes we can. Odin thinks that because he took our heart that he stranded me here. Curbed my power and my reach and that of all my blood. More fool him, eh?”

Frey had to laugh along with that, always one to enjoy a joke on old One-Eye more than most – and no longer wondering where Loki had gotten his sense of Mischief from.

…

To make a Cursed Blade:

Ingredients:

The Blade:

Metal –

Equal parts: Stygian Iron, Celestial Bronze and Stolen Dragon’s Gold

Quenching Liquid –

1 Dram: Unicorn Blood – forcefully taken
1 Ounce: Dementor Essence

1 Fluid Ounce: Basilisk Venom

The Guard:

Metal –

Equal parts: Purest Silver and Mithril

Quenching Liquid –

1 Dram: Unicorn Blood – Willingly Given

1 Ounce: Phoenix Ash

The Grip:

Metal –

Equal Parts: Purest Silver and Celestial Bronze

Quenching Liquid –

1 Dram: Dragon’s Blood

1 Ounce: Crushed Basilisk Scales

Unicorn Tail Hair: Enough to Wrap the Grip in its entirety

The Pommel:

Equal Parts: Purified Gold and Celestial Bronze

1 Unblemished Onyx cabochon

The Sheath:

Basilisk Hide

Dragon Heartstring

Instructions:

Forge blade, guard, and grip using Fiendfyre and a pure Stygian-Iron hammer and anvil, add ingredients for quenching liquid to a basin carved from pure onyx filled with neutral potion base. Shape pommel around Onyx. Engrave all metal pieces with runes, wrap grip with braided unicorn tail hair soaked in solution of Phoenix Tears and powdered unblemished amethyst. Stitch sheath from basilisk hide, using dragon heartstring for thread. Allow blade to bask under the light of a new moon and a blood moon before and between use(s).

“We can do all that’s necessary here.” Loki commented, reading the instructions once more for himself as Frey lit the forge fires which would keep the various metals liquid until needed for casting or pouring, or to prepare the neutral base for the quenching liquids that they’d be using. “Save for the basking it will need to undergo before using. When is the next new and blood moons on
If they weren’t going to occur soon, the blood moon especially, then Loki could always cheat a little and take it with him to bask it under the light of a moon on another version of Earth…Ymir knows there are enough of them floating around in the All of All Things.

“New moon is the night after I get back, my charts say a blood moon is the next full moon thereafter, so two weeks? That puts me into May before I can use it, but I’ve been tracking Tom and there hasn’t been any predictable pattern his shade is using…not yet at least. And it never stays in one place long.”

“What about this business with the department of Mysteries?” Loki asked as they both took up their places. Frey was a decent smith, but his control of Fiendfyre, being a very specific wizarding spell, was better than Loki’s own…and Loki had about a century’s worth of practice smithing from being “fostered” on Alfheim for a time in his own youth. Alfheim culture didn’t consider one grown until they could forge their own blade for battle or the hunt, fashion their own arrows, stitch their own clothes, etc. The Aesir looked down on them as being “soft” since their males and females both learned “feminine” arts like cooking and sewing. Loki called must Aesir muscle-bound idiots. “Is it your dark lord at work, or something else?”

Pouring out the molten Stygian Iron, Celestial Bronze, and Stolen Dragon’s Gold into their molds, they waited brief moments for the rough “blades” to cool enough to hold a shade, then Frey was darting in to carve the necessary runes on the golden blade which would be used to bond the other two blades into one, then repeated the process on what would become the “inner” side of the sandwiched metal. Each piece was quenched in the prepared liquid, then reheated with a burst of Fiendfyre before being held in place on the anvil by Frey as Loki worked the pieces together with the hammer, Frey working seamlessly with his father for hours to make the blade into the simple curving blade for a dagger that he’d chosen and drawn for his father to use as reference. It was quenched and reheated and worked time after time, until the two opposing metals had finally bonded and smoothed into one unit. Setting the dangerous blade – one perfectly capable of killing either of them as it stood – aside onto a piece of basilisk hide laid out for the blade to rest, they took a break, Frey returning immediately to Loki’s question.

“There’s no way to tell.” He said around gulps of sweet elvish mead and bites of infamous Idunn’s golden apples…which contrary to myth did not bestow immortality on the consumer, unlike those protected by Ladon which Luke failed to steal. “It could be him, it could be the Ministry up to no good. There’s no real way to tell unless I can nail Tom’s shade as actually being in the DoM. There’s things there he’d want access to, that’s for sure.”

“The prophecy about the two of you among them.” Loki pointed out. “Or perhaps another way to gain a body besides possession…since you’ve foiled the last two attempts.”

“Perhaps.” Frey shrugged. “But until we get this blade forged it doesn’t matter one way or the other.”

“Yes, yes, back to work.” Loki sighed as if put-upon and greatly abused. “Slave-driver.”

“Princely layabout.”

“Pernicious purveyor of chaos.”

“Ponce.”

“Prat.”
“Father.”

“Oh, now.” Loki snickered, heaving himself to his feet. “There’s no need to bring my age into this little prince…”
Chapter Twenty-Five: To Hell and Back Again

While most of Hogwarts lost their minds in the end-of-term frenzy, Frey’s own attention was tidily split three ways – none of which were studying for exams, unless one of the three (shagging Draco blind) happened to intersect with studying.

Frey spent his time between three things: Draco, obsessing about the finished blade that was currently dwelling in a warded-to-hell-and-back sheath that he had on him at all times, part of the warding being that only he could – intentionally at that – remove said blade from said sheath, and trying to figure out two problems: what the fuck was Tom’s shade up to, and how to unshackle the Dementors from their involuntary imprisonment.

From everything he – and his dogfathers and Sev, Frey making ruthless usage of the dreaded puppy-dog-eyes-of-doom to enlist their help – had found pointed towards the two entities creating a pact: the Dementors and the Ministry of Magic. It was also clear from what he’d been told by Heidi and Thanatos that the Dementors had held up their part of the bargain, while the Ministry had not, trapping them somehow on Azkaban Island after securing their alliance. What wasn’t clear and he hadn’t found – yet – was what kind of pact or binding had been used that remained intact even after the MoM reneged on their agreement. Most pacts, vows, or magically-enforced agreements should have broken once the MoM reneged…and yet, the Dementors were still trapped.

Something stank about the whole situation.

What was worse was that to find an answer, Frey was starting to get the feeling that he was going to have to go to the last place he wanted to go – the Ministry of Magic…more precisely the Department of Mysteries since there wasn’t anywhere else he was likely to find something as obscure as the ritual or what-the-fuck-ever that was used to bind the Dementors.

And as May crept closer to June – and Frey’s deadline to return to New York, a firm tugging on his wards around the Camp firming his resolve to spend as much time as possible there before returning to handfast with Draco on Lughnasadh (or August 1st) – he began to fear that his hunt for Tom’s shade might drag on until the deadline Thanatos had given him…which chafed at him, Frey having zero desire to test Thanatos’s fraying patience with his “Favored” hero after the Dementor debacle.

He needed to redeem himself somehow for the events of last May, and he’d rather do so by completing the tasks given him – including freeing the Dementors so they can complete their purpose in the universe – than having to commit what would likely prove to be a massive sacrifice in Thanatos’s name in order to buy himself more time.

Though he would be willing to bet that the Fates were pushing and pulling things in the background, working to align his tasks into one massive clusterfuck of fuckery for him to deal with all at once.

That generally tended – from what had happened in his own life as well as historically – to be how the bitches operated.

Frey was enjoying a rare moment alone with Draco, the two having little time to themselves as exams began, when Sev found him…with a bit of troubling news.
Hidden – mostly – under one of the *conveniently* placed weeping willow trees on the castle grounds near the lake, Draco reclined back in Frey’s arms, his blond head resting comfortably on the other wizard’s sculpted chest, the muscles firm but giving under his cheek and the soft silk of Frey’s casual t-shirt.

They had no classes this week or the next, merely revision periods they were free to use and battery upon battery of tests, and the two young men were taking advantage of their other friends being in one or the other – or hiding and/or studying solo – elsewhere on the grounds to talk about plans that would be sure to upset some and outrage others if they learned of them.

Granted, if they were any other soon-to-be-sixteen-year-olds they’d probably be standing shoulder to shoulder with their friends trying to talk the would-be handfasted couple *out* of doing such a drastic thing as binding themselves together, however temporarily.

That was the blessing – and the curse – of a traditional handfasting.

It could be for a year and a day…or for a lifetime depending on the wishes of the couple once that year-and-a-day was over.

In the old days, whether the union became permanent was predicated on whether the coupling…*bore fruit* as it were, with in the muggle world having children together being an automatic permanent declaration.

It didn’t *quite* work that way in the magical world however, and was left up to the couple whether they’d stay together or not…with the children or “fruit” of the union being held as legitimate either way, no matter how said children came about, so long as they were, in fact, the offspring of the couple in question.

Neither spouse was *ruined* by the union, whether temporary or permanent, nor were the child or children considered bastards or ineligible to inherit.

It was *perfect* for Frey’s situation really…even if it wasn’t the preferred method for him to provide the required heirs for the Peverell and Potter families…and likely having to throw in Black for good measure with as stubborn as Sirius was about not passing on the insanity his line had come to be known for or Remus’s equally intractable position regarding his lycanthropy.

That made three children – *three* – for him and Draco to have together, and that was only if Draco didn’t decide that he wanted to provide the Malfoy heir at the same time.

Frey was almost certain that Draco wanted to wait and have more children – likely the old-fashioned way – with whoever he ended up married-bonded to instead of just hand-fasted with…but in fact Frey *was* certain from what both his Far and Lucius had said in the past that the Malfoy heir *had* to be provided via a permanent union…which excluded Frey from being either the sire or bearer of the next Lord Malfoy after Lucius and Draco due to his being unable – and to be honest, unwilling – to enter into an *eternal* union of any kind at sixteen.

He wished – wished quite often actually – that he really *was* only a normal half-blood or wizarding teenager…but he wasn’t and he never would be.

He was a godling, who if he lived long enough would someday be a god…and while he *could* make Draco an immortal by bonding once he himself froze into his unaging state…mortals weren’t *meant* to live forever, as Frey well knew being in the early stages of his Becoming, where his body and
mind transitioned to match the requirements of the immortal state.

The mortals who could manage the transition between mortal and immortal were quite literally a one-in-a-billion find, the rarest of the rare.

To start with, they had to be as neurodiverse as someone like Frey or Loki, since the best (read: most sane) immortals were those who never allowed themselves to slip into stagnation, always learning, always seeking new things and new experiences.

Zeus may be a punch-line with his licentious ways, but he was also keeping himself sane by always seeking out new lovers and new experiences, the same with many of his immortal children and his brothers.

Half-bloods weren’t just the way gods and goddesses were free to effect change in the mortal plane, they were also the anchors that kept their divine parents alive and functioning.

Well…mostly.

Athena had her love of knowledge and wisdom, Ares is blood-lust and thirst for battle, but one and all they kept themselves involved in the mortal world despite having to be in many ways hands-off with overt machinations.

Honestly, that’s one of the reasons why Frey thought Hera was so bitter…as being bound to a faithful state as the goddess of Marriage…which was an interesting effect that seems to be a stronger binding between godheads and the god or goddess’s behavior in this universe than in his Far’s, much like how Hades had to live in the Underworld…was because she was so fucking bored being one of the only deities who couldn’t just pop off to screw around with a mortal or meddle in mortal affairs through her half-blood children the way the other Olympians could.

“Where will we have it?” Draco asked, idly tracing the symbol branded into Frey’s wrist. It wasn’t visible at the moment, Frey kept all of his marks and tattoos glamour when he was at Hogwarts except for the faint silver Sowilo-shaped scar on his forehead over his left eye. It wouldn’t do for the Headmaster to recognize the mark of the Hallows for example. But nonetheless, Draco had seen – and touched and kissed – them all when Frey felt comfortable enough that they weren’t being watched to drop all his glamour in the privacy of their rooms at either Black or Malfoy Manor.

“Malfoy Manor?”

“We’d have to tell your parents then – who’d spill to my dogfathers and Sev – and then we’d both be locked up in ivory towers until we were seventeen.” Frey noted with an arch of his brow. “Lucius may be sworn to Loki, but that wouldn’t stop him from preventing us from handfasting.” He thought for a moment then offered: “Peverell Fen?”

“Ohhm.” Now that intrigued Draco. The hidden – impossible to find really – enclave of the most notorious necromancers in wizarding history. Though there were other reasons to agree, such as it being so thoroughly hidden that likely only Frey’s divine parent would be able to find them once they were there…which would prevent any untimely interruptions. “That would work if there’s an appropriate space…”

“There’s an ancient glade, complete with a ring of ash and oak trees.” Frey told him drily, restraining the need to roll his eyes. “We don’t need an officiant…so there’s that at least. Do you think you’ll be able to order some plain raw silk robes for us…or will that make your parents suspicious?”

With Frey planning to be out of the country in the weeks between school-end and his birthday,
Draco was actually going to have to take care of a few of the little chores surrounding such a simple ceremony, like buying the robes and candles.

Frey would be able to get the binding ribbons from the Aphrodite cabin…so that was one less thing for his beautiful blond to worry about.

“My allowance for clothing is big enough that it won’t even make a dent.” Draco told him matter-of-factly. He knew he was spoiled nearly rotten. Gods knew he’d been told often enough by his Uncle Sev and some of the other Slytherins. “I’ll just tell them I’m staying over at Nev’s or maybe Blaise’s. They probably won’t be happy with me – with either of us – when we turn back up…but by then it’ll be too late for them to do anything but wait out the year and a day.”

“Mmm.” Frey hummed in agreement. “The dogfathers and Sev are going to have hurt feelings…but I can’t trust them not to try and stop us, otherwise I’d have them there, the same with your parents…”

Draco shrugged, thinking but not saying that his parents would forgive him…especially once they were able to throw a big society bash when Draco got married…at that point to someone other than Frey, no matter how much his father would probably push them into making their union permanent. *They* knew why they were doing things this way…and that would have to be enough for everyone else.

If it wasn’t…well.

It wasn’t – as he’d already pointed out – there would be nothing anyone could do about it.

Leaning down, Frey gave his wonderful – if occasionally snarky and spiteful – love a soft smile before stealing his lips and his breath with a deep, heart-felt kiss, sealing them together for long moments before the abrupt clearing of a throat nearby – as well as the growing lack of air – induced them to separate.

“One day, Mr. Potter.” Came Sev’s silken tone. “I will go out in search of you and *not* find you attached at the lips,” or some other body part, “with another student.”

“Of course you will Uncle Sev.” Draco agreed readily with a smirk. “After all…we’ll both graduate eventually…”

Frey buried his face in Draco’s short blond hair in an attempt to hide his snicker at his boyfriend’s words…as well as the sour look Sev gave his godson in return for his utter cheek.

“Indeed.” Severus sneered down at the pair. “Nevertheless, I must insist on your disengaging from Mr. Potter’s person, Draco. In fact, I am certain that there is a Charms revision session going on in the library that you could…benefit from attending and leaving me to deal with your…infatuation in private.”

Rolling his eyes in wordless resignation, Draco turned back to Frey and tested his godfather’s patience with a last kiss on those well-sculpted lips before climbing to his feet and heading towards the library.

His life wouldn’t be worth living after all if he didn’t…if Uncle Sev didn’t make his life hell for skipping out on the revision class, his father surely would if his son and heir turned in a less-than-spectacular performance on his OWLs.

And Charms wasn’t as guaranteed of an O for the Malfoy Heir as Potions or Astronomy were.
Though…what business his godfather had with his boyfriend Draco was nearly dying to find out…
with even money being that it had something to do with one or the other of the mysterious “things”
Frey was researching and working on obsessively when he thought no one was looking…or that no
one was at least aware that some of the tomes he’d been “studying” from during their revision
sessions were glamoured to hell and gone to hide their true nature from their friends and fellow
students…not to mention the teachers, given that some of those books most definitely weren’t from
the library being most assuredly Dark in nature…which a dark witch or wizard like Draco was able
to feel by merely coming into proximity with them.

Frey would tell him – or he wouldn’t – in his own time.

Draco knew the other teen well enough to know that much at least, and that bothering him about it
would only make the stubborn creature did his heels in that much firmer.

After all…Draco knew more about Frey than likely anyone else in wizarding Britain…except maybe
Frey’s godfathers, the other teen never confirming that they either knew or didn’t know about his
true half-blood state that had nothing to do with wizarding kind.

And there was a certain satisfaction to be had from knowing things no one else did…and Draco
being Draco was all about securing things to his satisfaction, even if he’d never be able to do so with
Frey…just the bulk of his secrets.

…

“It’s a bind-rune.” Severus told Harry as soon as Draco was in the castle and they were out of the
range of any long-distance eavesdropping spells the blond might think to try, though that didn’t stop
the snarky professor from putting up a *Muffliato* just in case.

Frey slowly rose to his feet, a look of deep consternation on his face at the pronouncement, not
needing any explanation of what the older wizard was talking about, as the Dark Arts master had
jumped into helping him with his Dementor research with both feet once he’d heard what Frey had
found regarding the creatures.

Severus had fought the Dark cause all his life – to his severe regret at times due to what it had cost
him under the Dark Lord, including the friendship and life of Lily Evans.

Setting a Dark creature free from the Ministry was right up Severus’s alley.

They just had to figure out how…which apparently he might have found.

“Are you certain?” Frey asked, frowning as he mentally reviewed everything he knew about bind-
runes and their uses. “A bind-rune *should* have shattered immediately once the Ministry betrayed the
Dementors.”

He knew he was right. Bind-runes weren’t used *often* in this universe but they *were* used in others,
Frey himself had learned all about them at his Far’s knee. They were made of simple clay tablets that
had been prepared using the blood – though being Dementors he thought Dementor Essences would
have been used given that they didn’t, well, *bleed* – or an equally magical substance to bind the
agreement that was inscribed on the tablet then signed – also in blood…usually.

They also served as a visual affirmation that the pact between parties remained in place…as they
cracked and shattered when the agreement was broken.

Which in the case of the broken pact between the MoM and the Dementors would have freed
them…bringing Frey back to the beginning.
A bind-rune made zero sense given that the Dementors were still bound but the Ministry wasn’t… unless they’d found some way to keep the bind-rune from shattering…

“Yes.” Severus folded his arms inside his robes, one hand on each elbow as he watched the tall teenager – almost a man grown, now – pace beside the still waters of the Great Lake. “Perfectly. In 1718 Damocles Rowle became Minister for Magic and insisted on turning Azkaban Island – the native home of the Dementors – into a prison. But there was a problem…”

“Dementors can’t be controlled.” Frey commented, well aware of the nature of the creatures after lecture upon lecture by Thanatos, Heidi, his Far, and even Alexios. “They only answer to Death and Her Avatars…so Rowle had to find a way…which I’m guessing led to the bind-rune?”

Severus nodded. “The Dark Lord wasn’t the first descendant of Salazar Slytherin…he was merely the most recent…and insane. Long before him there were various branches of the family tree of the Gaunts, who around the time of Rowle taking office stated having to sell off possession to support the ludicrous lifestyle they’d become accustomed to. And as the tomes we found in the Chamber can attest…there are ways around a bind-rune shattering…if you’re dishonorable enough to do it.”

“Given that the Rowles are blood-supremacists now, and Rowle wanted free guards in the case of the Dementors.” Frey noted dryly. “Somehow I doubt that qualms of conscience would have kept him from taking advantage of “Lesser beings” like Dementors, whether they had a purpose or not outside of his own aims likely never even entered his mind.”

“Politicians.” Severus sneered in agreement. “Do tend to put their goals ahead the common good, especially if the common good disagrees with their own views. Dumbledore is an excellent example of such with his Greater Good twaddle. A bind-rune fits. According to the text I found, it would have to be kept in a specially prepared lead-and-iron box engraved with runes to negate outside influences…such as the effects of a pact being broken. The only problem being…”

“Finding it.” Frey groaned, rocking back on his heels. “And somehow I have a feeling I know just where to look…”

…

“Did you really think you’d be able to keep your plans away from us, pup?” Sirius’s voice coming from an alcove outside of Gryffindor tower had Frey pausing in his tracks. He’d been heading back after dinner to collect up a few…necessities before going to the Ministry to find the damn bind-rune…and maybe figure out what-the-fuck kept drawing Tom there, since at this point, he was reasonably sure that it was Tom behind the two ministry employees being hospitalized…he just wasn’t as certain over what was drawing him there over and over again.

Shadow-walking would have been faster…but it would also have drawn attention in the busy hive of bees that was Hogwarts during exams.

This time of year, Frey kept the popping in and out of places he wasn’t supposed to be, or melting out of the shadows, to a minimum rather than draw attention from Dumbledore, or even other students, that he can’t afford with everything going on…and all at once too.

“Plans?” Frey asked innocently, batting big green eyes at his godfathers – and sweet darkness, Sev too – as he turned around, slipping the map that he’d been using to scry for Tom on behind his back.

If he was going to risk breaking into the ministry, he might as well get all the use out of it as he could…and Tom’s shade happened to have finally arrived in London after floating around St. Albans and the Chilturn Hills – but never staying in one place long enough for Frey to want to risk a blind
shadow-step or apparation.

Frey chuckled a bit, even as he resigned himself to not being able to talk or laugh or joke his way out of this one…he’d been well and truly caught based on the looks on the faces staring at him with varying degrees of immovability.

“I don’t quite know what you mean…”

Almost as one, Severus sneered, Sirius snorted, and Remus rolled his eyes, all in disbelief.

Yeah…he didn’t think that would work but had to try anyway.

“You’ve been different this year, cub.” Remus told him softly, with gentle understanding. “More distant, focused on this obscure search of yours. Even with Draco, you never seem…well…”

“All there.” Sirius supplied with a cock of a brow. “Trying to distance yourself…and not just from us, but from everyone. What crazy scheme have you cooked up now, pup? And does it have anything to do with what I gave you for your birthday this last year?”

Giving in with a mental sigh, recognizing the look on Sev’s face from when the older wizard categorically refused to allow him to face the basilisk alone, Frey gestured for them to wait saying:

“Wait here, I’ll be right back. Ah.” He held up one hand when Sirius made to follow him up the stairs and into the Tower regardless. “I promise I won’t disappear on you. On my honor. Just…stay a minute. I need to change and get a couple things…since I have a feeling that there won’t be time after you finish haranguing me about my reckless, Gryffindorish stupidity.” He said the last in a perfect imitation of Sev’s mellifluous tones, the two remaining Marauders chuckling.

“Whoa, Severus.” Remus said with a bright grin and laughing eyes as Sirius chortled at his side, Severus just crossing his arms with a deepening sneer. “He’s got you pegged.”

“Ha. Blood. Ha.” The stern black-draped wizard commented in reply. “Though, may I point out, that his supposed imitation lampooned you two fools as well?” He arched a brow and snorted when they suddenly sobered with looks of betrayal marring their formerly-lighthearted faces. “Gryffindors.”

The trio of elder wizards waited impatiently – whether it showed was another story – for their wayward charge to return, though when he came back, it was mid-argument and with another young man in tow.

“For the last time, Nev, no!” Frey snapped in exasperation. His best-friend after Luke and Draco had watched with wide-eyes and a grim mouth as Frey had switched his school uniform for basilisk hide trousers, boots, and gloves with dragonhide tunic and robes to finish off the switch.

Battle robes.

Not quite of the caliber of the all-basilisk set that was waiting for him to freeze into his immortality, but impressive and spell-resistant nonetheless.

His Cloak was tucked into a pouch on his goblin-steel belt, blackened to dull the shine of the metal, all his clothes or weapons in some shade of black or grey to blend with the shadows.

When he’d turned from taking out the Potter sword – with its deadly basilisk imbued blade – from his trunk, it had been to find Nev dressed similarly to himself, though his clothes were his tough dragonhide gardening gear in dark brown rather than the duelers wear of Frey’s. Frey had
immediately argued with Nev’s silent intention to join him on whatever scheme he was about to embark on, a one-sided argument that he might as well been having with the fucking wall for all the mind Neville had paid him as he followed along all the way out of the tower.

“I’m coming, Harry.” Neville finally said, brown eyes flashing defiantly. “You can’t stop me. Not if you’re in as much of a hurry as I think you are.”

“He can’t, Mr. Longbottom.” Severus interrupted the fight with an arch of an ebony brow. “But I assure you…we can.”

“But we won’t.” Remus cast a cautioning look at his fellow teacher. “As something tells me we’re going to need your wand with whatever trouble Harry’s found…this time.”

“You make it sound like I seek it out.” Frey protested half-heartedly.

“You do.” Severus snorted. “As a certain store of basilisk parts in my storage can attest. So. What trouble have you found this time, Mr. Potter?”

“I’m coming too!” A voice piped up from a nearby alcove, where a certain someone had been waiting to ambush his boyfriend for a snog, only to be interrupted by his Uncle Sev and said-boyfriend’s godfathers. Thankfully Draco had been wise enough to change into dark clothing for his skulking, as he rather doubted some of his flashier clothes would have been appropriate for one of Frey’s capers, if his stories of monster-battles and the events from last year could attest. “And you can’t stop me either!”

Frey groaned under his breath as Severus eyed his godson like something that was due to be pickled and displayed in one of his specimen jars.

“No one is going anywhere.” Sirius stated firmly, arms crossing as he scowled at the motley crew that had assembled in the corridor. “Until Harry provides us with some answers. Well, pup? What’s this all about?”

“Voldemort.” Frey cocked his head to one side in patent amusement when jaws dropped all around. “I’ve been tracking his shade – and I have a damn good idea of where to find it. I go, I trap his shade, and turn it over to my patron…with maybe a stop along the way.”

“And where might I ask,” Sev drawled, refusing to be sidetracked by how the blasted boy had accomplished what the Ministry had failed to do – though he was rather sure Dumbledore had managed to track the Dark Lord as well. He would, however, be returning to this stop the irritant wanted to make along the way to battling the Darkest lord Britain had dealt with in the last several centuries. “Might that be?”

Frey shrugged then answered nonchalantly.

“The Department of Mysteries.”

The adult wizards groaned while the eyes of the younger two audience members brightened.

Now that sounded like an adventure…even if both of them were quaking in their knickers over the thought of facing off against the Dark Lord.

Sirius rubbed his thumb and forefinger over his eyes with a curse.

Because, of course, where else would one find a Dark Lord than the Department of Mysteries.
“I suppose you have a plan to get into the most secure department in the entire Ministry…all without tipping your hand to Voldemort?” The Black scion asked dryly.

Frey just smirked, holding out his hands.

“Grab hold…and whatever you do…don’t let go.”

…

“Merlin fuck!” Sirius cursed low and heated as they came out the other end of the shadow-walk in a dim corridor where the doors around them started to spin. “I feel cold, does anyone else feel cold? Just what the fuck was that, pup?!”

“Calm yourself.” Severus hissed, senses alert and wand out before the surrounding haze of utter black had faded away, having zero intention of ever letting the mutt know that he was equally disconcerted by their shared charge’s little stunt.

“I thought Hogwarts was blocked from travel except by floo.” Neville said, feeling a bit dumb at the look that comment gained him from Draco. “What? After last year and all…”

“That wasn’t exactly apparation, and it definitely wasn’t a portkey.” Remus told him soothingly, wand out as well, the others finally following suit as they moved to flank their quiet leader who was studying the revolving doors intently. “Granted, I don’t know what it was but I gather Hogwarts isn’t warded against it…”

“It’s Harry.” Draco responded with a shrug, going along the easiest of them all…of course he was also the best informed as well. So that was shadow-walking…or at least, that’s was he rightly assumed.

“Harry, right.” Sirius muttered. “Who somehow managed to circumvent the warding around both Hogwarts and the Ministry from one breath to the next. Explanations better be forthcoming after this pup, or you’ll be in for the pranking of a bloody lifetime, mark my words…” He threatened with just the right hint of menace to get a quirk of a grin and a devil-may-care glance from his godson.

Challenge accepted.

“What’s the problem?” Draco murmured lowly into one gold-tinted ear.

“It’s random.” Frey answered finally. “From what I can tell, unless you know the secret to force the doors to go to the room or section you want, you have to try your luck one by one until you get where you want to go.”

“Prevention against intruders learning something they oughtn’t.” Severus hummed under his breath in appreciation. “Clever.” He had to admit.

And a massive time-killer and pain in their collective asses.

“We are not splitting up.” Sirius said firmly…and was ignored as in the very next moment his godson did just that.

“One adult, one student.” Frey told him with a stubborn set to his mouth and a stern look. “You can take it out of my hide later, but we don’t have the time to dilly-dally. Mark the doors as you clear the rooms. Send out a patronus if you find Voldemort…or a box made of iron and lead, inscribed with runes.”
“What’s in the box?” Severus probed with narrowed eyes as the others simply took it on faith, Remus taking charge of Draco – having more patience with the spoiled teen – while Sirius reluctantly left Severus to pair with his godson.

Remus took charge of Draco – having more patience with the spoiled teen – while Sirius reluctantly left Severus to pair with his godson.

Sirius hated that, it grated at the very marrow of him, but even he could readily admit that when it came to protection, there wasn’t much better for Harry than the Snarky Snape.

Even if the bastard needed to familiarize himself with the inside of a shampoo bottle.

“Something that I’m convinced would only be kept here.” Frey told him evasively as they waited their turn for the doors to stop spinning, the others having preceded them. “Otherwise… I have no fucking clue where to find it.”

“Language.” Severus chided him absently as they turned slightly away from each other, wands – and in Frey’s case sword – out. “This is… disgusting.”

Dozens upon dozens of brains… with tendrils? Were floating in various viscous materials. It was enough to churn even a potion master’s stalwart stomach.

“Eeech.” Frey hacked a little at the smell. “Definitely not what we’re looking for. But there’s a far door, there.” He pointed with his wand, sending out a ball of red light to hover over the nearly-concealed door. “That might lead somewhere more promising.”

Severus sniffed derisively.

The Department of Mysteries was a warren of jumbled rooms and corridors and random nonsense to please even Dumbledore’s haphazard sensibilities.

Severus favored his charge with a glare when the boy – who was nearly taller than him, damn his genes… and Severus wasn’t a small man – scruffed him abruptly when he went to open the next door several rooms after the brain room.

“What is it?” He asked sharply, only to soften when he saw the alert – and cautious – look in emerald eyes.

“I think you were right about what they used to bind the Dementors, Sev.” Frey murmured, eyes darkening with understanding as he read the waves of magic that verily rolled from just beyond the closed door. “And so very, very wrong.”

“What do you sense?” Severus’s voice was hushed as his hand tightened in reflex at the younger wizard’s tone. Over the years, he’d grown to respect what Lily’s boy was capable of. And given the performance that said boy put on during the Tournament let alone in the Chamber against the basilisk… well. Potter had rarely proven his faith misplaced… even if he did seem intent on sending him into an early grave from sheer worry over his antics.

“Death magics.” Frey told him with a grim cast crossing over his face. “And a lot of it. More than I’ve ever felt concentrated in one place… barring being in the presence of my patron Himself. Whatever’s through that door… it won’t go lightly into oblivion. It’ll fight back, with everything at its disposal.” Frey shot Sev a look. “Send a patronus, quietly, to the others. They need to be ready if this blows our cover. If Tom really is here… once we destroy whatever is through that door, he might very well find us before we find him.”

Nodding once, his face taking on his blank mask at the prospect of being hunted through the Department of Mysteries by the Dark Lord, Sev quickly shot off the two messengers to warn the others, both Black and Lupin answering back in the negative in regards to signs of either Death
Eaters – or even the Dark Lord – being present let alone finding the box Frey had had them looking out for.

A box that he was getting more and more certain didn’t even exist.

No…the Ministry had bound their slaves with something much darker than a mere negated bind-rune held in a magic-rebounding box.

They’d done it in blood…and sacrifice.

Steadying himself, Sev on his flank, Frey reached out and opened the door, stepping into the cavernous room with the dreadful, chilling archway at one end.

What could bind a Dementor?

The very thing they were designed to cleanse and renew: souls.

 Murdered, executed, sacrificed souls that were siphoned out of their mortal coils and then bound into the runic working that covered every square inch of the black, ominous arch that whispered in the minds of any who were foolish enough to come too close.

Common men and women would call it the Veil of Death.

Frey knew it by its proper name: an oubliette, a forgetting place, from whence there was no hope of return.

Where it led, none of the texts knew.

But the Ministry, being too clever for themselves by half, had found a…use for it nonetheless.

“Well.” Severus commented, mouth quirking in a half-smirk. “I was half-right. They did use runes.”

Frey snorted rolling his eyes as he walked towards the archway, sheathing his sword for the Elder Wand.

Thankfully, he’d recently gotten a lot of practice controlling the spell that would likely do the trick better than any other…but being a Dark spell would ring the Ministry alerts like nobody’s business…unless the DoM was exempt from the alerts…but he didn’t think it was.

“Fiendfyre.” He encanted, Sev arching a brow and keeping one eye on the entrances as an alarm began to ring.

The DoM was warded to alert on high-level Dark magic after all.

That was…unfortunate.

Part of Severus, however, couldn’t help but stare in wonder as a fifteen-year-old boy used the darkest of fire spells with perfect control, control that rivalled that he’d shown over ice the previous year. The Fiendfyre grew larger and larger, taking on the shape of a dragon much like that he’d faces off against, spinning in ever-tightening and ever-increasing circles of flame around the arch, like a whirlpool beginning to form…and instead of sinking, it rose higher and higher. That was, at least, until it crashed down.

Tower after tower of flame crashed down on the Veil, even as the circles surrounding it engulfed it, Frey keeping up the display until the bright-white glow of a Patronus messenger caught his attention
forcing him to smother the flames and snuff them out, leaving nothing but a melted scorch mark on the stone floor.

“Death Eaters!” The dog-shaped messenger hissed quietly. “In the Hall of Prophecy!”

Exchanging a glance, Severus cast a Point Me for Lupin, the two of them not deigning to look back at the empty room that had just moments before housed one of the worst acts of barbarism visited against a sentient species in British wizarding history, both of them thoroughly disgusted with both the Ministry and the Unspeakables who had done their dirty work and kept their shameful, blood-drenched secret.

…

“What’s the plan, pup?” Sirius asked for what felt like the millionth time that night.

At least from the looks on the faces of Harry and Snape they’d found the box-thing that he’d been after…so there was that.

Now they only had to deal with a half-dozen Death Eaters and the possibility of Voldemort’s ruddy manky soul showing up…else everything would be just peachy right about now.

Frey eyed the massive room with shelf after shelf after shelf filled with glowing orbs.

He had just one question.

“All of these are prophecies?”

Sirius nodded with a shrug, being familiar with some areas of the DoM from his years working as an Auror.

“Fulfilled, unfulfilled, in abeyance,” he rattled off. “Given since the founding of this department, covering events from ages past or far in the future, you name it, it’s probably here.”

A wicked glint appeared in emerald green eyes.

“Excellent.”

…

The Death Eaters – and the form that Frey assumed was possessed by Tom given that it was being very liberal with the Crucios – were so utterly focused on their task of trying to break the enchantments embedded in the shelving the prophecy orbs were placed on, that they never realized that they were being flanked.

Granted, they’d come a dozen-strong, all Death Eaters who had either evaded suspicion or bought their way out of Azkaban like Walden MacNair and Albert Yaxley.

And given the semi-high placement of both of those wizards and the time of night, they were neither expecting resistance nor truly prepared to face it believing themselves alone, though all of them were – as always – eager for blood to be spilled, even if it came from one of their own, as another of their number fell under Voldemort’s (via-possession) wand at another failure.

At least…they thought they were alone, right up until their misconception was shoved in their collective faces by a mocking drawl from behind the form of their Master and their twitching brethren on the ground.
By Frey’s count, Tom’s temper had put at least two of his own men down for the count and given more than one other the shakes.

Rather back-assward of him to Frey’s mind.

“Having problems, Tom?” Frey drawled, smirking as nine wands – albeit several that shook even if just a tad – leveled on him, the form hosting the shade not among them. For his part Frey held the Elder wand low and gentle at his side, silently keeping time with it as it tapped against his leg. “Must be inconvenient, that whole lack of a body. Makes touching a prophecy orb to remove it rather difficult, doesn’t it?” He arched a brow at the sour expression on the half-maddened face of what had probably been at one time a handsome young wizard. “It’s cost you at least two hosts to the enchantments on it by my count…”

“Harry Potter.” The strange garbled hissing came from a mouth that jerked and twitched. Whoever Voldemort was riding, they weren’t weak, it taking much more effort than Quirrell to simply speak for the shade. But the most disconcerting thing about the straw-haired wizard that Tom had chosen this time wasn’t the twitch or the odd speech, but the one blue eye and one red eye that stared out from a face that was doing an excellent impression of a stroke victim.

Whoever this was playing host to Tom’s parasite, it had nearly fired them in the process.

“Tom Riddle.” Frey shot back cocking his head to one side, wand tap-tap-tapping away on his thigh, drawing more than one eye from the Death Eaters who’d moved to face him in a sickle formation. “And who has the pleasure,” he sneered, rolling his eyes. “Of hosting you tonight, Tom? One of your minions perhaps?”

“One of my most loyal.” Voldemort hissed back. “Who was trapped and b-b-betrayed by hisss own father…until your own actionssss freed him from hisss coilssss.”

“Really?” Ebony brows flew up in mock-surprise. “Do tell.”

“Barty C-crouch kept hisss ssshameful Death Eater ssson prisssoner for over ten yearsss, after sssneaking him out of Azzzkaban.” Tom hissed and spat, his speech worsening with every word. “Barty the Younger w-willingly took up the c-c-charge of being my hossst when it wassss needed.”

“Wow.” Frey responded in a deadpan, face blank. “He must have been either a ruddy idiot or fucking insane given what you’ve done to the last three – or is it four now, does your ugly-snake-baby thing count as a host – hosts.”

Anticipation zinged through Frey as Tom grew increasingly enraged with his disrespect.

Given that Tom had been found here rather than elsewhere in the DoM – such as searching for a way to gain a new body – Frey knew just where to push and prod and mock to make the Dark Lord lose his ever-loving-mind.

Frey knew full well what that orb said, it was about him as well after all. He’d been told early. And told of the consequences of that one Seer’s words, consequences that had left him with a distaste for the Fates and their meddling acolytes like Dumbledore, a distaste that had only trebled when Thanatos had filled him in on just what his fate might have been had the Avatar not interceded.

Even the most stubborn of the Apollo cabin knew better – now that he was grown and considered rather formidable – than to give anymore prophecies about him or those he cared about.

He was willing to admit – at least to himself – that he had taken more enjoyment than he’d probably should have (other than that rightfully gained from saving a friend from a horrifying future) by
spiking the prophecy Luke’s batshit-crazy mother had given when he was just a baby.

But...hey.

Everyone needed a hobby...his just happened to be spitting in the faces of the Fates...meddling heifers.

“Avada-”

Before the second word could leave the twitching mouth, Frey’s wand stilled, the count finished, and then it was up in the air with a jerking motion reminiscent of setting a hook in the mouth of a fish... and Voldemort had a hell of a lot more to worry about than Frey, as he triggered the enchantment he’d set in place around the room, toppling the shelves and sending a torrent of prophecy orbs raining down on the heads of Tom and his Death Eaters, Frey and his companions all shielded with their preparatory spellwork, Remus keeping up a shield around himself and Neville, while Draco shielded Sirius and Severus. Those who weren’t responsible for keeping up the shields – against both the orbs and the Death Eaters once Yaxley finally noticed Frey hadn’t come alone.

It was madness, spells flying and Seers growling, shouting, or chanting, apparitions rising in clouds of dust motes and light from the ground.

It was chaos, Severus and Sirius each taking down their first targets with grim looks that were belied by a manic grin or gleeful eyes, taking no prisoners and giving no quarter while Neville settled for merely maiming the type of monsters that stole his parents.

It was glorious.

Within a matter of a minute or two, all of the orbs had fallen and the shielders had stopped their defense, both Remus and Draco falling into a spate of hexes and curses and shields with whichever Death Eater decided to try their hand, more than one underestimating the sheer maliciousness that Draco generally took great care to prune and cultivate to ensure that it didn’t pour out on an undeserving target...mainly as he knew Frey probably wouldn’t like it if he didn’t mind his manners with some of the dolts the blond had to deal with on a daily basis.

And throughout it all, as if in the eye of the storm, Frey and Tom were locked in a furious exchange of wordless curses, each nastier than the last.

All the while, Tom – and his host – remained blind to the inches of ground that he steadily lost, his opponent ever coming closer.

And why would he be aware of such a thing?

After all, who in their right mind had ever wanted to get closer to one of the deadliest wizards in the last two centuries?

No one sane...that was certain...which rather explained why Dumbledore was always eager to engage the Dark Lord in a duel.

“What is your plan, boy?” Tom hissed and spat. “Kill me again?” He scoffed. “I am Lord Voldemort! You think to defeat me? Me?! Who has gone further down the path to immortality than any wizard before me?!” Voldemort shouted, his words easily reaching the surrounding wizards – a number which had grown exponentially as the Aurors finally responded to the alarms sounded by Frey’s use of Fiendfyre in the Veil Chamber. “I am forever!”

Frey nearly rolled his eyes at the melodrama.
“No.” He corrected, calm and firm, not even out of breath as he darted forward with speed that was 
*almost* beyond that of mortal man, dropping the Elder wand which returned to its holster so that he 
could grab hold of Tom’s – Barty’s? – wandarm, holding it high and away from them, hiding the 
dagger that he’d taken smoothly from the sheath at his lower back, holding it hidden in the shadows 
between them. Shadows which had thickened and hidden the dagger from sight at a mental 
Flamel. Mortals age and then they die. That is their way. That is *your* way.”

Without further ado, Frey thrust the dagger into the still-beating heart of Barty Crouch Jr., the Cursed 
Blade tugging and pulling at Tom’s parasitic shade, siphoning it unstoppably into the onyx hilt.

“What?” Barty gasped as he felt himself become alone, one hand coming up to press against the 
bleeding wound as beat by beat of his heart he bled out onto the wreckage-strewn stone floor. 
“What have you *done*?”

“*Now that.*” Another voice came from around them as Frey banished the dagger back to the sheath 
at his back. Once he was alone it would be a matter of summoning Thanatos to remove the shade. 
But for the moment at least, Tom’s merest sliver of a soul was safe and sound and *trapped* in Frey’s 
hands. “Is a question that I believe many of us would like answers to young man.” The peppery 
tones of Amelia Bones were a match for the stern mien the witch had taken upon witnessing what 
appeared to be the final end of Voldemort.

Frey blushed a bit, playing up his role of bashful hero, all the while locking eyes with a whole – 
merely suffering scratches and a burn across one shoulder from what he could tell – and healthy 
Draco over her shoulder.

“Secured the future, Madame Bones.” He said at last with a faint half-smile. “Now not one more 
soul will ever have to grow up listening to stories of a snake-faced fiend who will return to cleanse 
the wizarding world. Voldemort is *dead*. Let his reign – past and present – die with him.”

…

*Daily Prophet*

*June 8, 1996*

*Front Page:*

**Boy-Who-Lived**

**Now the Vanquisher?**

*Death Eaters, Duels, and the Shade of Voldemort*

*What Really happened in the Department of Mysteries?*

*An investigative report.*

*Back Page:*

**Veil of Death a Casualty of Death Eater Reprisals?**

*Dozens Dead in Azkaban as Dementors Revolt from Wizarding Control*
“I’ll be back for my birthday, for *our* day. You have my word, no matter what, even if I have to slay another dark lord, I *will* be here, love. I swear on the blood of Ymir I will.” Frey swore to Draco as he held that precious face between his callused palms.

The furor around the DoM had finally died down, and school was soon to let out.

But no sooner had one fire been extinguished than another had sprung up, and Frey’s duty to his friends – to this *world* – were drawing him ever backward to New York.

“You better, Frey.” Draco swore right back at him, jerking him down into a hard, claiming kiss by his braids. “Or so help you, I’ll hunt you down and kill you *myself*, dark lords bedamned!”
A/U: As you might have guessed from the events of the last chapter and the title of this one, we’re moving away from HP events and into Percy Jackson territory. We’ll still have plenty of wizarding world going on, but the main “action” of the story from here until the end of Lokison will be mostly surrounding the PJ storyline and giving Frey more chances to flex his godling muscles and learn/grow his powers.

Chapter Twenty-Six: Lightning Strikes

Frey stood along in the same warded grove with the simple wooden alter where he’d gone through his Rites, standing stoic and calm as his Far and his Patron had worked with tireless hands to tattoo Yggdrasil upon his back and the runic bands of his house and bloodline and station upon his biceps and shoulder caps.

This was also the place where Frey had revealed Loki’s true heritage to his father, and where Laufey had claimed Frey as being of the House of Ymir.

It had a heavy sort of significance to it, one that he felt was fitting, given that he was taking the final step out from behind the shield of Thanatos’s Patronage.

From here on out, once this brief bit of ceremony was done and finished, Frey would begin forging his own path without the ever-present force of Thanatos guiding him or marking the way.

He would always have a connection to the Elder god, but he would no longer belong to the Elder god – and that was something he coveted a great deal.

Frey had been itching to pass over Tom’s final soul shard, but with the heavy gazes of both Asgard and the Wizarding World upon him after his final show-down with the Dark Lord, calling attention to both his relationship – rare as it was – with the Avatar as well as his possession of a dieumort seemed…ill-advised. He wouldn’t have been the first person to have possession of a toy Odin wanted, and he rather doubted he would have been the last the greedy god had destroyed to gain whatever had caught his one eye had he been so foolish as if to flaunt the Blade before it. Asgard watched him too closely for Frey to take the chance, so it had had to wait.

And with a bit of collusion from Loki – and a well-timed minor explosion in an empty barrack in the Golden Palace as a result – Asgard would have other things to worry about this night than a meeting between Patron and Ward.

“You have completed your quest.” Thanatos spoke solemnly, his handsome face bare – including the scar that crossed one eye and cheek – for the occasion. Holding out one lean hand he gestured for the knife.

Frey smirked a bit, removing the Blade from its sheath, his own hand hovering over the pommel.

Watching, Thanatos arched a brow. They both knew that the Elder god had intended Frey to hand over the Blade…something which Frey had no intention of actually doing.

Drawing on the power inside him that had likely come from Thanatos himself – and always seemed to be growing moment by moment – Frey sucked in a breath and his eyes burned bright Avada green for a long moment, then yielding to Frey’s wordless command as it was created to do, the Blade gave
up its captive, the small misty orb – barely the size of a marble – that made up Tom Riddle’s final soul shard coalescing in Frey’s palm, which he held out in turn to Thanatos as he resheathed the Blade at his back.

“Holding infinity in the palm of your hand?” Thanatos smirked, eyeing his protégé with a mix of concern – for the clear strain the show was putting on Frey’s powers – and pride for how far he had come. Though the young godling still had eons to go before he was his own equal…he was closer than many had come in many lifetimes.

“Well.” Frey snarked back. “It’s not exactly a heaven in a wildflower, but I do believe this belongs to you.”

“So it does.” Thanatos reached out and closed his fist around the cloudy black-grey mist, snuffing out the show and sending that last, tenacious bit of one of the more annoying wizards he’d ever had to sic one of his people on – whether a shadow warrior, Harvest Maiden, or a protégé and/or acolyte like Frey.

A bit of a mad wanker was Tom – and annoying as Gaea on one of her “my children must be avenged” rampages.

Frey gave a slow nod, making as if to turn away their business done, when Thanatos rocketed out one hand lightning quick and grabbed his wrist – the same that he’d branded with the Hallows mark a year or so ago when he’d set Frey on Voldemort’s trail, adding to his task as a punishment for his misbehavior.

His protégé gasped knees almost buckling as his mark burned under the touch of Thanatos, head tossing back as his grit his teeth against the pain.

“Surely you didn’t think it was that easy did you?” Thanatos half-mocked him, tone jaunty. “To leave the service of one such as me?” He tsked. “Clearly we haven’t done enough to educate you in the ways of the gods if that’s the case.”

“Not that easy.” Frey bit out, hanging onto his pride by his fingernails as the intense heat and unrelenting pain continued, pounding against his resolve. “But I don’t owe you anything now.”

“There is, still,” Thanatos sighed, shaking his head. “The matter of the contract, that which allowed your very birth.”

“That doesn’t concern you.” Frey shot back as the pain began to ebb away, shaking his arm and breaking the Elder god’s hold, partly through a burst of immortal strength – strength that came and went as he settled further into his Becoming but that wouldn’t settle on him fully until he became fully immortal – and partly through Thanatos allowing the move. Frey barely shot a glance at his arm, just enough to see that what had been a simple brand-like marking was now a full-tattoo filled and shaded in the colors of the Harvest Lord, gold and orange and red filling the spaces between the black, the colors of Thanatos. “Not until I either have children or become an immortal…”

“Or die.” Thanatos reminded him dryly. “As that would also constitute a breach of the agreement. The Potter and Peverell lines must be continued. It is your duty. All I have done is make certain you live that long…as I’ve an inkling about your plans regarding the coming Turn.”

“What?” Frey asked, nearly sidetracked, but his temper which had been roused by the grab and exacerbated by the pain, rose to keep him on track. “I know that. You think I don’t know that?” He snorted, beginning to pace under Thanatos’s now nearly-indulgent gaze. Somedays his former-Patron – which he imagined part of the pain of Thanatos’s “gift” had been the peeling back of the
Elder god’s invisible “back off” sign on his aura – could be more mercurial than his Father waffling about whether Thor was or wasn’t or maybe-might-be his brother…or maybe not.

It was kind of entertaining to Frey…after all, it didn’t really matter to him.

Considering someone you’d never met and only heard stories about as real “family” was a bit difficult in the face of flesh-and-blood like his uncles Helblindi and Byleistr.

Thor – to Frey – was just another bedtime story, and if anything a problem to be tackled a later date when he eventually journeyed to Yggdrasil in a more visible fashion.

He continued his rant, temper well-and-truly boiling over.

“All my fucking life that’s all I’ve known.” Frey spat at the amused dark figure. “My duty to you. My duty to the Wizarding World. My duty as a Lord. My duty as a Prince. My duty as a hero, as a half-blood, as a fucking Aesir Prince…but I’m not an Aesir after all, now am I?” He sneered. “No, the holier-than-thou crow-fucking bastard had lied, to everyone including his own family, and all of Yggdrasil for thousands of fucking years! I slew a damn hydra when I should have been learning multiplication tables. Di immortals!” He cursed. “I learned swordcraft before I learned how to use a fucking telephone! I don’t fucking need you, one of the bastards that did this to me, to remind me of my fucking duty!” He barked. “I know! I know my fucking duty! And I’ll do it just like I did all the ones before it and all the ones after it! I’ll have some kids – kids I’ll have to watch grow and age and fucking die, mind you! And then I’ll go off and slay another monster or kill another fucking Dark Lord…because what-the-fuck-else am I going to do with my very-fucking-much abnormal life?!”

The sound of his panting filled the clearing as he finally seemed to run out of steam.

Only he hadn’t…not quite.

“I’m not mad at Far.” He said quietly. “Or with my other parents, not really. I don’t blame them for my life. And most of the time I don’t mind it – not really – being so very much not normal. With Voldemort after my ass, whether I was regular-wizard Harry Potter or not – I never could have been that, at least I don’t think.” He shrugged, looking away, eyes shadowed and face bleak. “But you? Death? The Fates? You all fucked with me before I was even born. Meddled a bit here, switched things around a bit there. Now here you are.” He gestured towards the shadow-wreathed figure half-heartedly, showing the redone marking in stark relief. “Doing it again. And why?” He shook his head baffled. “Trying to stack the deck?”

“You’re to be a Death god.” Thanatos admitted after a long moment of frozen silence, realizing that he’d never get another chance with this one if he didn’t. “You had to have realized…”

“Realized?” Frey chuckled sardonically. “Maybe. Pumping me full of death magic at every opportunity, leading me to freeing the Dementors, to forging a dieumort – that was a good one by the way, I didn’t quite realize what it meant at the time – you were stacking the deck, trying to predispose me towards claiming Death as my dominion in Yggdrasil, right?”

Thanatos just shrugged. “You’re one of mine. Is it so wrong that I would want one of mine to join me, to be like me?”

“Wrong, no.” Frey answered. “But…” He smiled a gentle smile, one filled with more than a bit of finality at the Elder god as the scent of ice and sea air began to tingle at his senses.

His Far was trying to break through the warding, alarmed no doubt by how long the two have been
in conference with each other.

“I’m not a normal half-blood rising to the ranks of divinity.” He reminded his former patron. “Or even a normal godling raised by the gods among them. I’m something else. Something new. You did that.” He pointed out. “With help from your Primordial Mistress Death and the Fates, and and and.” He cocked his head to the side. “Ascending won’t be a shock to my system, or an inevitability. And no one is going to force me to be anything I don’t want to be. I could Claim Death as my dominion. Or Darkness or Shadow, or even Trickery or Lies or or.” He waved a hand. “The possibilities really are endless. You see now.” Frey said, continuing unstoppably on, all with that same gentle smile on his face. “There’s a dozen things – or more – that I could Claim upon my Ascension. Death is only one of them. My power can compel me towards a certain aspect of Divinity…but it can’t force me.” His words turned silky. “After I do this one last thing, that which was agreed upon for me before I was even conceived, I will never be forced by another being in the matter of my own future.”

“So mote it be.” Thanatos said with an ironic smile and a nod of his head. “You are free Frey Haraldr. Free from my service. Free from you childhood. I pronounce you a half-blood grown, and freed from the service of Olympus and Hades. So mote it be.”

Thanatos turned, but glanced back before disappearing into the shadows to give one last parting word.

“This won’t be the last we’ll meet, young Frey.”

“I’m sure it won’t, Elder Thanatos.” Frey smiled, a bit of his normal good-nature returning to his face. “But next time…it’ll be on my terms.”

“Frey Haraldr.” Thanatos murmured to himself as he let the shadows whisk him away from New York. “How you have grown.”

…

Several days passed uneventfully after Frey had his showdown with his former Patron.

Life carried on.

Frey still lived in the Thanatos Cabin, though the sigil had changed while he’d been otherwise occupied with handing over Tom’s soul shard and getting the shit burned out of his arm to the same sign of what he’d found out from Chiron was called the “Master of Death.”

Because that didn’t speak of foretelling and Thanatos playing with his future.

Great.

Just fucking great.

But he wasn’t temporarily homeless whilst visiting the Camp, so there was that…

The air was tense.

He and Luke sparred, or taught the younger campers, or helped Silena with her duties, Frey joining in on the rounds of Capture the Flag, which the Blue team tended to win even against the “unbeatable” combination of the Athena and Ares cabins.

Luke and Annabeth had gotten into some kind of friendly-rivals grudge match while Frey was off
offing his pesky neighborhood Dark Lord, making things a bit tricky to navigate…but entertaining as hell to instigate everything from food fights to pranks to insult-matches.

Nevertheless, despite Frey’s best efforts, there was an air of tense anticipation around the Camp.

Something was very wrong.

Not the least of which was Chiron’s tale of having to help save a young half-blood with sea-green eyes from a fucking harpy.

Hades had to be epically pissed off to unleash those three from the Underworld, in fact the last time Frey’d heard of it happening (other than for their legal prowess) had been…

Well, fuck.

It had been when Thalia, daughter of Zeus, had been discovered, by whose very presence broke a fifty-year pact between the Big Three against fathering (or mothering, Frey wasn’t making any bets against any of the three being able to pull it off after what he’d learned about his own anatomy) half-blood children due to the damage they tended to cause on Earth when they went to war against each other.

“You know who the last kid who had one of those nasty biddies out for their blood was…right?” Frey mentioned the next day after hearing Chiron’s story as he stood over the subject of said-story…a lean half-blood pre-teen who’d echoed one of Frey’s bigger slays by slaying the minotaur on the way to the safety of the wards…though not without cost.

Having lost both James and Lily as a toddler…Frey would never wish that pain upon another, especially a young boy as clueless as Grover and Chiron were insisting this one was.

“Mhmm.” Luke nodded, frown marring his handsome face as Annabeth made her way into the infirmary. Exchanging a wordless glance, both agreed to shelve the topic until later. Thalia’s death…or en-treeing depending on how you looked at it…was still a very raw wound for the young girl. “What’s up shorty?”

“Shut up, Luke.” Annabeth bit out with a pout, crossing her arms over her chest. “Who is this kid, anyway? I told Chiron I’d watch him until he woke up.”

Both older teens just shrugged and stood, wandering away and leaving her to it – and to interrogate said helpless victim when he woke up.

Hey.

Better him than them.

When it came to an Athena half-blood and their search for knowledge, it was every man for themselves.

…

“Allright.” Luke pinned his best-friend with a half-hearted glare. “What’s eating you? Things have been…off ever since you came home. It isn’t Jackson is it?”

Luke couldn’t see why it would be.

Yeah, the new-kid-hazing thing that Clarisse liked to pull was a bit of a pain, and so was all the
speculation that had started to run rampant ever since the new kid used water powers to take out the more thuggish group among the Ares kids…but all in all, it mostly was normal Camp-Half-Blood-stuff, nothing new, especially to someone who’d been living there almost his entire life.

Having a new camper – even one as potentially problematic as an even-odds-he’s-Poseidon’s Perseus “Percy” Jackson – shouldn’t be messing with Luke’s best-friend.

Which probably meant that Frey was up to his tight ass in trouble of one kind or another.

Frey just pursed his lips and shook his head, not even turning to look away from the sparring ring where Annabeth was going through forms with Jackson. Which was good, since other then the three of them – Luke, Frey, and Silena – most of the other campers were giving the poor bastard a wide berth. Annabeth just wasn’t the sort to go with the flow, probably one of the reasons she fell in with Luke and the still-a-tree-Thalia so quickly when they were all on the run and slowly making their way to Camp.

“Got into it with Thanatos…a bit.”

“Well, fuck me.” Luke blew out a shocked breath and gave a short laugh. “You don’t do anything by halves do you?”

“It made sense…at the time.”

“You know.” Luke shook his head then vaulted the ring rail, planning to help train up the newbie before Annabeth lost her patience. “You’re going to bite off more than you can chew one day and that right there is what I’ll have embroidered on your shroud: it made sense at the time…”

…

A Claiming – and the calling in of bets as Jackson was claimed by his father…Poseidon – and an ultimatum later found Frey tapping one foot on the perfect white tiled floor of Zeus’s bedroom, an irritated arch to his brow and an expression demanding an explanation written all over his face as Ganymede snickered from the bed where he was reclining as Zeus fidgeted under his lover’s gimlet gaze.

“Please.” Frey’s tone was pure Jotunheim ice. “Please for the love of chaos,” he shouted. “That you didn’t lose your fucking masterbolt with your bedamned Father rousing in Tartarus!”

“Well…” Zeus shrugged a bit, looking over at his other lover for help, Ganymede rapidly shaking his head and holding up his hands in denial.

They both might be gods and Frey wasn’t…not yet at least…but when he got hacked off enough even they watched their step with him.

He might not be able to kill them, but he was already powerful enough to hurt them…and like anyone immortal, they had a healthy respect for anyone with that sort of power.

Or he might just decide to hold out on them…you know…that too.

Raising his hands with a put-upon groan, Frey ground them a bit into his eye sockets.

“You know, fuck, I know you know,” he said, mentally chanting all the reasons why lashing out at Zeus – beyond throwing a bit of a fit – was a bad idea as he barely kept his temper. “That that kid didn’t have jack shit to do with that bolt going missing. Even odds says it was a half-blood that your father got his hooks into before I was able to block him from forcing or coercing his way into any of
“Poseidon still broke our pact.” Zeus changed tacks. “I’m within my rights to punish him for it.”

“So did you, and unless my instincts are wrong about the Moirae and their games, so has Hades.” Frey sighed, dropping his hands in defeat. “Let’s not go there, okay? It’ll just make me even more pissed off than I already am over this whole situation. To recap: your Bolt is missing, two pre-teens and a slightly-immature satyr are off on a quest to find it and save Sally Jackson’s soul from your brother, and I have a fucking migraine…anything else?”

“We’re pretty sure Hades’s Helm is missing too.” Ganymede added, the Spymaster peeking out from behind the curtain of the silly Cupbearer. “Which is the real reason why he’s so pissed off. He isn’t as in-the-know about Kronus…”

“Which is fucking ludicrous how obstinant he is on the subject when Tartarus is part of his domain.” Zeus interjected, Ganymede carrying out without pause.

“…so he really is hoping that Poseidon’s latest kid has either it or the Bolt.”

“Fantastic.” Frey swore under his breath. “You know I’m not just going to let this lay…right?”

Ganymede smirked. “Well…from what I can tell, Thanatos freed you from the onus of following the traditional half-blood rules…so it’s not like you have anything stopping you…other than all the minions of Hades between here and wherever our little heroes are at the moment.”

Frey smirked right back and stepped into the shadows and away from Olympus.

“Oh, great, thanks for that.” Zeus snarked at his lover. “I was hoping for angry-hate-sex before he left. Now if we’re lucky we’ll get gloating-goodbye-sex before he goes off to handfast himself to his pretty blond.”

“Poor baby.” Ganymede rolled his eyes. “It’s so hard to be the King of the Gods…”

...

Metal clanged and clashed as sword struck sword, Percy and Ares facing off on the beach where the pearls had spit them out from the Underworld.

Percy had more than a little axe to grind with the god of War, who had led them into a trap and nearly cost all of them their lives – who had cost his mother her life as Percy had, as the prophecy said, failed to save what mattered most…in the end.

You shall go west, and face the god who has turned.

You shall find what was stolen, and see it safely returned.

You shall be betrayed by one who calls you a friend.

And you shall fail to save what matters most, in the end.

Though, if anyone had thought to ask him, he wouldn’t have picked Ares as the god who had turned over Hades.

And yet…there they were, Ares with a wounded heel, and Percy tired and running on empty, the enraged god sure to kill him at any moment…at least, that’s what he thought.
Only it wasn’t *his* sword that blocked the next blow…but another.

“You know.” Frey mused, finally stepping from the shadows where he’d spent the better part of a week watching over the trio as they made their way from New York to the Underworld. And as a result…was a *mite* bit irritable. “For a god…you’re not very smart, there, are you Ares?” Frey asked with mock-sincerity. “I mean…setting up your uncle’s kid?” He tsked. “Especially given that Percy here seems to be of the self-sacrificing, never-give-up school of heroics. Not very smart, no. Not smart at all. Now Zeus is going to get his bolt…and who’s going to be blamed?” Frey arched a brow as he met Ares blow-for-blow with his Potter sword, one of the few capable of standing up against a war god in single combat. He wouldn’t last long enough to take Ares out, not unless he got one of those bursts of strength again like with Thanatos, but hopefully it would be enough for the kids to take the distraction for what it was and get their asses to Olympus. “Not Hades, that’s for sure.”

“Ah, yes.” Ares sneered. “Father’s latest whore. How is that working out for you, half-blood?”

“Given that I’m here and thus far not dead.” Frey answered dryly, shoving Ares back inch by inch until he was nearly pinned against his motorcycle. “Rather well, I’d say. Better than some of your recent choices. Stealing from Zeus and Hades, trying to incite a nice little family war?” He tsked again, repeating once more: “Not very smart, Ares.”

“I didn’t steal anything.” Ares bit out, then swung his sword with a roar, watching in shock as it flew out of his hand with a bit of a clever move from Frey and a gust of power that rocked him back. Ares blinked, eyeing the annoying half-blood more closely for a moment before shoving it aside. He didn’t have time to worry about half-blood weirdness…especially when said half-blood was *right* and he was going to have both his father *and* his uncles on his ass any minute. “I just…liberated the bolt and helm from the kid who did.” Shifting, he sighed internally then gave a wordless command to his ride, the front shifting and revealing the Helm of Darkness which he handed over to Frey, who in turn passed it off to Percy. “I don’t even know why,” Ares muttered, put out. “It was as if…”

“You were possessed?” Frey offered with a groan. “Great, just *fucking* great.”

“What is it?” Grover asked, eyes wide as Percy clung to the Helm – and the only chance he had at saving his mother – for dear life.

“I ran into another possession case a couple years ago.” Frey reminded the satyr. “Luke, remember? And it was Kronus doing the possessing. If he’s gained enough power to influence a god, especially one like Ares, well…”

Grover gave a worried bleat.

That was very *not* good at all…

…”

“I off one evil megalomaniac, only to run headlong into a fight against another.” Frey noted with no little amount of bitterness to his father, once he finished running down the events of the past week to Loki when the god and Avatar managed to escape long enough from his royal duties to visit his dreams. “Just fucking great.”

“Technically, my son.” Loki pointed out, even as he frowned heavily, mind focused on searching through every angle, every detail of the situation that was brewing in the Olympian pantheon. “You don’t have to do a thing. You fulfilled your fated destiny when you finished Riddle. There’s
nothing forcing you into this situation. You’ve chosen it.”

Frey slumped a little as his father’s – dead-on as usual – summery knocked a lot of the wind out of his indignant sails.

“I know.” Frey sighed, running one hand down his braided hair in agitation. “But…”

“Ah, the dreaded but, however, in the end, etc.” Loki teased. “More than one harebrained-scheme has started – and ended disastrously – with a but.”

He would know, after all, he’d spent thousands of years through thousands of incarnations cleaning up after Thor and his friends.

At least in this incarnation he had Frey to look forward to, and other than Hela none of his blood had been cursed or harmed – thus far – by Odin or the other Aesir…which often wasn’t the case and what generally drove him down a dark path from what he’d discovered when he rose up high enough this incarnation to become an Avatar – and thusly take himself out of the cycle of birth and rebirth.

“But,” Frey rolled his ever-brightening eyes. They weren’t the telling-immortal-glowing-green of Loki’s eyes in his Aesir form – not yet – but fraction by fraction they were getting there, the same infinitesimal changes that marked his ever-strengthening form, his ever-increasing height-and-breadth, and his increasingly-radiant skin, among other tells such as his brain growing ever more neurodiverse and his power subtly darkening to match his eventual domain. “Other than kidnapping and scooping up everyone I care about and hiding them away from Kronus and Odin on Jotunheim – or some other dimension – there’s not really much of a choice involved. My precious people – excepting present company and a few others – have to stay here. Or at least that’s how they’d feel about the proposition of relocation. So unless I want them either killed or enslaved by an even bigger asshole than the One-Eyed raven-fucker I don’t really have that much of a choice in the situation but to help.”

“Well if you’re going to be all heroic about it…”

“Far…”
Chapter Summary

Warning for MPreg

Lokison

Author’s Note: I know a lot of you aren’t jumping for joy over the Draco situation, but with how I’ve written the story it’s a necessary and temporary part of Frey/Harry’s life. This is the last chapter with overt Drarry themes, hereafter they’ll be more friends-with-benefits/co-parents than loves. Just hang-on this storyline is almost done and then Frey can go back to sowing some wild oats for a while.

Chapter Twenty-Seven: A Year and A Day

August 1st 1996, Peverell Fen, Unplottable Location

The pendant Frey had given him shone brightly under the light of the Lughnasadh moon as Draco stared with eyes as luminous silver as the moon itself up at him.

Loki watched with cautious eyes as the two younglings reached out and joined hands, both dressed in simple – and traditional – undyed cotton robes, the only adornment either wore being the gleaming pendant around the Malfoy Heir’s neck and the engraved cuff with the Yggdrasil sigil – a long-ago present from Loki himself – just below Frey’s left elbow.

No other eyes were spying on them this day – Loki had ensured it – and Draco trembled both from nervous excitement and sheer terror over finally meeting his Frey’s father…and his family’s patron.

They were as alone as they could be, even Loki was only present to perform the handfasting – and make certain that another couldn’t attempt to bind the two more tightly – or permanently – than was required.

Loki had a great deal of respect for the Malfoy self-interest, which was second only to their hefty strain of self-preservation, and had no intention of gambling on which would win out if Lucius had been allowed to preside over the rite instead of himself, no matter how much easier it would have been what with Loki having to keep a clone active on Asgard for the rites going on there as well as cloaking all sight of the event as well as performing the handfasting. It was a mere trifle for someone with his power, but still…blocking the All-Father’s or Heimdall’s sight was never easy for all that he was well-practiced at it by this juncture.

Taking up the pure Acromantula silk tie, Loki looped it over and around their clasped hands as his son and young Draco seemed to carry out an entire conversation without saying a word. Resting one of his palms on the back of their hands and the other on the underside, holding their hands between his own, he nodded at his son who said his words.

“You cannot possess me for I belong to myself. But while we both wish it, I give you that which is mine to give.” Frey swore, green eyes dark with promise, then leaned down and pressed a meaning-filled hiss to the corner of Draco’s cupid’s-bow mouth.
A mouth which quirked a bit before opening and giving his own promise.

“You cannot command me, for I am a free person.” Draco said, knowing that it would be true for this year-and-a-day if not for once he actually became a vassal and acolyte of Frey’s father Loki…a time which was hopefully far away. “But I shall serve you in those ways you require and the honeycomb will taste sweeter coming from my hand.”

Standing on his toes, Draco echoed Frey’s sealing-kiss, though stepping out of tradition for a moment and going for a heated, tongue-twining kiss that had Loki giving a coughing laugh to separate them, eyes dancing, before finishing the simple ritual.

“Now you are bound one to the other with a tie not easy to break.” The God of Mischief and Chaos swore, flicking his fingers in a manner that had his magic sweeping out and swirling around the pair, binding them in truth the way the silk bound them in symbol. Intention was everything here. If it was done with the intention of permanence, it would be exactly that…no matter what pretty words the officiant used. “Take the time of binding, this year and a day, to learn what you need to know - to grow in wisdom and love. Frey, Draco,” he nodded to each youngling. “As the Avatar of Magic I pronounce you bound fast, should you wish it, your union can be made permanent at the end of this time, or be severed without harm or judgement. So mote it be.”

“So mote it be.” The two newly-minted spouses murmured as magic danced around them once more before sinking into their hands, the silk tie sinking into their skin and creating a bonding-mark, the currently location and status of their bond. Only if they chose – which they wouldn’t – would it rise and sink into their hearts and minds and souls. Still, it gave them the legal standing each needed for Draco to be considered an adult wizard a year early – important since they had a bit of official business to carry out before disappearing on their “honeymoon.”

Frey swooped up Draco into his arms, kissing him ecstatically while Draco joined in his laughter while Loki clapped with a slight smile for their overflowing happiness.

Whatever may come of their temporary union, at this moment each was happier than they’d ever been, and that was all that mattered to the god as he caught his son’s eyes and gave a nod before melting away, returning to Asgard and dismissing his clone-double.

Whatever Loki’s doubts over the situation, his son was perfectly right over what he’d said to Thanatos – they, him, Thanatos, James and Lily, even the Primordials who had meddled, they had all put him into this situation without a care for what might come of it whether joy or tragedy.

Frey and Draco were both filled with joy and young love, the invincibility of young men.

Time would take it’s toll on them, Frey would eventually have to leave, but not now, not at this very moment.

And really…Loki was glad that whatever trials would come, Frey would have an anchor in his future children and this happy moment with his first love.

…

Later that night, in the Master suite of Peverell Fen, Frey gently brushed a lock of silver-blond hair out of silver-blue eyes as his satiated new husband cuddled into his chest, half-lying on the much-larger form for the godling.

No sooner had Frey’s Far disappeared back to Asgard than he’d swept Draco away to the castle proper – specifically the massive silk-draped solid-oak bed that was probably older than Hogwarts
and had once upon a time seen the conception and birth of generation after generation of Peverell Lords.

Hours had passed between then and now, and Frey had thought that Draco was holding onto consciousness by his well-manicured fingernails – Frey himself wasn’t tired or satiated but that had more to do with his having entered his Becoming than some short-coming on Draco’s part. Draco disabused him of any notion of tiredness when he spoke up, voice clear and firm – and shattering several of Frey’s long-set plans in the process.

“I don’t want to use a surrogate.” Draco dropped that bombshell with a firm-but-serene tone that Frey recognized as having been inherited from Narcissa. “I don’t see the point, especially if we finish our business at the Ministry on time.”

Frey arched his brows in disbelief as he tilted his head down to stare into rock-hard gaze that only moments before had been closed and sleepy.

His response was a bit short, though understandable since his new husband – if only for a year and a day – had just short-circuited his brain.

“What?”

“Contract, ritual, surrogate.” Draco said slowly poking his lover in the side with one long, elegant finger. “All of those things that required us to get semi-married…remember oh genius one?”

“I know what you’re talking about.” Frey rolled his eyes a bit. “I mainly stuck on the no-surrogate part. How then do you propose we give Thanatos the magical line-heirs he’s expecting me to provide before I’m free – completely – of the wizarding world?”

Draco shrugged, giving a pretense of nonchalance that he wasn’t even close to actually feeling.

This was important to him – more important than Frey was ever to likely realize.

Children between them would make a bond that wouldn’t break along with their handfasting next August…something which at the moment Draco had no guarantee of. He couldn’t fathom – wouldn’t fathom – a life that was absent Frey. He just wouldn’t. If that meant a bit of…discomfort on his part then…so be it. At least he’d have something of Frey’s with him always, even if in the end all it was was a pendant and the children they would share between them.

Frey had just been too much a part of Draco’s life for the Malfoy Heir to let him go completely.

Besides which…he had an idea who Frey might want to use as a surrogate…and that know-it-all beaver of an annoying bitchy muggleborn would carry Draco’s children over his dead fucking body.

“You do realize that I’m a carrier…” Draco drawled, rather amused at the adorably-confused look on Frey’s handsome face. “Right…?”

“Ah, oh, oh.” Frey stuttered, eyes wide. “I just thought…”

“What?” This time it was Draco rolling his eyes. “That my father would allow me to entertain the very idea of a husband instead of a wife because I’m just that fabulous?” He snorted, snuggling back into Frey’s muscled chest, sleep finally worming its way through him now that he’d gotten his request off of his mind – and onto Frey’s. They had over two months after all before All Hallows Eve. And between them they were more than capable of fixing the looming ritual to accommodate for one of the donors to be the carrier of the heirs instead of a third-party surrogate. “No. As soon as Father realized I preferred boys to girls he had me tested by our private healer.”
“Oh.” Frey said once more, so very eloquently, mind already churning out ideas of how to alter the ritual that had been used – interestingly enough – to create him, let alone his required heirs. “That… makes sense actually…”

Draco just gave another soft snort, drifting off to sleep and leaving his lover to think over how, exactly, he was going to alter the ritual.

It wouldn’t be too difficult…after all, his mother had been both one of the donors for Frey as well as the carrier of him, only Draco being male would require alteration from that original ritual…and the lack of divine interference…and and and…

…

That same night, a storm brewed in two households that were in some ways similar but in others were so-very-different.

…

_Malfroy Manor, Lugnashadh Night_

Fine crystal shattered against elegant – and gleaming – white marble floor tiles as a wine glass freefell from a lax elegant hand.

“Lucius!” A stunned Narcissa gave a very unladylike shout from where she’d been wandering through her husband’s outer study on a course to drag him from his work and up to their bed. It wouldn’t have done to let him brood, her husband hadn’t taken it too well when their beloved son had disappeared off with his lover Harry after their traditional Lugnashadh rites.

The reason for which was now more than clear in gleaming silver thread – which denoted a legal but temporary union – on the Malfoy Family Tapestry.

“Lucius! Come at once!”

…

_Black Manor, Lugnashadh Night_

Meanwhile, Remus was steadily working his way through packing the more delicate things from the Master’s study at Black Manor.

With Voldemort gone, there was no reason for them to keep the Manor as their normal home – Sirius might have given Dumbledore his notice, both of them well aware that their pup/cub planned to take his NEWTs at the Ministry before school began but Remus loved teaching and had agreed to stay on, albeit with Floo Access so that he could return home at night – and a move back to their penthouse in London was well under way.

Most of the Manor had already been closed up, Sirius and Harry having had a discussion over which home their cub would make his normal home and which he would only visit once or twice a year.

To neither’s surprise, Harry had chosen Peverell Fen, one of his oldest and most secure holdings, to be his main “base” in the wizarding world.

The reason for which choice became startlingly clear to the werewolf as he happened to glance at the Black Family Tapestry hanging behind what would someday be the desk of one of Harry’s own sons – in theory anyway – only to take a double-take at what he saw.
“Pads!” Remus bellowed. “You better not have known about this or I swear to all the gods I’ll skin you and make myself a Grim-pelt-rug for my separate bedroom!”

…

“Yes, Narcissa, what is it?”

…

“I didn’t do it, whatever it is Moons, I swear!”

…

“Look at what your son/cub has done now!”

…

“I’ll kill him.” Lucius swore under his breath, eyes wide and face pale. Then he groaned, eyelids falling shut in realization. “If his father doesn’t kill me first for letting this happen…”

…

Sirius wrinkled his nose.

“Malfoy?” He yelped in dismay. “He handfasted…or something…with Lucy and Cissy’s little…”


“Eww.” Sirius retched a little. “It was bad enough hearing those things from our infatuated godson I did not need to hear you repeat them…thank you love. Well there’s only one thing for it…Moons, my heart, how would you feel about having a jaguar-skin rug for our room…?”

…

On Asgard, Loki just chuckled manically, before clouding the view of his son once more. Chaos, lovely chaos.

His child became more like him every day.

It was simply wonderful to behold.

Especially when it put the fear of, well, him, into one of his more arrogant – if entertaining – vassals.

…

One Week Later

Sirius Black finally managed to corner his cousin at the restaurant where Cissy tended to lunch with a few other of the pureblooded ladies on Wednesdays.

Which he knew – much to his own chagrin – due to his pup’s friendship and then later relationship with Cissy’s son.

The Malfoys had been rather conspicuously absent from the normal post-Lughnasadh ball several days before – which had been Sirius’s first plan of attack.
He knew better than to try and come see either elder Malfoy at their Manor, especially if the boys had done something unbelievably stupid…like fucking elope and get fucking handfasted by Merlin’s bloody knickers!

They – him and Remus – had known instantly when the Malfoys failed to attend the last ball of the summer season that they had been as blindsided as they were over the elopement.

But, as all owls had been returned, he – and his mate – were nonetheless hopeful that Narcissa and/or Lucius might have some information more than what they themselves did regarding the whole situation.

“Cissy!” He hissed urgently as he snagged her arm and towed her away into the alcove he’d been lurking in by the Apparation point.

“Sirius Black you unhand me this instant you brute.” She hissed right back, eyes narrowed. A spate of invectives nearly tripped off her tongue – mainly for Sirius by proxy for his, his, bridenapping godson but the frantic look in those storm-grey eyes curbed her knee-jerk reaction. “Oh.” She calmed, patting his hand a bit in unified consolation, prompting him to drop her arm. “Oh…I see. You were left just as in the dark as we were I take it?”

“Yes.” Sirius scowled, staring off over her head rather than look into those all-too-knowing eyes.

“Remus found the…new addition…to the Black Tapestry while we were packing to remove to our penthouse now that things are nominally safe again. You?”

She gave an elegant shrug. “Malfoy Family Tapestry.”

“Mmm.” Sirius nodded, then darted a quick look down at his cousin’s shattered expression, looking back away just as quickly before her blatant devastation set off his own.

He couldn’t believe…wait no. He could believe that Harry had done this. It was all too in keeping with his independent nature. He just didn’t want to believe that his pup had chosen to get handfasted…and all without a word to anyone or for reasons that made no sense…mostly.

“Do you know anything at all?” He asked after giving both of them a moment to collect themselves.

Narcissa shook her head, then added: “The Ministry sent us their congratulations.”

The Black cousins shared a derisive sneer in unison over the sheer cheek.

“Well, that finishes it.” Sirius sighed. “You or Lucius were my last round. None of Harry’s American friends know a thing – at least that they’ll share. Nor any of his wizarding friends…you?”

“Draco’s are just as at-sea over his silence this last week as we are.” Narcissa gave a moue of her lips. “None of them were aware of either boy having any special plans this summer.”

“Damn it, pup.” Sirius cursed, Narcissa looking like she’d like nothing more than to join him if she weren’t so very aware of them being still in public. “What the hell are you up to…?”

…

In a cave on the coast of England, someone was definitely up to something, though it wasn’t the situation that Sirius would have given his eyeteeth to know about.

Rather, it was a situation that while it would have been a matter of mild curiosity, other than the person involved…nobody really gave a fuck.
Mainly because the person involved was Dumbledore, and it was a stubborn-old-goat meddler
moment of trying to prove young Harry Potter wrong in regards to Tom being well and truly dead…
a situation that had Albus aghast and everyone else relieved…and unwilling to just listen to the
“venerable” Headmaster of Hogwarts.

That infernal child's actions had put Albus in a sticky situation, which when combined with the
steady-erosion Albus's public persona made it so without actual evidence of his suspicions, even
Albus's most faithful friends were unwilling to entertain his – as they had been deemed – paranoid
delusions.

Unknowingly, with every step he took on this venture he echoed those of Tom, from the zealous
belief in his own superiority to the use of a House Elf not his own (rather Tinky belonged to
Hogwarts, which presented some challenges in orders that he could and could not give the creature)
to his purpose: defeating a foe that if they knew of it (Death for Tom, Frey for Albus) would simply
laugh at their conceit.

Studying the bowl on the pillar after easily crossing the poisoned-water filled with Inferi,
Dumbledore felt in that moment something he hadn’t felt in many years: doubt.

That was a Nightmare Draught, one which must be drunk to empty the bowl according to the
diagnostic spell he’d used.

One he couldn’t simply feed to the cowering creature at his feet that kept tugging at its ears and
muttering, as he couldn’t knowingly mistreat the Elf according to the Hogwarts charter. If he had
simply fed it to the Elf without scanning the pillar, that would have been allowed as he wouldn’t
have poisoned it knowingly. But what was done, what knowledge had been gained, couldn’t be
undone or unknown.

It was what it was.

And though he didn’t know it, Albus would have been much better-off giving into his self-doubt
than continuing on.

But hubris struck down the high as well as the low, and so Albus gave the order to the Elf to ensure
he drank it down, every drop and return him and the Locket to Hogwarts once it was done.

Tinky did, though with tears and trembling.

And Albus, returned to his office as he’d ordered, slipped ignobly into the darkness, one hand still
clutching what he never awoke from his living nightmare to realize was nothing but a fake.

…

Frey and Draco got the news in Paris, where Frey had first taken Draco on their whirlwind
honeymoon after finishing their NEWT exams at the Ministry.

As an emancipated Lord, Frey was an adult, and as his bonded spouse, Frey was able to sign the
required forms for Draco to accompany him.

After all, Frey had promised Draco that this year and a day would be as perfect as he would make it.

Having to deal with Dumbledore and other students and gossip rags whilst in a fishbowl was hardly
conducive to keeping his promise.

Besides which…Draco had made his opinion on their children’s carrier perfectly clear, and the
Malfoy heir could hardly sit in a Potions class or duel in Defense while carrying their babies.

ALBUS DUMBLEDORE DEAD IN HIS OFFICE

The headlines screamed in various languages and forms from the Prophet to Magicae Hodie, one of the older publications in the greater Wizarding World.

Foul Play Suspected?

Questioned more than one, while others favored a different stance:

Age, Secrets, and Lies:

Dumbledore’s Suicide possible in wake of allegations of paranoia and war-mongering.

“What is it, husband?” Draco asked as he stumbled in, adorably ruffled from the hotel suite’s bedroom.

Seeing Frey staring down at the papers with a bemused expression, Draco blinked a moment to help clear his eyes. He didn’t think he’d ever get enough of that. Calling Frey his husband or having him sitting across the breakfast table after a night together. He knew he would have to, in time. That he would have to pack enough memories into this now-just-shy of a year to keep him content through all the years that he wouldn’t be able to call Frey his or see him of a morning.

But for the moment, he was young, he was bonded to the man he loved, and they were in Paris with plans to visit Rome and Venice and other places all over the world before they returned home for Samhain and their looming ritual.

The night before they’d both sat down after arriving in Paris and sent off long-distance owls to both his parents and Frey’s dogfathers, Frey – and being able to call him by his real name and not by his “Harry Potter perfect Golden Gryffindor” cover was another secret thrill – having already “called” his other sort-of-but-not-really guardian Chiron and letting him in on at least some of what was going on so his American friends didn’t worry.

They didn’t want their loved ones to worry or panic.

That wasn’t what this was about.

All of this was simply about them and they weren’t interested in fighting or what have you when they could be spending as many moments as humanly possible in a blissed-out haze of honeymooner ecstasy.

Starting this morning with Draco getting Frey to hand feed him some of those delectable-looking strawberries, a plan helped along by Draco choosing the best seat in the hotel – squarely sitting on Frey’s silk pajama-bottom clad lap.

Which also helped to answer his question as Draco was able to read the headlines for himself, which he handily summed up with an: “Oh.” Then shrugging when Frey arched a brow and poured his beloved a mimosa. “At least now we don’t have to off him before he started meddling with our children.”

“Draco…” Frey shook his head, an amused smirk lighting up his green eyes. “What am I going to do with you…”

“Oh…” The blond fluttered his lashes dramatically, along with a put-upon pout for effect that had
Frey laughing into Draco’s hair at the show. Every now and again Draco liked to put on the airheaded blond sex-kitten stereotype just for funzies – or to make Granger fume over that being the number two overall student in their year behind Frey…either way. “I’m sure you’ll think of something…”

Frey continued to make good on his promise, even as the shadow of England dogged their steps all across the planet.

Draco was spoiled with the finest chocolates in France and Germany and Switzerland, was swept through the finest fashion houses in Paris and Milan and Tokyo, found himself wined and dined along the Danube and beside the Venice canals. Frey surprised him with a trip to the famous gemstone cutters in Bombay where the godling spent hours frustrating the gem cutters until he found a perfect set of aquamarines to match Draco’s eyes, which he then had set by the finest wizarding craftsman in Singapore into a ring with diamond accents and a matching men’s bracelet. There were picnics in the Alps and lazy mornings overlooking the Indian ocean, a whole week whiled away with nothing but soft words and lovemaking on a beach in Hawaii – a place that neither of them had ever been.

They raced on sleds pulled by dog teams in Alaska, and danced all through the night in clubs in San Francisco where the local nightlife didn’t so much as blink an eye at two beautiful young men in nearly-as-beautiful clothes making out on the dance floor.

San Francisco, however, brought a bit of reality back into their love-drugged minds, as once again a cloud seemed to settle over Frey until they were well away from the West Coast of the U.S. and crossing the continent to bask some more on endless beaches – these ones pink and nestled in the Caribbean.

Draco made no mention of swinging North to see Frey’s friends…but then neither did Frey.

Turning southward once more, a portkey had them bouncing from exploring the Aztec ruins – on Draco’s insistence rather than Frey’s which would like surprise many who knew them – before hitting Rio and enjoying a different sort of nightlife among the wizarding clubs there.

Draco woke morning after morning to champagne, and chocolates and berries, and spent the nights in silk – and often flower petal – draped beds tangled and entwined with his lover who was intent on wringing every ounce of romance from their trip that he could – whether cliched or not, like the roses that were found on the breakfast table of every suite or the petals that he would often cover Draco in…only to chase them away from his perfect porcelain skin with heated kisses and stroking hands.

One such morning found Draco rousing to the sensation of whisper-soft kisses trailing up his spine. He was sprawled out, face-down in a silky pillow in their latest stop which had brought them back around to Paris.

Frey had apparently decided to wake him this morning with a combination of sensuous massage and delicate kisses – which Draco was fine with.

It was what his husband was avoiding that Draco wasn’t as fine with – namely the letters that had been waiting for them at every Gringotts locations along their route.

His love had set it up so that Gringotts London had put up a – temporary – mail redirection ward on them, paying a stiff fee in the process for the little blighters to sort and forward their mail to them
during their trip.

Some things – like the word of Dumbledore’s ignoble death-via-idiocy (an inquiry had been undertaken and the events unearthed, along with the truth that the old man had died for a fake Horcrux), or their outstanding NEWT results and subsequent early-graduation from Hogwarts – had been welcome.

Other things – like the pleas, demands, and recently out-right threats for them to come home and “face the music” as one of Frey’s dogfathers had put it – were not.

In the end, there had only been one wizard or witch who had any idea of where they would be at any given time in case of emergencies – someone both of them trusted without reservation – one Severus Snape.

Though honestly…if he’d been kept out of the loop, Sev would have tracked down and killed them both long before Draco’s father succumbed to sending strongly-worded threats to Frey’s manhood over what Draco’s mother has apparently deemed “loathsome bride-napping” of her precious baby boy.

Telling Sev had a lot more to do with sheer self-preservation than worries over something like the world ending while they were away and needing someone to know where they were.

“You know we have to go back, love.” Draco murmured sleepily. “We can’t hide all year.”

“Why not?” Frey asked, covering Draco’s back with his front and leaning down to nip lightly at the mouth that Draco’s head-turn to speak had revealed. He was only half-joking. This break had done more for his morale and burgeoning temper than Draco knew. It was more than tempting to chuck it all and stay a vagabond with his silver-blond lover at his side.

He knew it wouldn’t do to ever suggest such a thing to his husband, however.

When Draco had his dander up, he would out-lecture McGonagall on a tear.

Frey had heard one of his “duty, House, family honor” lectures before and had decided to never get that much bile directed at him.

“It’s not like we’re poor, or powerless.” Frey continued, drifting back down to return to his mapping of his lover’s back with only his lips. “Short of visiting family, there’s no real reason to ever return to England if we don’t want to.”

Draco kicked out lightly at Frey’s ankle in censure.

“We’re going back, love.” Draco shook his head on the pillow, reaching back and tugging Frey back up for another kiss. “But…not right this second.”

“Sounds good to me.” Frey chuckled as Draco turned under him, allowing his husband to manhandle him back down his body towards the very insistent morning arousal that he’d helped along with his lips and hands.

...
months. With only a few letters here and there to know they were even alive.”

Neither wizard was surprised to see the Malfoy couple already waiting, both pairs of worried parental-figures having kept the other informed regarding any communication at all – no matter how small – from their wayward newlyweds. Before the invitation complete with a bespelled location for Peverell Fen had arrived, they were all giving strong consideration that their eloped chicks had decided on a traditional wizarding honeymoon of a full-year Grand Tour…so the invitation had been welcome news indeed. That they weren’t that thoughtless had done little to soothe any of their tempers or frayed nerves.

And Sirius, much like Lucius from what he could tell, was spoiling to tan Harry’s hide.

Draco was somewhat to blame as well, of course.

But none of them were kidding themselves – Draco on his own would have never eloped and gotten handfasted, let alone stayed away going on three months before returning to face the parental ire.

They all sat in silence after the House Elf retrieved drinks for all four of them then popped away, tension and anger thick enough to cut the very air, Narcissa wringing her hands a bit in her lap, Remus shifting a bit, while Lucius turned icy-Lord-Malfoy and Sirius scowled at both the closed door and his Ogdens, the expensive – and rare – reserve label doing little to defray his temper.

Finally – finally – after what could have been mere handful of minutes or over an hour, the door swung open and they were greeted with the shining and so-very-in-love-and-happy faces of their young, the sight puncturing their tempers and fear and worry and hurt like a sharp tack to a balloon as a luminous Draco cried out “Mother! Father!” and darted forward into the now-standing and crying Narcissa’s arms, Frey sharing a sharp look with Lucius that sheathed their argument – which would prove to be just shy of an all-out-brawl if Sirius was any judge – before beaming at Remus and throwing his arms around both of them.

“I have so much to tell you.” The young wizard said simply.

And they let him get away with it.

Of course they did.

He was their Harry.

What else was there for them to do?

What was done was done, and while they’d rake him over the coals for it later, at the moment all they could do was hug him back and listen to burbling tales of exotic beaches and perfect days.

The hurt wasn’t healed – not by a long shot – but it was, for the moment at least, soothed.

…

“You’re lucky they’re so forgiving, my son.” Loki commented that night as he wandered a pink beach with Frey at his side. Given that Frey had been on what amounted to a honeymoon for these last months, he’d mostly been giving him space – even in his dreams – to be a newlywed and spoil Draco.

Though if Frey had tried to pull with him what he’d – what they’d – done with the Malfoys and Black-Lupins, there would have been Helheim to pay before he forgave them for the slight.
But that was Loki’s nature.

Much like Lucius, who would likely never recover the easy near-mentoring relationship he used to have with Frey after his patron’s son had swept his son off—and away from whatever prosperous match the Malfoy Lord had been considering.

Lucius was in a tenuous situation, one that even Loki didn’t know which way the Lord would turn.

On the one hand—his son had captured the heart of a demigod.

That was no small thing.

Frey was as perfect a match as the Malfoy Lord could have ever wanted for Draco—being powerful, wealthy, of strong wizarding heritage through James, and above all, he was who Draco wanted.

But then there was the other thing.

The impermanence of their union.

Their family would be elevated for the union—despite it being temporary—with the “Savior” of their society…but not as much as they would have been had Frey married Draco and not merely handfasted him.

Draco wouldn’t be ruined or some such thing, he would likely still go on to marry a suitable match.

But…

To have utter glory so close and yet so far would chafe at Lucius if Loki was any judge of the man at all.

“I know.” Frey agreed wholeheartedly with that statement. “It was just so…”

“Free?” Loki suggested.

“Yeah.” His son shrugged. “I’m so close to true freedom from constraint that I can taste it…and I let it go to my head. If it wasn’t for Draco—and needing to use the ritual circle at Peverell Fen—I don’t know if I ever would have gone back.”

“You are close.” Loki nodded. “But no matter how tempting freedom can be, you can’t let its call keep you from your duties, my son. Speaking of which…” Loki gave his son a genuine smile, one that he tended to save for Frey alone, though that ridiculously lovable—but still an arrogant oaf—Thor had seen it thrown his way a time or two over the centuries. “Your nephews want to meet you, soon.”

“Nephews?” Frey chuckled shaking his head. “I think uncles might be a better title, considering that Lady Hel’s sons are older than me by a good eight or nine centuries.”

“Yes,” Loki chuckled. “There is that. Shall we plan for near Yule? During the Winter Revels while Asgard is distracted?”

“That should work.” Frey frowned lightly. “I’m sure the Malfoys will be more than glad to celebrate without me for a bit. And Draco shouldn’t be too far along…”

“Draco?” Loki’s brows shot up his forehead. “Draco shouldn’t be too far along? What happened to using a surrogate?”
“Draco happened.” Frey said dryly, which really... was an explanation all for itself.

“Ah…”

“Yes. If I like my balls where they are, I had better put all thoughts of using a surrogate far from my mind.”

“Made himself clear then?”

“Extremely.”

...

Loki watched from Asgard as Frey set into place the large diamonds approximately 2ft x 1.5ft in size that would serve as the central power-crystal for the Heir Ritual his son and his handfasted-spouse were going to attempt. They were oval crystals used for each of the three Houses Draco and Frey are providing Heirs for: Peverell – Purple Diamond; Black – Black Diamond; and Potter – Red Diamond. Each had been soaking for days in a solution of differing herbs, comingled with blood to both power the ritual and provide the – well – genetic material for each of the heirs they were trying for.

Thanatos had arrived with the All Hallows Eve sunset, assisting Frey with setting up the stones and even adding blood for the Peverell and Potter stones/heirs that he had access to... somehow that Loki – and Frey with him – didn’t really want to think about.

“Brother!” Thor shouted. “What passes on Midgard?”

“A ritual most interesting.” Loki replied casually.

“Ah.” The Thunderer frowned. That wasn’t what he’d been hoping for. Verily, since the defeat of the villainous Dark Lord months before, things with the Warrior-Mage had been most... quiet.

It was rather a let-down after months and years of excitement.

“He seeks heirs.” Loki supplied dryly, rolling his eyes as his adopted brother was joined by the idiots Four. “And Lord Thanatos has arrived.” With that Loki clouded the seeing-pool with a flex of his power before standing straight and removing his hands from resting along the rim.

“Then you may join us, brother!” Thor exclaimed. “Word has come of a bilgesnipe terrorizing one of the outlying villages! Father wishes us to assist!”

“Very well.” Loki sighed as if put-upon, while secretly pleased to take the Aesir’s attention from his son – if only for a spell. “If this ritual works then there will be little point in watching over the Warrior-Mage for months, until after his period of handfasting is finished.”

“Indeed.” Volstagg slapped Loki on the back with enough force to fell a weaker being.

But no matter what the Aesir whispered, Loki was in no way a weaker being.

“Why I remember when my wife was heavy with our first…” Volstagg went onto reminiscence for the entire journey to the outlaying village, with only a prompt here or there to keep him going from Loki – much to Fandral’s irritation who was well aware of what his cousin was up to.

Still.

Better Loki making mild sport of Volstagg than sulking over having to leave the palace library or the
seeing pools...small wonders.

“Do you think it really worked?” Draco whispered to his husband as they both stroked his lower abdomen with quiet reverence late in the All Hallows night.

Thanatos had long since departed, leaving them to recover in the quiet of Peverell Fen.

Things were still tense between them and their families, but they both hoped that news of children would help with that...at least a little.

“I know it did.” Frey whispered back, green eyes glistening with tears as he stared up into equally-reverent silver-blue eyes, pressing a light kiss to just below Draco’s belly-button where even now their children were nestling in for the long months ahead. “Thank you, love...thank you for my children.”

December 20, 1996; Malfoy Manor

Draco woke once again – for what was probably the several dozenth time since their handfasting – to Frey pressing kisses to his sleeping body. This time his target wasn’t his eyelids or his cheeks or his spine nor was his intent to even awaken him let alone have him awake aroused.

He was pressing barely-there brushes of his lips to the barely-there baby-bump that Draco had started to show. As a male carrier, Draco would give birth about a month or so earlier than a female would, which also translated into things like his pregnancy showing sooner – especially with what they had confirmed after waiting an endless two week before going to St. Mungo’s for a test. Not only was Frey kissing his bump, but he was speaking softly in what Draco thought might be Norse to their unborn children.

Draco had no idea what Frey was saying, likely something along the lines of he’ll miss them and be good and don’t let Papá Lucius bother them, given that Frey had said the same things to Draco’s belly the night before – and every night really since they’d arrived at Malfoy Manor for the Yule Season with the knowledge that Frey was going to have to leave on the 20th for the day to meet with some of his – other – family.

He might have hoped that the news of coming grandchildren would make Lucius feel less-hostile towards Frey...a hope that had quickly extinguished in the face of his father’s ongoing – if hidden – ire.

Lucius was polite, cordial, and always the gracious host.

But he wasn’t welcoming, not to Frey, not even with the knowledge of who was Frey’s father constantly holding him back from hexing the defiling bastard up one side and down the other.

Tunneling his hand through Frey’s long – and loose for the moment – ebony hair, Draco tugged him up for a kiss of his own.

“The babies say hi to their wonderful mum.” Frey told Draco after they’d finally broken their kiss. “And promised to take care of you while I’m away.”

“They did did they?” Draco hummed under his breath. “They must all take after you then, love. Bunch of hopeless protective heroes bound for Gryffindor.”
“Hey.” Frey protested lightly. “I’m a secret Slytherin and you know it.”

“Sure you are love.” Draco pat him on the cheek as his love pouted down at him. “Sure you are.”

…

*December 21, 1996; Tierra del Fuego – The Universe Cosmic*

With the time difference between the two universes, Loki and Frey arrived at the meeting place right on time – and on Yule – despite that Frey would also be back to celebrate Yule with his husband at Malfoy Manor.

On-time or not, they arrived to the sight of a pair of tall figures already waiting on them.

His Far had already told Frey quite a bit about his “uncles” Jomangandr and Fenrir, as his story a couple years before on Samhain before the gathered TriWizard schools had shown. They were full-Jotun for one. And both shapeshifters with it, though apparently neither is powerful enough to be considered full-invidja according to how Frey’s grandbera Laufey figured things.

They had powers, like Frey imagined anyone in close relation to his Far would have powers, but they weren’t to the extreme of Loki or Frey himself, given the circumstances surrounding their birth.

It had taken a lot of power to overcome Odin’s curse on Frey’s half-sister.

A lot of it.

Even, in part, from the twins themselves.

Still, they were mostly content to wander around the Universe Cosmic from all accounts, keeping out of the All-Father’s far-reaching and spiteful self while often getting up to as much mischief as possible.

It only took one look into their identical eyes to give that bit of background credence as Frey withheld the urge to snort in laughter.

Oh yeah.

They were related to his Far.

Both of them had the same devilish glint in their eyes – a bright lime green – that Frey saw every time he looked in the mirror or into his father’s face.

A thought reinforced as both turned from greeting their grandfather, locked their eyes on their target, and threw their arms wide, charging forward to tackle him to the ground all with the irritating cry of “Uncle!”

…

“We’ve set you up the way Grandfather asked, Frey.”

Hours after the initial run-tackle-wrestle-tussle that the trio of Frey, Jor, and Fen had gotten into – which had somehow included Frey getting permission to use his “uncles’” nicknames – while Loki watched and laughed, and they were getting down to business.

Since Fen was mainly based on Earth while Jor had a tendency to wander more often, he’d taken the lead.
They were an interesting pair.

And ones that had shown up in more than one legend as “tricksters”, even contributing different stories to skalds over the years – much to their grandfather’s chagrin when more than one ludicrous story had actually made it into legend…like him and giving birth to a fucking horse.

It was all in good fun from his grandsons…but still…Thor had the idiots Four had gotten more than one laugh out of that gem.

“Okay…” Frey answered, arching a brow at the innocent-seeming faces of his Far and Uncles. “What does that mean?”

“We,” Fen waggled a thumb between himself and his brother. “Run a couple of corporations here.”

“Businessmen are fun to prank.” Jor chimed in. “And even more fun to skin of their ill-gotten gains.”

“I have a sudden urge to go search your wardrobes for green tights.” Frey deadpanned. “Why do I have a feeling you spent more than a little time in England…Nottingham maybe?”

“Meh.” Jor shrugged, looking away. “That was a long time ago.”

“We’ve evolved.” Fen smirked. “And so have our methods. Jor runs – when he’s here – Ouroboros International…again, when he’s not spying on NOVA Corp.”

“Someone needs to keep an eye on them…” Jor muttered under his breath, his twin ignoring him.

“I run Lupine Consolidated. And as of your marriage – ”

“Congrats about that by the way. Condolences about your father-in-law. That’s rought.”

“You’re the owner of Ymir International.”

Frey’s head would have been spinning if he wasn’t used to similar speech patterns from the Weasley twins.

“Ymir International?” He arched a brow at his father.

“You need a cover here.” Loki said simply. “Did you think I’d let you come into this world, this universe a homeless pauper? And on this Earth, the closest thing to a Prince is a CEO of a multinational company. Your uncles are on your board and will manage things for you until you decide to take over. I believe they’ve already found a lovely young woman from Norway to be your “public face” of the company.”

Frey just shook his head.

He couldn’t even say he was surprised.

That – even down to going behind his back to do it – was exactly the sort of thing his Far would anticipate and take care of before the problem even occurred to Frey.

“I have a lot to learn.” Was all he said, to understanding smiles all around.

“You’ll get there.” Jor told him with a pat on the head.

“We’ve only got thousands of years of experience on you, that’s all.” Fen shrugged off the number
as if it didn’t mean a thing. And honestly, knowing at least some of his grandfather’s plans to take Frey travelling after sinking into his immortality…it really didn’t. “You’ll catch up.”

...

Beltane, 1997

It was official.

Draco hated being pregnant.

He loved his husband, couldn’t wait to meet their little ones, and hated pregnancy.

His waist had disappeared, none of this wonderful clothes fit anymore, and if he didn’t sleep propped up his heartburn kept him awake.

Then Frey would come in from rattling cages at the Wizengamot and rub his feet with the special lotion he’d gotten from their Uncle Sev, or would bring him special roses that were only found in one garden in Japan, and all the discomfort would fade into the background…at least for a little while.

Draco had been afraid that his pregnancy would overshadow the promise Frey had made him – to make this year and a day the best of his life.

A useless fear as things had turned out.

He was probably the most spoiled-rotten pregnant person in England, if not the wizarding world.

Things were wonderful, as close to perfect as Draco could ever imagine…but still.

Draco fucking hated being pregnant.

...

Midsummer June 21, 1997; Peverell Fen

Once again, Loki was in two places at once.

Well…his double-clone was in one place and he himself was actually in another…but…semantics.

Draco’s pregnancy hadn’t been easy on anyone around the young wizard, Draco most of all, which was one of the main reasons why Frey had never really considered anything other than using a surrogate when he realized the situation he was in: in love with Draco but still required by Thanatos and a binding magical contract to provide heirs.

Even for a natural male carrier like Draco and Frey both were – or Frey could be if he chose, if Loki was being precise – a multiple pregnancy was much more dangerous than it was for a female. There was less room for the babies to grow for one. And Draco’s hips and lower body wasn’t designed to support them for eight months for another.

Loki’s son had nearly worried himself into a bundle of raw nerves and anxiety by the time Loki had managed to arrive that morning.

Midsummer was an auspicious day for a birth, and having Loki perform the caesarian spell was much safer than even going to the competent staff at St. Mungo’s.
When the time came, Thanatos would come to witness, and then the children would each be dedicated to one of the Primordials – Magic, Chaos, or Death – as had been agreed at Frey’s own conception ritual.

But above all…his son was about to become a father himself.

Not even Odin or any force of Aesir could have kept him from being anywhere but at this exact place in this exact moment or witnessing the sheer terrified joy on Frey’s and Draco’s faces when Loki set their children in his son’s arms, passing his single granddaughter to her mother before casting the spells to heal Draco and take care of his new grandbabes.

“Witnessed.” Thanatos spoke as he stepped fully from the shadows, the other gathered witnesses kneeling or nodding as was appropriate. “What shall be there names?”

Frey and Draco exchanged a glance then Draco spoke, naming them as was the mother’s prerogative.

“This one.” Draco reached out a brushed a finger against a dark-as-night haired babe’s cheek. “The firstborn: Antioch Haraldr Peverell.”

“Witnessed.” Loki spoke along with the others, including Thanatos.

“Our second-born.” Draco repeated the gesture with the babe who also had ebon hair, though his was paired with alabaster skin instead of the dusky tones of his brother. Loki would wager his favorite daggers that when the newborn-blue faded that Antioch would have eyes as dark as his hair and his brother the same silver of their mother. “Asterion Draconis Black.”

“Witnessed.”

“And our daughter.” Frey spoke at last with a nod from Draco, passing the naming priledge to his husband – albeit his husband of only a month and some weeks left before their handfasting ended. “And third-born: Frija Lily Potter.”

“Witnessed.” Loki blinked back a tear. Oh, his mother would be beyond pleased. His own presence was blocked from Asgard, with his clone standing among the watchers by the viewing pool. To them, Loki was a Healer, and likely a friend of the deceased Potters. Nothing more.

“Witnessed. And witnesses. And witnessed.” Thanatos clapped his hands thrice, finishing the ritual. “And their patrons?”

“To the new Patron of House Peverell: Lady Death, we dedicate our first-born son and the Peverell Heir Antioch.” Frey spoke, Draco then speaking on his heels. “To the new Patron of House Black: Lady Magic, we dedicate our second-born son and the Black Heir Asterion.” Then Frey spoke last, sealing the dedications with a flick of his Elder Wand. “To the new Patron of House Potter: Lord Chaos, we dedicate our third-born child and only daughter and the Heiress of House Potter Frija.”

“So mote it be.”

…

“They’re beautiful, love.” Frey told a tired Draco once they’d been left alone. “Thank you, thank you, thank you.” With each thanks Frey pressed kisses first to one of his children’s brows and then to Draco’s lips.

“Best things we’ve ever done.” Draco joked then sobered, seeing the fear and trouble brewing in his
lover’s eyes. “I’ll always take care of them love. So will my family, as much as Father disapproves of you now. They’re mine just as much as they are yours. No matter what – our children will be safe. I promise.”

Frey cracked a smile, worry lifting – at least a bit.

“I’ll hold you to that love…I’ll hold you to that.”
A/N: This chapter is pretty short for reasons that will quickly become apparent. There is another author’s note at the end that will explain things further.

Chapter Twenty-Eight: The Price of a Vow

Luke paced furiously around Chiron’s office at the Big House, worried out of his mind.

A camper had disappeared last year after nearly-killing Percy, one Ethan Nakamura – child of Nemesis. That had been bad enough. Now the wards around the camp were weakening…and they were all close to losing the only safety many of them had ever known.

But to make matters go from bad to dire – no one, not a single soul, could contact Frey.

“We’ve tried everything, Luke.” Chiron told him, brows furrowed thoughtfully. “Calls drop, Iris messages can’t be completed, even sending an owl fails. No method of contact can get through…which is concerning to say the least.”

“Could it be Kronus?” Luke asked, finally voicing what had been floating between the two – Activities Director and Head Camper – for the days since they discovered the weakening of the wards. “He has to know by now that Frey is a threat to him and his plans.”

It was a good assumption to make, given that Frey had confronted – and reversed – Kronus’s taint in both Luke himself and Ares.

The only question was whether or not the disgraced Titan had the power to manage it.

“One would think so,” Chiron agreed on principal. However… “It doesn’t feel like my father’s power. Rather, it tastes much more of Frey’s own magic than any outside force.”

“He wouldn’t though.” Luke punched a hole through that logic with rapid-fire quickness. “Frey would never abandon us when we need him…” Would never leave Luke on his own against Kronus, let alone the younger campers.

He just didn’t have it in him to be that callous or uncaring.

In many ways his best-friend was a marshmallow wrapped in steel – hard outside and a soft, gooey center.

“Nevertheless…it seems he has, given the discrete word that Ganymede had with me when I was last summoned to Olympus.” Chiron shifted restlessly. “Frey can contact us but not us him. Though I imagine whatever is causing the state of affairs is unintentional.”

“Great.” Luke threw up his hands in frustration. “Wonderful. So even the gods are on communication blackout from him. That’s just fantastic.” Growling a little under his breath – though being driven by worry rather than the anger that he was showing the world – Luke stormed out.

Oh, Frey. He worried over the problem like a Cerberus on a bone. What have you done now?
... A question that wouldn’t have an answer until much later in the summer, when the godling in question arrived to a flurry of relieved-but-aggravated headslaps from the camp populace – particularly Annabeth and Silena.

In the meantime, Clarisse followed by a motley crew of two demigods and a cyclops would set out to retrieve the Golden Fleece to save the Camp, have more than one run-in with Chris Nakamura and the Titan Army, and would return...only to a vastly different outcome than anticipated.

... “No, seriously.” Frey rubbed sheepishly at the back of his head. “I didn’t do anything that should have caused this…I mean I was a little distracted – new father and all that plus finishing out my handfasting to Draco – but I didn’t ward myself against contact or anything…” He trailed off, eyes widening as he stared at where the Fleece was wrapped around Thalia’s tree.

Luke and Silena had been joined by the trio of Percy, Annabeth, and Grover with their new plus-one of Tyson (a cyclops and apparently Percy’s half-brother) to weasel out what Frey had been up to for the last year and a week.

“Well…” Frey grimaced, shaking his head. “Now that I think about it…”


“I may have…maybe…probably…promised Draco more than once that the year-and-a-day would be the happiest of his life.” Frey admitted sheepishly, chewing on his lower lip with bright white teeth. “And that I would be only his for that time… and other things to that affect.”

The demigods all groaned or cursed in unison.

He’d made a Vow.

Unintentionally.

Typical Frey.

“So…” Annabeth drawled, laughing on the inside even as she fumed a bit. Things would have been so much easier if they’d had Frey on their side. And safer...probably. Gods knew that Frey liked to live on the edge a bit more than the rest of them. “You made a Vow – unintentionally. And to make sure you kept it your magic prevented us from contacting you...probably because that hero-complex of yours would have had you popping over here to save the day and pissing off your now ex-husband and the mother of your children in the process... that about right?”

“Ah...yeah...theoretically.” Frey shrugged then spotted something...off with the Tree. Cursing, he darted forward, the others on his heels, reaching the Tree just in time for something—or rather someone to be released from inside it.

“By all the gods…” Luke said reverently as he kneeled down by the girl being cradled in Frey’s arms...a girl who showed no sign of the wounds done to her and was glowing a bit from the Fleece’s influence. “Thalia? It can’t be…”

“Can.” Frey said, voice a bit grim even as he checked the young teen girl over with steady hands. “And worse is.”
“Why do you say that?” Annabeth snapped, joyful tears running down her face. “How could you say that?”

What had happened to Frey in these last couple years that he would, would, would be upset that her friend was alive, not just alive but alive and a person again instead of being a tree?

After all…he’d been the one to make the sacrifice in the first place to save her…so why wasn’t he happy that she was back and whole?

“I see the Fleece has done its job a little too well.” Chiron commented as he spied the demigoddess now wrapped up in a robe Frey had summoned from the small pouch on his belt that had expansion charms on it.

Anymore, the godling went nowhere without it, even if it was just stepping outside his door.

“Chiron? Frey?” Percy frowned, not understanding everything about the situation but knowing there was something off about their reactions even without Annabeth’s half-happy half-angry tears. “What’s going on?”

“There’s a prophecy regarding a child of the Big Three as you well know, Perce.” Luke commented as his common-sense overrode his delight at having his friend back…if quite a bit younger than him than she had been originally. From what he could tell Thalia had aged – but very slowly – while trapped in the tree. “Before, it was automatically attributed to you since you were the only one around, and that was a good thing because you’ve told Kronus to fuck off more than once. But now…”

“Thalia is a child of Zeus.” Frey finished the thought, eyes grim. “And more…one with more than one bone to pick with the gods. Kronus just got a second chance at influencing the prophecy in his favor rather than in ours…let’s just hope that when she wakes up, Thalia is a little less…”

“Hot-headed?” Luke offered then continued. “Stubborn, fiery, temperamental…”

“I was going to say like her father.” Frey rolled his eyes. “But…yes. All of that.”

It was a testament to the ongoing relationship between godling and god that the lightning bolt that struck the ground between Frey’s irreverent feet did nothing more than make him roll his eyes again and stick his tongue out at the sky…and more, that said impertinence didn’t usher in a second, and much more deadly, strike.

…

The days of the summer – what was left of them – belonged to the Camp as Frey set to work once more training the campers and strengthening the wards once more.

Chiron had set him to finding a dragon to guard the Fleece, an easy enough task for a wizard, and while Thalia spent a lot of time in the infirmary sleeping, she did eventually wake-up, requiring help from Frey and a few others like Luke and Annabeth to help her acclimate.

He even had to pop up to Olympus to soothe his irritated lovers over his uncommunicative state during the previous year and a day.

But the nights belonged to his other lover and his children, the former of which understood – even if he didn’t appreciate – Frey’s duty to the demigods.

And that was how they spent another summer and then another year.
Frey traveled to-and-from England and New York, strategizing with Zeus or Chiron, changing nappies and delighting when Frija’s hair turned the silver-blond of Draco and her eyes the emerald green of his mortal form and his late mother. Loki’s prediction had been right-on, Asterion taking the silver-eyes of his mum Draco and Antioch the endless black of the Peverells…something which Severus loved to tweak the two Marauders over. They were a constant-presence, particularly Severus and Sirius as Remus, now the Head of Gryffindor in the wake of Dumbledore’s death and Minerva’s promotion to Headmistress, was the only one of the three whose time wasn’t his own.

Sirius – reluctantly – was helping Frey learn and manage and navigate the ways and means of being a titled Lord. Much of it he’d already known, but knowing the theory was different than putting it into practice. Moreover, Sirius was still the Black Regent until such a time as Asterion turned seventeen and it could be turned over to the now-three-month-old babe.

Sev on the other had was greatly enjoying his retirement from teaching and had turned to a private potion’s business, taking on a sometimes-harried Draco as his apprentice.

Time and life marched on, with visits to Jotunheim and the other Earth happening whenever Frey and Loki determined it was safe enough.

Laufey was in turns delighted by his great-grandchildren…and saddened by their inevitable deaths, much in the same vein of Frey, who loved and mourned his children in turn.

Every moment with them was precious, and reaffirmed his determination to expand on his early design of a pocketwatch that functioned similar to the infamous Weasley clock.

But his would need to do more.

Much, much more, especially if his Far made good in his threat to take him “traveling” once he froze into his immortality.

He wouldn’t allow anything to steal away his time with his children.

Even a conflict that he’d chosen to involve himself in.

Though, he’d failed a bit recently in that aspect.

This world was his first home, it was his children’s only home if he wanted to keep them out of Odin’s reach, and over his dead boy would Kronus gain dominion over it ever again.

Which meant in the future he’d have to watch his words a little closer.

As his power rose and he became closer and closer to his immortality, his words gained power, power to bind even him.

As he’d learned, nearly at the cost of the lives of several people who he’d grown to care about – if even in an absent way with Clarisse who annoyed him more often than not with her bravado.

The price of his unknowing Vow had been high, and nearly been paid in the blood of his friends.

It couldn’t happen again.

Frankly, if he had his way, it would never happen again.

He was free now, well and truly, free, and he wouldn’t let anyone or anything, even himself, ruin it.
End Author’s Note: Okay, so I said I would explain things a little more and I will. I excluded Frey from the Sea of Monsters storyline for a very good reason: there was no way to salvage all the lessons and themes and foreshadowings if he had been in play. SoM was a very important learning/developing point for all the characters involved and putting Frey into the mix would have fucked it all up pretty badly. However, this is also the only point in the PJ storyline where I’m doing this so he’ll be back and kicking ass again in the next installment of the series.
Author’s Note: The wording of the prophecy in this chapter is taken mostly straight from the books, obviously I take no credit for it other than two minor tweaks to make it fit with what I have planned.

Chapter Twenty-Nine: Olympus’s Bane

“Papa! Papa fly!” Frija demanded imperiously of her much-beloved father Frey, arms raised high towards him, seeming like a giant to her toddler eyes.

No one was taller than her Papa, not Daddy, or Daddy’s friend with the pretty purple eyes, or even Grandpere Lucius.

Her Papa was the biggest and the best Papa ever, even her brothers thought so – and her brothers didn’t often agree about much which made their Papa and Daddy trade looks and funny smiles.

With a laugh, Frey bent low and picked up his princess under her arms, lifting her high above his head and spinning all while little Frija laughed and screamed with joy, soon joined by her brothers who clamored at his legs chanted various versions of “fly, Papa, fly!”

Draco and Blaise – who had begun seeing each other semi-regularly, with Frey occasionally joining them both romantically and more…intimately – looked on indulgently as Frey tumbled and played with his, their, children. Frija and her brothers weren’t alone in their opinion of Frey’s parenting abilities. No matter how busy or hectic things got with Frey being Lord Peverell-Potter or Potter-Peverell depending on who was speaking, he always was home in time to help with dinner and baths and bedtime stories.

Stories that were quickly becoming things of legend in the ever-growing circle of children that the triplets socialized with from Wizarding Great Britain…though for reasons that Draco never liked to think too hard on, despite how fantastical or mystical or heroic the stories, Asgard and Jotunheim and the Yggdrasil were verboten.

He’d asked – once – why, when he’d never strayed away from such topics before.

His lover’s – even a semi-lover as he currently was – answer had saddened the blond who had been accused more than once of being too up himself to care for the troubles of others outside his family, which Frey both was and wasn’t.

Frey didn’t want his children to resent him for telling them of a fantastical world that existed and they could – in theory – visit…but which would never welcome them for their sire’s and grandsire’s origins.

He didn’t want them to have issues because others saw them as being born of what amounted to as the monsters under the bed – whether Jotnar or Aesir, as not all of Jotunheim had welcomed Loki and his son with open arms despite the loving and tear-filled welcome they had gotten from their kin.

Frey’s reticence on the part of all things Yggdrasil had seemed strange – at first – to both Draco and Lucius when his son brought it to his attention, especially in light of the ever-looming date of Frey’s Ascension to that pantheon which would herald a curtailing of the amount of time the young godling spent as an active parent.
But they were forgetting a key factor, one which was pointed out by Severus who had long been brought “into the loop” as it were concerning Frey’s status.

Frey wasn’t only of Yggdrasil, his roots were also firmly entrenched in Olympian ground…and often his body was firmly entrenched in Olympian flesh with his ongoing affair with the pair of Zeus and Ganymede. Frey might not wish his children to know of Yggdrasil but he showed no such compunction regarding Olympus. When it came time to Ascend, he would likely imply – as he tried as best he could to refrain from lying to both his children and his Far as best he could – that it was to Olympian ranks rather than Aesir.

“How long until he has to go back to New York?” Blaise asked as he wrapped his arms around Draco from behind, leaning forward to rest his chin on the slightly-shorter man’s shoulder.

Draco shook his head with a sigh.

“Not long enough.” He responded, leaning back into the wordless support offered by his first – and he had an inkling that if Blaise had his way his last – boyfriend. “It’s never long enough. Frey was right – everyone was when they warned me about getting involved with him. If we were bound – forever bound – I would never have been able to share him with all the other demands on him and his time.” He smirked up into purple eyes. “I’m far too selfish for a true husband who isn’t mine alone.”

Blaise chuckled – message well received – and leaned down to press a deep kiss onto pale pink cupid’s bow lips as their sometimes-lover gamboled around the lawn like an overgrown puppy with his children clinging to him and shrieking with laughter.

…

“Ok, I’m used to the…odd around you lover.” Draco arched a brow and jerked his head towards the shimmering light that hovered over their shared bed later that night. “But…what the fuck is that?”

That being a rainbow-like shimmer hovering over the three entwined bodies on the massive bed, and had Frey groaning and rising to his feet, the shimmer following him insistently as he clothed himself in his battle-gear with an absent wave of his head, his power ever-growing as he aged. It wasn’t quite the basilisk-hide armor that still waited for him from his rites of man(or god)hood, but still impressive in gleaming grey and black Horntail dragonhide and cushioning silk arcomantula tunic and bottoms underneath the heavy hide. Swords appeared at back and hip, while daggers made themselves have home in many and various places in boots and belt and wrist, with the Elder Wand safe as always in the invisible sheath on Frey’s lower arm.

Another quick spell had his hair braided back in warrior braids from the fucked-out sweaty mess it had been on rising from the silk-draped bed, and Frey tossed a coin into the rainbow shimmer – an Iris message, as he explained to his lovers – making sure that whoever was on the other side had no view of the bed’s watchful occupants.

“Frey.” Luke’s tense face peered out from the misty message, the sounds of an argument coming through loud and clear, Frey easily making out the main office of the Big House in the background. To his sharp sense, it looked like Percy and Clarisse going at it, with Thalia jumping in here-and-there, Annabeth to his surprise not involved…indeed nowhere to be seen. “We need you here.”

“What is it?”

“It’s Annabeth.” Luke blew out a shuddering breath, fear written plainly over his face and trembling his voice. “She’s been…taken.”
Emerald eyes hardened, and a nod was all the reaction Frey gave in response, a hand slashing up to cancel the Iris message.

“Come back, lover.” Draco demanded, rising and rushing to Frey’s side, one elegant hand reaching up to grasp onto the finely-chisled jaw and force his ex-husband to face him head-on. “Come back. No matter what, no matter the cost, our children need their father – both of their fathers. Don’t you dare leave me and Blaise to raise your little monsters on our own, do you hear me you Gryffindor prat?”

“I hear you.” Frey managed a dry chuckle despite the fury that was beating just inside his breast. He wasn’t as close to Annabeth as Luke or even Percy, but she was still a life he’d saved…and that meant something to the godling.

More importantly, she was like a little sister to Luke, and one of Percy’s best friends.

Kronus hadn’t pulled his punches this time, though Frey wanted to hear in full just what had happened for himself before making any judgements over what the goal had been that ended in her capture.

“I hear you.” He repeated, taking hold of Draco’s hand and giving him a promising kiss to the knuckles. “I’ll give the monsters a kiss goodbye, then I’ll go. And yes…I promise to come back.”

…

Frey waited in the shadows at the edge of Camp Half-Blood, ruminating on all that had been shared by Luke and Percy, with a few – at times snotty – interjections by Zoe Nightshade, the same lieutenant of Artemis’s Huntresses that Frey had butted heads with off-and-on ever since he’d been placed at Camp by his patron Thanatos.

Annabeth – captured by a manticore.

A manticore who spoke of a “stirring” that had Artemis going off on a hunt.

Two new campers escorted to Camp, who spoke of a stay in the lair of the Lotus-Eaters, making them who-knew-how-old and a description that sounded startlingly like Percy’s former teacher who ended up being a harpy…and Frey could only think of one reason why a servant of Hades would be interested in protecting a pair of half-bloods instead of hunting and killing them.

Of all the ill-tidings that had been revealed, it was this last that truly bothered Frey.

Or rather, it was their powers, as he could sense more than a little death power surrounding them.

All three of the Big Three – if he was correct – had children of a similar age after all breaking their pact to refrain from fathering half-bloods, and three of the four children in question were poised on the brink of the correct age to fulfill the most recent world-ending prophecy.

A prophecy that Frey is more and more certain belonged to Percy, able to nearly see the strands of Fate winding around the younger boy.

“Heavy thoughts.” A young voice, one that if pressed Frey would call bright chided him from the shadows as a form stepped out of the darkness, seeming to bring the light along with his bright blonde locks and blinding white smile.

A smile that Frey had seen on this-one’s father more than once.
“These are heavy days, Lord Apollo.” Frey sketched a short bow, just enough really to keep one of the youngest – but more powerful – gods from giving in to the urge that many of his brethren have had regarding Frey and finally smiting him. “As I’m sure you well know, being the god of Prophecy and Foresight among other things.”

Apollo’s smile turned grim, though the interest in his sunny blue eyes fail to lessen, as he studied the half-blood that had somehow managed to capture his father’s attention for longer than any other mortal in recent years…save for the mother of his half-sister Thalia Grace and her brother Jason…but that was a tale for another time.

There was something off about this half-blood, Apollo couldn’t help but notice now that he stood within an arm’s-length of him.

Something his brother Ares had alluded too, about the sheer power this Frey Haraldr seemed to give off, enough to stand toe-to-toe with Apollo’s grandfather and live to tell the tale, no matter how weakened Kronus was from his lengthy imprisonment in Tartarus.

A something that perhaps explained his fascination with Frey…a fascination that Apollo felt somehow was different than his own burgeoning lust at the near-perfect face and form the half-blood boasted alongside a nearly-intoxicating level of power.

Yes…this one was different.

However, just how different Apollo knew had yet to be revealed, despite the long list of achievements already attached to Frey’s name.

“A daughter of Athena missing, Artie out of touch.” Apollo rambled a bit, watching the dark form of the beautiful boy who to his eyes wasn’t quite yet a man despite the magical markings and premature maturity he sensed. “A bit of Prophecy and Foresight might just be the ticket.”

“She’s yours, then.” Frey nodded thoughtfully, turning away and facing towards where the Big House – and the mummy in the attic – loomed. “Delphi.”

“She is.” Apollo tucked his hands into his immaculately tailored jeans, eyes unusually serious for such a fun-loving god. “Cursed – as I’m sure you were able to ascertain – but mine nonetheless.”

Frey nodded again.

For someone like him, it wasn’t hard to make out the taint of Hades’s power all around the Oracle, including the attic where the husk of her resided.

He might’ve even been able to unravel it with time and study…but for someone trying to lay low from Odin and the Yggdrasil, even someone as nominally high-profile as he’d made himself with his quest and the prophecy he was born with, not to mention current events, taking on the god of the Underworld wouldn’t be wise considering the amount of sheer power he’d have to tap into to manage it.

Helping Percy with a dual against Ares was one thing, even helping Luke with his possession issue was a world away from challenging a god in such a way.

And the Sorting Hat hadn’t wanted him in Slytherin for nothing, not to mention having his Fan pissed off with him for even trying it, let alone succeeding, wouldn’t be worth the gain in the end as he also sensed that the curse in question had an “out” built into to…the right circumstances just hadn’t come to pass yet.
Still…

That didn’t help them when Chiron and the rest were refusing to allow a Camper to seek a quest.

“Zoe is having a nightmare.” Frey murmured as he felt the distress coming from the Artemis cabin. Every time he came to Camp he strengthened the wards, a sound measure considering the near-disaster that Ethan had managed to unleash with poisoning Thalia’s tree. And now much like the Headmaster of Hogwarts or the Lord of an old wizarding manor, Frey could glean a massive amount of information from them.

Apollo blew out a breath, strain showing in the thin lines that suddenly spider-webbed around his eyes and lush mouth.

“I know.” Was all he said, leaving it up to Frey to decide if Apollo simply knew or was the cause of the nightmare in the first place. “Like I said…times like these, a little Foresight can go a long way.” His gaze cut back over to the beautiful creature – and yes, he was pretty sure creature was the right word for Frey Haraldr, legacy of Thanatos – who stood like a dark sentinel watching over the Camp. “No matter what happens.” Green eyes clashed with sunny blue, Frey listening with every inch of him on the heels of what Apollo had just implied. “Don’t allow them to go without you. Not this time. Prophecies are often self-fulfilling. Perhaps…just this once…one won’t come true that comes from one of mine.”

Frey sketched a short bow, and Apollo disappeared in a burst of light, gaining a chuckle from his audience of one.

“Show-off.” Frey said fondly, ignoring the teasing breeze that ruffled his air at the proclamation.

Great.

Just great.

The longer he stayed in this world, the more attention he brought to himself – knowingly or not.

After all, somewhere along the way he’d apparently gained the favor of the gorgeous – but dangerous – god of the Sun.

Frey shook his head as he made his way back to the Thanatos cabin, wondering to himself who was going to take this newest development worse – Zeus or Loki…?

…

“Five shall go west to the goddess in chains,

One shall be blessed in the land without rain,

The bane of Olympus shows the trail,

Campers and Hunters combined prevail,

The Titan’s curse must two withstand,

And one shall perish by a parent’s hand.”

Silence echoed in the wake of the Oracle’s words to Zoe Nightshade, the mummified form slumping to the ground like a puppet with it’s strings cut…which Frey supposed was true, given his discussion with Apollo the previous night.
Chiron quickly took charge, having a couple of the bigger Ares boys carry the Oracle back to her home in the attic as Zoe began giving orders to the Huntresses for which four she wanted with her on the quest – only to be cut off by Percy.

“Campers and Hunters combined prevail.” He said, sea-green eyes flashing in the light of the campfire across from where the Huntresses had settled next to Chiron around the fire. “Campers, that means us. You’re not supposed to do this with Huntresses alone.”

“He’s right, Nightshade.” Thalia stood, one hand resting fisted on her cocked hip, arching a smug brow at the eternal-teen she’d never been able to stand ever since Zoe had tried to split her away from her friends – particularly from Luke.

Granted, she’d been a bit heartbroken to wake and discover that the boy her age that she’d had a crush on had not only grown up while she’d been a tree but had fallen in love and gotten married, but it wasn’t like she would have expected him to sit around and wait for her.

She knew Nightshade’s damage – and she respected it, what had been done to her before becoming a Huntress was awful – but that didn’t mean that every half-blood boy was worthless.

Even if it had taken her a bit of time to warm up to Percy…and she still didn’t quite know what to think about Frey, despite his being instrumental in saving her as a leafy monument until Percy and the others had saved her.

“You need us.”

Zoe sneered, but nodded reluctantly.

Depending on her fellow huntresses was easy, natural after centuries of hunting and fighting together.

No matter how irritating…Thalia Grace had a point.

“Then you’ll come.” Zoe said. “And…”

“And me!” Percy jumped up only to get slapped down.

“No.” Zoe scowled. “No boys.”

“But…” Frey caught Percy’s eyes and shook his head, gesturing for him to wait.

Luke stepped into the void, playing peacemaker as he’d become accustomed after being elevated to the head of the Cabin counselors after marrying Silena.

“Then Thalia and Grover will go with you.” Luke smirked a bit, humor gleaming in his eyes. “After all, Grover isn’t a boy and Annabeth is his friend. Who will come with you from your Huntresses?”

“Pheobe.” Zoe said decisively, gesturing one of her best forward.

“That give you four…” Luke nodded. “How about…” His eyes lit on the de Angelo girl, who had decided to join the Huntresses to much dismay of her brother, but before he could say anything, his best friend – and constant thorn in his side – spoke up.

“I’ll go as well.” Frey stepped forward, silencing the uproar his announcement caused with a lift of his hand. “I’m not a boy after all.”
“No…” Chiron mused. “No, you’re not.”

“Chiron!” Zoe protested, scandalized. “He’s, he’s…”

“Not interested.” Frey laughed, folding his arms across his chest. “Especially not in little girls who decided they never wanted to grow up. Annabeth was one of my charges – I saved her life more than once. I’m going to get her back.”

Zoe bit back the rest of her protests, even as the Huntresses glared at Frey’s description of them and more than one of the Campers snickered at it, Luke coughing to cover his own laugh.

Those two had always been like oil and water.

Running the gauntlet or playing capture the flag Chiron had quickly learned – even when Frey was young – to put them on the same side or blood would flow.

Going on a quest together?


He’d be shocked if they both made it back with all their limbs attached.

…

“Why didn’t you let me fight to join you?” Percy scowled as he watched Frey back a bag.

The two green-eyed half-bloods had gotten pretty close after Frey helped him beat Ares, and more often than not if Percy wasn’t found with Annabeth, Luke, or Grover he’d be with Frey who had taken him under his wing very much like a fond – if a bit distant – uncle or older brother despite only being a handful of years Percy’s senior.

“Because sometimes my little water sprite.” Frey teased him, ruffling his hair and gaining himself a dark scowl – both for the nickname and the hair-messing. “Direct confrontation isn’t the way to win the war. I know Nightshade, have known her for years.” Frey snorted, thinking of one or two of their more…interesting clashes. “There was no force on Olympus or Earth that would’ve gotten her to cave to taking a boy on the quest. And no.” He cut Percy off. “I don’t count.”

“Why?” Percy asked, perplexed. “You’re still a guy…”

“I’m male.” Frey corrected him, mentally adjusting that to intersexed in other forms. “And this is more about a state of mind than it is my gender, similar to Grover. Luke could’ve gone, or Chiron. All of us male – none of us boys.” Frey smiled at the consternated look on Percy’s face, nudging him with a shoulder. “Hey, don’t worry about it. Besides, I’m pretty sure Luke wanted to see you so…”

“Yeah yeah.” Percy rolled his eyes, still thinking on what Frey was alluding to. “I’m going, I’m going. Enjoy your quest with Zoe…”

Frey snorted and rolled his eyes, not believing for one second that the stubborn kid was going to let it lie…especially once Luke got done reminding him that Percy had Annabeth’s hat…the one that made the wearer invisible.

Which, after all, was the reason he’d sent Percy off to Luke in the first place.

He couldn’t tell the teen to sneak and follow them, it wouldn’t be a sign of good-faith with the
huntresses after he’d all-but-forced them to take him along.

But if the kid did it of his own accord…well.

Frey *couldn’t* have had anything to do with that…now could he.

With a smirk and a flick of his eyes towards where he felt himself being watched – likely by either his lover or his father…maybe both – Frey slung his pack over his shoulder and sauntered out to meet with the rest of the questers…and braced himself for the incoming migraine that dealing with Zoe was likely to cause.

…

“You really are a hopeless hero, aren’t you little prince?” Loki sighed, shaking his head. “Where did I go so wrong with you?”

Frey snorted, rolling his eyes at his father’s dramatics.

“I wonder where I came by *that* train hmm?” Frey mused dryly. “Perhaps from the wizarding hero who stood off a Dark Lord to buy time or his wife who sacrificed her *life* to save mine…or just maybe…” He drawled. “It came from a Jotun who has worked all his life for the betterment of the Aesir?” Frey arched an ebony brow as his father cleared his throat and looked away. “And now for the Jotnar? Tell me again Far, were you twelve or thirteen when you used one of your illusions to save yourself and Thor from a bilgesnipe…?”

With a snort and an eye roll of his own, Loki muttered: “Thirteen.” Then rapidly changed the subject.

“I still don’t understand your involvement with this…*mess.*” Loki commented, with an idle hand wave. “There’s a prophecy in play, the Fates have been – and still are – meddling wenches.” He sobered, staring down at a face that looked more like his – with just a hint of James and a dash of Lily – each and every day. “Why must you endanger yourself when the hero has already been chosen, the threads of fate woven? *You are becoming* Frey,” Loki reminded him. “Your powers grow. An outburst of them at the wrong time – or before the wrong audience – could be deadly if you’re found before you freeze into immortality.”

This dreaming they were lounging in Frey’s quarters at their family’s hold on Jotunheim, Frey laying back with his father petting his head beside him. For all that more and more people considered Frey a man grown – to his father he would always be Loki’s little prince. And alone like this, that was just fine with both of them.

Frey stared up at the diamond-and-ice ceiling far above their heads for a long moment, then said:

“Because Far. Because I know what it’s like to have a prophecy, to *be* that chosen – or forsaken – hero. You’re right, you’ve always *been* right when it comes to the events of Olympus and Camp Half-Blood. But just the same…I had help, and I survived, if a little battered and bruised. Percy needs that, needs *someone, anyone* who can understand having all the weight of the world crushing you and grinding you down. If I keep him from insulting Ares here or help slay a monster there.” Frey shrugged, sad green eyes meeting their twins. “Then I will. I want to protect this world for my children…but more I want to *be* the hero that they can be proud of and hold memories of my deeds close to them once I can’t be here for them in the flesh anymore…”

…

“*Phoebe!”* Zoe cried out in the midst of battle.
They’d made it to Washington D.C., with their invisible tail following them, on the trail that Zoe could somehow track of Artemis’s essence.

Then everything went very quickly, in Frey’s opinion, to hell.

Too busy to worry about the Huntress, what with fighting off a Nemean Lion, Percy at his side, Frey let out a wave of his burgeoning godling powers.

His father was right, they were growing, as shown when the spartoi attacking them – living skeletons with spears and swords in the command of Ethan and Kronus – stilled and several fell into dust.

At his side Percy blinked for a split second before diving back into combat against the remaining spartoi.

With Phoebe injured they needed to get clear of the enemy quickly and tend to her – a reality driven home when no sooner had the spartoi been dealt with than a deafening roar shook the glass in the museum.

Frey snorted to himself even as he switched his sword for a spear and shield with an absent thought.

What was with monsters and museums, anyway?

It was nearly as bad of a cliché in the half-blood world as the villains-in-warehouses that you see in movies.

“Get Phoebe out of here.” Frey ordered Zoe and Grover, both of whom nodded grimly as Thalia and Percy squared up to stand at his side, Riptide held loosely – and expertly – in Percy’s hands and Aegis open on Thalia’s wrist with a short sword in her opposite hand, both with grim expressions to match Frey’s own. “We’ll buy you time.”

“What is it?” Percy asked, shifting a bit to get into a firmer stance against the creature they could hear bounding their way.

“What not anything we want to deal with.” Frey said briskly, eyes narrowed and focused as he tried to get a more definitive answer to Percy’s question. “It’s not a reptile, that’s for sure.”

Thalia snickered a little, still not over the fact that the other “demigod” could talk to anything reptilian, having heard the story of the Hydra in the Natural History Museum from Luke.

The trio hissed out various curses as the monster came into sight and they finally had an answer in the form of a massive golden lion.

“Fuck my life.” Frey cursed. “Nemean Lion. Don’t bother doing anything other than blocking strikes on the body – it’s only vulnerable in its mouth and eyes. Thalia.” He locked eyes with the daughter of Zeus a split second. “You and I will fend it off – buy Percy time and keep it distracted. Percy, you don’t have a shield, but you’re fast – aim your strikes for the soft-palette and through into its brain or for the eye socket and brain, got it?”

Both younger demigods nodded and braced, then with a springing lunge Frey and Thalia leaped out, flanking it from front and to the side and giving Percy an angle to the massive head as the quick swordsman either parried swipes of the deadly claws or harried the vulnerable spots on the head.

Thalia and Frey fell into a fast paced rhythm, barely giving the Lion time to react to their strikes or strike itself let alone attack Percy, snarls and hisses – both from them and it – echoing through the
massive open building.

When it appeared the Lion would whirl and retreat – or feint as such before striking again – it was met head-on by Percy who had read the move in the coiling muscles and lunged, Riptide tearing through tender eye tissue and straight into the brain, killing the Lion instantly.

“To my father, Poseidon.” Percy spat out, teeth bared in a vicious snarl as Thalia and Frey – both more than a little tired and beat down from the sheer power behind the Lion’s swipes and having more than one wound seeping blood from vicious claws – nodded sheathed their own weapons. Percy had used more strength than he’d thought, Riptide being stuck against the rear portion of the skull. He’d have to wait until the Lion disappeared into dust – which it did a moment after he spoke – to retrieve the blade.

Frey let out a soundless whistle as he saw the trophy left behind for his young friend – the same that Heracles had been given by Zeus for the same feat of might – the impenetrable lion skin.

“Nice.” Thalia said with genuine admiration. “C’mon. We’d better catch up to the others and figure out where we’re going from here with Squid-Boy onboard and Phoebe looking pretty bad from the spartoi.”

…

The argument with Zoe over Percy’s inclusion was close to vicious before it was over…though not without more than a bit of divine assistance.

Frey, Thalia, and Percy had caught up with the other quickly, only to find them with more than a little help in the form of Apollo, whose almost knowing gaze Frey met head-on.

A genial nod was all the two exchanged before the god disappeared with Phoebe – and gave them a bit of advice in the form of Cloudcroft, New Mexico.

“We have to move fast.” Thalia told Zoe, the two fighting like cat and dog – again – this time over how to follow Apollo’s advice. “Those spartoi won’t take long to catch up with us, even if Frey can somehow dust them.”

“I can’t control it totally.” Frey warned them with an arch of a brow. “Thanatos’s powers that I’ve inherited can be a bit…finicky until I master them.”

“Can’t you take us there through shadow?” Zoe asked, ignoring Thalia for a moment. “I’ve seen you travel that way before.”

“Sure I could.” Frey shrugged. “Except the closer to the West Coast – and Mount Othrys – I get, the weaker and more unpredictable my powers will grow from the Titan taint. If I use them to shadow us all across the country…it might weaken me too much to be back into fighting form once we hit the stronghold. It depends.”

Thalia cursed under her breath at that, Percy, Grover, and Zoe all sharing commiserating glances. The story of Luke’s scar – and Frey’s reaction to the West Coast – was something of an open-secret among the son of Hermes’s friends.

And Frey was too powerful of a weapon to risk him draining himself and not being able to regenerate his powers until they got back outside of the tainted area.

“But.” He smiled, reaching into his armored battle-robe. “There’s nothing that says I can’t help out in another way…how does taking the train sound to everyone…?” He asked, lifting up his wallet
and arching a brow.

…

The tension between Zoe and Thalia was thick enough to cut with a knife on the ride between D.C. and Cloudcroft…though at least the rabid arguing had settled into an icy silence, which was both better and worse than the open animosity all at the same time.

Neither girl was in the best frame of mind to begin with from Frey’s point of view, even before bringing into the quest and their personal dislike of each other – and in Zoe’s case anything male – into the mix.

Zoe…well. They were going to a place that she’d been banished from, after betraying her family and helping Heracles…who had left her alone to deal with the consequences of helping him in the first place. Add in that Artemis was missing, the one being who had been willing to help her after all of that and…yeah. Someone who tended to be stilted and uncomfortable around anyone not Artemis or her sister Huntresses was snappy and irritable.

Thalia on the other hand was dealing with two problems, each as seemingly overwhelming as the last. Annabeth, who Thalia had doted on and treated like a kid sister was taken, captured, by Kronus’s minions. While at the same time there was Apollo with his words making it clear that Thalia could supersede Percy as the “hero” of the Big-Three prophecy.

Not exactly the wake-up the demigoddess would’ve preferred, that was for sure.

Especially as she, much like Luke, could easily see the temptation of Kronus’s offer to the half-bloods who were helping him overthrow Olympus.

She was a half-blood with one hells of a grudge against the Olympians…not the best candidate to either raze or save them.

Percy and Grover had given up on distracting or talking to either girl earlier, finally delving into either playing cards or chatting quietly amongst themselves, as Frey pretended to sleep while still keeping watch with his powers over their compartment on the train speeding along with a soothing clatter of wheels on rails towards New Mexico.

If it wasn’t for the ever-increasing presence that he associated with the spartoi gaining on their eastern flank and the looming taint growing with every mile closer to the West they get, Frey would probably rest in truth…but as it was, rest was the last thing on his mind.

…

They made good time to New Mexico – but not good enough as not long after disembarking the train they found themselves once again hiding and running to evade the spartoi who had grown in number from the small troop they’d shaken off in D.C.

Frey was in the process of trying to rent another car to get them out of the dusty town when Grover stopped dead in his tracks from his pacing.

“What is it, Grover?” Thalia asked, cocking her head to one side – and then she felt it to, not just her but all of them.

Frey paused mid-sentenced, letting the sheer power roll over him, filling him with the scent of ice-capped peaks and deep, dark forests. Blood pumped through his veins, and the urge to run and jump and fight filled him. Shaking himself, he eyed the others, who if by the looks on their faces had had
“What is that?” Percy breathed, nearly panting with effort to stay still as it washed over him in a cacophony of crashing waves and the cries of gulls and whales and the scent of the deepest sea.

“Pan.” Grover said as if in benediction – which to a satyr it truly was. “The Great God Pan. He’s here.” Grover moved as if to run only to be stopped in place by a hand篇文章为摘录，故不展示原图。
“We have to jump!” Frey shouted over the sound of the boar and the rushing wind. “We’re going the wrong way!”

“On three!” Thalia called. “One, two, three!”

On count, Frey loosed his hold on his magic and they sprang away from the boar, landing with varying degrees of grace – or a lack thereof as Grover tumbled to the ground. While Percy helped the satyr up, the others stood and watched as the boar disappeared from sight within moments before turning and seeing where they’d ended up – in the middle of nowhere with nothing but sand surrounding them and the glint of what might be metal towards what Frey thought was the northwest horizon.

“Where are we?” Percy asked, head turning as he took in the sprawling, vast desert plain.

“Hard to say.” Zoe said with a shrug. “Probably not New Mexico with as fast as the boar was moving but other than that…” She tsked. “The southwestern U.S. is basically one massive desert sprinkled with mountains and cities, crisscrossed by roads.”

“Which way?” Thalia directed at Frey, who of the lot of them had the best odds of figuring out where to go between his powers and his natural senses…though why he was so strong had never quite been explained to her satisfaction.

“I smell exhaust and tar that way.” Frey pointed. “Probably a road. If we can find a road sign we’ll have a better idea of how to continue from here.”

As they set off, Percy drew back to talk to the older demigod as Zoe and Thalia glared at each other and took point.

“You doing okay?” He asked, the most sensitive to Frey’s plight with his powers. After all, Percy wasn’t up to his best either in a desert. It wasn’t like there were large bodies of water anywhere nearby from him to draw from. Though he was pretty sure if he had to that he could tap into the reserves hidden below ground…he just didn’t want to have to, afraid of what that might do in a place that was already low on water year-round.

Frey grimaced as he breathed in and the nasty-ass taint of Kronus coated the back of his throat.

“I’ll survive.” He told the younger male, jaw set. “In the end…that’s all that really matters compared to how many half-bloods don’t live long enough to know what it’s like not to have monsters chasing you every hour of the day.”

Events passed in a large blur for Frey after Grover had received Pan’s blessing via giant boar.

Percy faced off with Ares – again – and was given a rather ominous peak at his love-life thanks to Aphrodite.

They traversed the junkyard of the gods without becoming demigod jelly on the sand, but nearly bit it at Hoover Dam only to be saved by a pair of Hephaestus’s creations.

Which brought them to San Francisco – the root cause of Frey’s powers being unpredictable and his mind a bit fuzzy.

It was official…he hated the West Coast…or at least he would so long as it was tainted by Kronus, a contagion that was worse than when he’d been in LA helping Percy against Ares and a hundred
times worse than his and Luke’s trip to the Garden of the Hesperides.

Percy sending off the ophiotaurus, which had been helping the demigod navigate through the challenges of the task, which he’d named Bessie of all things, was no more than a blip on Frey’s radar, though Grover heading back to camp with Bessie in tow did wake him up from his funk at least a little.

Frey at least wasn’t the only one off his game.

Being so close – but at the same time so far – from her sisters who had cast her out was taking its toll on Atlas’s daughter, while the visions both Percy and Zoe had been having weren’t helping things to say the least.

Still…thanks to Frey having been there before, they knew their way to the Garden and the entrance of Mount Othrys—if they could only get past Ladon.

“Did you think we would just stand aside, sister?” One of the Hesperides mocked her without mercy. “After you betrayed us? And for what?” The same sister asked, obviously the leader. “A hero that betrayed you?” She hissed, spying Riptide held by Percy. “You even have the audacity to bring that cursed blade here? With heroes in tow?” She snorted turning her back on them, the other Hesperides joining her. “Ladon! Ladon! There are intruders in the Garden!” They called then disappeared.

“Wow.” Thalia said under her breath. “And I thought I had family problems.”

“Yeah, no kidding.” Percy grimaced as in a near-identical circumstance as the Museum they heard a great roar and then the sound of a massive monster coming their way. “Kinda puts having thousands of cyclopes half-brothers into perspective.”

Zoe was pointedly ignoring them even as Frey shot them a chiding look, knowing the best out of all of them just how bad her sisters spurning her had to hurt the Huntress, what with having a grandfather – adopted or not – that would likely smite him as soon as look at him.

“Ladon’s a dragon right?” Percy nibbled at his lower lip in worry, shuffling his feet. “Can’t you talk to him?”

Frey snorted. “Yeah, right. And say what? Sorry, old chap.” He snarked. “We’re just here to rescue a goddess? I’m sure Ladon will just calm right down and let us pass.”

“What’s the plan this time?” Thalia asked, flicking her wrist and having her massive shield Aegis emerge.

“You all run.” Zoe said, squaring her shoulders. “Ladon will focus on me – if for revenge over my helping Heracles than nothing else. Once you’re clear, I’ll catch up.”

Or at least…she’d try.

She wasn’t kidding herself, she’d heard the prophecy the same as everyone else.

And given that they were about to enter her father’s prison…she wasn’t going to make any bets on coming out of this alive.

But she could risk going up against Ladon, if Atlas was destined to be her undoing.

As if he could read her very thoughts – which wasn’t as ludicrous as she might like – Frey met her
eyes and nodded once, his unnaturally green eyes somber.

He realized what she had…even if none of the rest had.

Prophecy could be beaten, be undone…but only rarely when it came directly from the mouthpiece of the gods like the Oracle of Delphi.

…

“You holding up?” Thalia eyed Frey with worry.

She’d never seen the older – well, now, at least – half-blood so off his game.

“I’ll make it.” Frey shuddered out a breath as the entrance to the Titan stronghold came into sight. Closing his eyes, he cracked his neck and shut down his preternatural senses. He had to. The taint was just too strong – it threatened to overwhelm him. He could fight through the nausea and headaches the taint caused – but the fuzziness from the taint interacting with his power was something else entirely as both Ladon and the manticore had proven out.

They paused for a moment at Frey’s signal, all smiling – though tinged with worry – at the sight of a battered but still-standing Zoe catching them up.

“Good.” She said with a rare smile for the Thanatos-legacy. “We’ll need your strength and your sword if we face what I fear.”

Nodding, Frey held out his hands in a wordless command.

“What about your powers?” Percy’s brow puckered even as they all clasped onto Frey’s arms, each leaving room for sword or shield in case Frey sets them down in the midst of the enemy.

“I’m not going to be able to use much of it here.” Frey told him honestly. “Not if I want to keep a clear head. The very air is tainted. This at least, I can do to keep us from having to fight our way in and out.”

Understanding nods came from the trio, and with a flex of power and will, they appeared – still wreathed in shadow – where Atlas was imprisoned.

Or at least…where he was supposed to be.

Zoe, made to move forward in a bound, only to be held back in an echo of Frey’s cautioning of Grover’s response to Pan’s presence being felt in New Mexico.

Only it wasn’t Artemis’s power that caused Zoe’s instinctual reaction, but the sight of her lady pinned beneath the sky – just as her and Percy’s visions had suggested they might find.

Frey held her bow-strung-tight body against his own, one hand covering her mouth and his opposite arm a steel-band against her waist where he could feel sticky blood coming through her armor and onto his palm.

She was injured by Ladon…a highly poisonous dragon.

Frey would venture that the only reason she was still standing was both her age and power – which were considerable given her heritage and high place among the Huntresses – and her birthright as one of the Hesperides.

They waited like that for long moments as they took in the scene in its entirety – not just the
attention-grabbing form of Artemis laboring beneath the sky.

Frey was afraid that he was going to run out of hands when both Percy and Thalia nearly gave them away at the sight of Annabeth bound in chains beside the form of Ethan who was in council with “The General” who Percy had heard of from Doctor Thorn the manticore but not realized quite who it was – Atlas himself, perhaps the strongest – and angriest – of all the Titans. Thankfully, they caught each other, Thalia’s nails nearly drawing blood on Percy’s arm even as she dug into his pocket – which brought a bright red blush to the younger male’s cheeks – and taking out Annabeth’s hat which will turn the wearer invisible. From there a bit of a plan was made all in silence, even as Frey’s eyes clocked and accounted for each and every Titan or monster present, among Atlas and Ethan’s number were also Krios, the Titan of Stars and Lord of the South, as well as more spartoi and telekhines than Frey really wanted to count.

Once the plan was in place, Frey risked another flex of power to cloak the others in shadow, then took up position…in Artemis’s place under the sky.

Artemis gave a bloodthirsty grin even as an alarm rang out as her father’s lover took her place.

They would have to be fast.

Even a half-blood as strong as Frey would not last long under the Titan’s Curse.

Fortunately for them, her grandmother Rhea had ensured that only others would have to take on the curse consensually, while any Titan would be bound against their will to the task of holding up the sky.

With a battle-cry, she summoned her weapons and met Atlas, her captor, head-on with the clang of steel on steel.

…

It was without end.

Moments became hours and centuries and ages, as the weight of the sky crushed him down, leaving him breathless and stunned, clearing all thought but that of pain.

Frey panted, finding it nearly inconceivable that Ethan, let alone Annabeth, had known what they would have to take on along with the Titan’s Curse.

Annabeth, for all that she should have been a Ravenclaw if she’d gone to Hogwarts, had clear Gryffindor tendencies along with more than a dash of Hufflepuff for trying to save Ethan from the Curse.

Too noble for her own good, that girl.

Though if the Curse was good for anything, it cleared his mind of the tainted power that encompassed Mount Othrys, letting him – in the small portion of his mind capable of thought – watch and appreciate the plan even as it fell apart not long after he set Artemis free and Percy and Thalia did the same for Annabeth.

Artemis found herself pressed on all sides, Zoe coming to her aid only to be picked up and flung into a solid-rock wall by her erstwhile father while Percy, Thalia, and Annabeth held off Ethan and the monsters.

They were losing ground, and fast.
“They need you, my son.” Loki breathed into his mind, even as he watched a section of his son’s hair turn white from strain at the crown of his head from root to tip. “They can’t give the Huntress enough time without your sword and spear.”

“Percy!” Frey called out to the closest – and strongest next to himself – demigod, regretting it even as he knew it had to happen. They needed him on the line more than they needed him pinned under the sky, as his father’s word attested.

Loki was many things, a general and strategist among them, and thanks to the Seeing pools had a better perspective than Frey did under the sky.

He trusted that his father – while willing to lie to him to save him if necessary – wouldn’t lie about this when he knew good and well that it would take him a long time to die under the Curse.

Much longer than it would take any of the others save Artemis and the Titans.

“Tag!” He shouted, Percy getting the point immediately and giving a rolling dive, knocking Frey loose from his position kneeling on the ground in the classic “Atlas” pose immortalized by countless sculptures and paintings. Percy’s pose wasn’t nearly so graceful, ending up on all-fours.

Rolling his neck and summoning the self-same sword he’s used to slay a basilisk – and was poisoned as a result – and his spear, Frey leapt into battle as strength ran though him with the distinct flavor of his father’s power, batting Krios away from Artemis with a meaningful glance at Percy and taking her place against Atlas even as the Lord of the Stars taunted the Huntress regarding her wounded-and-dying lietenent.

“Ahh…” Atlas drawled, even as his eyes lit with challenge. This one was different from the rest, even the too-sentimental goddess. He would have never taken on the Curse to save another. Let alone been so ready to battle after gaining free of it. “You smell of ancient power, godling.” He smirked as he placed just why this one was giving him one hell of a fight, parrying every strike from Atlas’s sword and slashing furiously with both sword and spear. He was becoming…but wasn’t quite there yet.

In fact…Atlas would bet that taking on the Curse had set this one back at least a few years in his becoming.

A shout and cry from their side drew Atlas’s attention as Artemis lunged and tripped Krios, sending him tumbling beneath the sky and Percy rolled out from under it as Krios raged and howled, Frey leaping without pause as Atlas stood in shock, his guard lowering for no more than a split-second…all that his opponent needed.

Frey’s spear tore through skin and muscle with inhuman strength – a Jotun’s strength, his eyes flashing red for a long moment – the momentum of the throw toppling Atlas backwards even as Ethan roused the vanguard to attack anew despite the General’s fall, his rallying cry too little too late as Frey stood over the pinned-and-gurgling Atlas, his spear having torn through the Titan’s exposed neck. Eyes flashing at Ethan as the other stared at him in seething fury, he wrapped both hands around the hilt of his sword and plunged it down through armor and bone, straight through the Titan’s heart, three words tumbling through his lips in an echo of Percy’s defeat of the Lion.

“For my father.”

The others rushed him quickly as the Titan forces spilled out of every corner, surrounding them as they stood over the fallen form of Atlas as it crumbled into dust, the Titan banished to Tartarus.
Artemis had Zoe in her arms, following the motions of the others as Percy, Annabeth, and Thalia all laid hands on Frey and with one last fuck-you to Ethan shadow-stepped from Mount Othrys, getting as far from Kronus’s taint as he could before collapsing, leaving them tumbling to the ground somewhere in the Midwest.

“Di immortales.” Thalia crouched over Frey’s slumped form, as Artemis laid an ever-weakening Zoe on the ground beside him as the others hovered. “Is there anything we can do?”

“Not for me.” Frey waved her off, coming up on one elbow to stare in worry at Zoe. “I’ll be fine in a day or two…is she…?”

Artemis nodded with a pinched look on her face – and with good reason.

Zoe Nightshade had been her constant friend and companion for thousands of years.

And now thanks to her own father…she was dying.

“Percy.” Zoe coughed up blood, even as her eyes took on a fever-bright sheen. “Be better than the one I made that sword for.”

“I will.” Percy vowed, one hand brushing over Riptide where it rested in his pocket now that the overt-danger was over, the post-battle crash coming up on him fast.

“Boys are stupid.” She smiled weakly at Annabeth. “Make sure he lives up to that, yeah?”

Annabeth nodded, a tear slipping from her eye even as Artemis and Zoe exchanged a few words, and the first among equals of the Huntresses slipped away, her body disappearing in a shower of rich gold and purple dust.

“Purple?” Percy wondered. He’d never seen that before.

Frey just hummed as the others eyed him knowingly, while with a whistle Artemis summoned her chariot.

“I have a conclave to make.” She said, armorign herself in her ceremonial garb with a thought. She could – and oh, she would – mourn later. For now, there was a greater danger than her follows knew rising in the West. “And no time to drop you off.” She smirked a little despite the dullness of her usually vivid eyes. “So I suppose we have no choice but to have you accompany me and give witness to all you’ve seen…wouldn’t you say?”

“Will they listen to us this time?” Percy couldn’t help but ask, given his experience with the other gods.

Artemis hardened, reminding them all of just why others feared her.

“After what it cost to gain this information…they must, or they’ll have to face me.”
Chapter 30

Lokison

Author’s Note: As always, the majority of the prophecy that the Oracle gives is straight from the PJ books, but tweaked to work better with my plotline. The description of Kampe comes straight from Wiki for the most part.

Chapter Thirty: By the Ghost King’s Hand

“Well…” Frey tsked to himself in the wake of the conclave. “That could have gone better…”

He was right – as usual, much to Luke’s eternal irritation – as the two friends watched as Nico stormed away after Frey banished the spartoi he’d raised.

The young – though not as young as they’d first thought when he’d arrived weeks before – had not taken his sister’s defection to the Huntresses well, any more than Zeus had taken the same decision from Thalia, effectively freezing her before her sixteenth birthday and making his child the hero of prophecy.

Luke just snorted and rolled his eyes.

“I suppose you’re going back to England now?” He asked, Frey giving a humming nod in response.

“Don’t worry.” Frey smiled. “I’ll be back, and Zeus can’t really afford the distraction of me right now. Or any of the other gods for that matter.”

Luke grimaced. “Please tell me my old man hasn’t hit on you.” The demigod nearly begged as they wandered off towards the Big House where Luke now lived with his wife Silena along with Chiron and “Mr. D” or Dionysus, though the god at least would likely prove to be gone much more often with Artemis’s stirring the Olympians to action against the growing Titan threat.

Frey gave an honest guffaw at that.

“No, not him.” He told him between laughs, wiping at a tear that threatened to spill in humor at the very idea. “I’m a little too male for Hermes…well, that and I’m your best-friend and he doesn’t want to screw up your relationship any further.”

“Then who besides Zeus and Ganymede have made a pass at you?”

“I don’t know if it counts as a pass, but.” Frey shrugged. “I’m pretty sure Apollo is a little more interested in me than just my ability to help Percy with his fate. And Zeus doesn’t have any problem with sharing me any more so…I might see where that goes.”

Luke winced at the very thought.

Best-friend or not, he would never understand the mindset that most immortals – including his friend who wasn’t there yet – had regarding relationships.

“Away with you, you smug polyamorous bastard.” Luke shoved him away as they reached the steps of the Big House. “Shoo. Go hug my godchildren or irritate Draco or something.”

With a mocking bow and a shove to the shoulder, Frey stepped into the shadows, making it home to
the U.K. just in time for bedtime stories.

“Papa!” The chorus of shouts from his children made him laugh – this time in pure joy – and he knelt down to wrap them in his arms and just breathe in their innocent toddler scent.

This.

This, right here, was why he fought.

For them, and the type of world he wanted to give them.

“Everything alright, Harry?” Draco asked with soft concern, easily spotting the signs of exhaustion riding his longtime lover hard.

Blaise had been called off on a business meeting in Japan, leaving Draco and his parents to manage the kids while Frey was away.

“I am now.” He said, looking up into icy-blue eyes that in time had grown from ardent desire and loving into a more mellow – but stronger at the same time – loving comfort and friendship.

The desire was still there, it likely always would be.

But what he had had now with Draco, and yes, Blaise was stronger and more lasting than any hot-blooded adoration ever could be.

“I am now.”

…

It was a feeling that carried him along for many months, into late the next summer as he delighted in watching his children grow and popping back over to New York as often as he could to help train the half-bloods there or up to Olympus to add his two cents on Zeu’s strategies and battle plans or to Jotunheim or even the mirror-Earth that would likely become his home one day if his Far was right.

Still, he knew that the calm idle following the crushing blow he’d dealt Kronus in slaying his first General would eventually come crashing down.

He simply didn’t expect it to be as catastrophic as it turned out to be when the hammer came down.

…

“Who’s in trouble this time?” Frey asked right off the bat when he’d been ushered from the Thanatos cabin on his regular schedule arrival time from the U.K. and straight up to the Big House. It was said with more than a little tone of weariness and posed to Silena who was looking lovely – and blooming – at just gone three months pregnant. “Percy, Annabeth, Grover, or somehow all three?”

Silena snorted. “As if you can talk mister trouble-magnet.” She pointed out good-naturedly, one hand coming to rest elegantly on her stomach. “How many scrapes have you gotten into now – both with and without my husband?” She arched a knowing brow as Frey looked away and rubbed at the back of his neck.

“So it’s not…” He trailed off in question.

“Oh, no.” Silena chuckled, shaking her head and sending her loose long hair tumbling down her back. “It most definitely is. Both Percy and Grover, though my money is on Annabeth being right in
the thick of it with them.”

“What’s happened in the last week?” He frowned, perplexed. He’d just been at Camp before being out of touch for a brief period to celebrate his birthday...late due to issues with the kids and the annual Malfoy holiday in France, but still... “The sky hasn’t fallen or anything has it?”

“No.” Silena sighed, waving a hand. “It’s just...well. You’ll see.” She promised darkly.

“Uh oh.” Frey winced. When Silena wasn’t happy, that usually meant either someone was trying to break up her and Luke – as had happened more than once even before they were married – or her goddess-given powers from Aphrodite were bugging her.

In other words...teenaged angst of the loooovvve variety.

“Ah, Frey, you’ve arrived.” Chiron greeted one of his favorite – if most mysterious – protégé’s with genuine relief. “Most excellent.”

Frey clasped arms with the wise immortal centaur, all the while eyeing the motley crew assembled behind him around the dining room table. As usual there was a new face – probably another activities director since they seemed to have issues with staffing with Mr. D off helping with the oncoming war – at the table...though a curious one that felt very much not right to Frey’s senses which were recovering nicely from his ordeal under the sky. Percy, his twin sky-bearer with a matching white streak to prove it, was sitting across from – and eyeing warily – a fuming Annabeth, and next to a clearly worried-and-nervous Grover. Luke, Clarisse, Michael from the Apollo cabin, Castor and Pollux representing the only Dionysus half-bloods, Charles from Hephaestus, and the rest of the cabin heads were all present and trying not to draw Annabeth’s attention...probably due to the fact that her glares at Percy were fierce enough to kill.

With a sigh, Frey settled in for an evening of playing mediator, starting off with: “what’s the emergency?”

“There’s an entrance to the Great Labyrinth in the Camp.” Luke led with at once, shooting a warning look at Annabeth. “One that Ethan probably used to poison Thalia’s tree two years ago and from what we understand might be planning to use for an invasion force.”

Groaning, Frey leaned forward and buried his head in his hands, already seeing where this was going.


“Has a quest already been sought?”

“No.” Chiron spoke up, stamping one hoof. “We thought it best to wait for you.”

“Absolutely not.” Frey hissed, narrowing his eyes at his former mentor. “I’ve already fulfilled my fate. The Oracle probably won’t even speak for me. Next.” He set his jaw and crossed his arms.

There was no fucking way he was going to set himself up for Fate to fuck with him again.

The last time had done enough damage to his psyche for two lifetimes.

Pass.

“I’ll go.” Annabeth said before Percy could heroically – and stupidly – offer. Seaweed Brain was already the central figure for an ongoing prophecy, there was no need to paint an even bigger target
on his back…no matter how pissed she was at him over the whole Rachel situation.

Standing at once, Annabeth braved the attic, only to return milk-white and shaking.

“What is it?” Percy jumped to his feet, rushing to her side and hesitating just a moment – but more than long enough for her to move out of hugging range after his hesitant – and hurtful – pause. “What’s wrong?”

Annabeth looked up into those sea-green eyes and repeated the Oracle’s words, words that had already burned themselves into her brain.

“You shall delve into the darkness of the endless maze,
The dead, the traitor, and the lost one raise.
You shall rise or fall by the ghost king’s hand,
The child of Athena’s final stand.
Destroy one’s hope with a hero’s final breath,
And make an enemy far worse than Death.”

“Don’t panic.” Frey advised immediately, seeing the three points of contention – and worry – in the prophecy. “Prophecy is wooly and rarely obvious until after the fact. You’re hardly the only child of Athena roaming the world, the same with heroes, and as a legacy of Thanatos I can tell you that it’s not hard to have a worse enemy as he’s invariable fair – if unyielding.”

Shuddering out a breath she nodded, Chiron taking that as leave to ask after who she wanted to accompany her on her quest.

“Percy, Grover…” She paused, knowing it was unconventional but not caring. “And Tyson.”

Now, that surprised them.

For two reasons, one being that unless it was specifically states in the prophecy quests rarely had more than three members…and extras tended to end up dead as Zoe’s death had recently reinforced, and second that Annabeth while warmed to the cyclopes now, had hardly been his biggest fan when he’d first arrived with his half-brother Percy.

“You know that will increase the danger.” Luke cautioned her. “Taking more than two others often winds up deadly.”

“I know.” She gave a wobbly smile. “But with Frey here to help plan and guard the camp – you are staying aren’t you?” She checked and then continued with more confidence after he gave a slow nod, his eyes dark with worry – though over what she wasn’t quite certain. “And the prophecy itself…well.” She nodded. “Better safe than sorry. We’ll four go seeking Ariadne’s String in the Great Labyrinth.”

“So mote it be.” Frey murmured, almost under his breath.

…

Percy entered the Thanatos cabin with a heavy step, the scene he’d just scene by collect Iris-message playing in his head, and drawing him straight to the one person who he knew would be able to answer his question.

“Percy?” Frey asked, sleep still rich in his voice as he rubbed at his eyes. He’d been deep in conversation with his Far when the wards on the Thanatos doorway had gone off. With Bianca off with the Huntresses and Nico…who knew where…he’d set them back up. “What’s wrong?”
It couldn’t be an assault on the camp as that would have been a different alarm altogether.

“I just…I just saw something.” Percy rushed to explain to the adult half-blood, eyes drawn immediately to a couple things he’d never seen before.

Frey always wore shirts to the wrist.

Always.

But from what Percy had understood of the gossip around camp, it hadn’t always been that way.

And if the scars on his chest and the tattoos on his arms were any hint, now he knew why.

“Holy shit.” Percy breathed out, eyes wide with shock. “Where did you get all those scars?”


“O-kay.” Percy blinked then shook it off, getting back on point. “I got an Iris-message.”

“O-kay.” Frey half-grinned, moving to the “kitchen” area of the massive cabin and getting them both something to drink – soda for Percy and firewhiskey for himself. “How’d that bring you to me?”

“It was a collect message, and it showed me Nico.” Percy explained, sipping at the soda and letting the familiar taste settle his nerves. “He…he didn’t know I was watching, I don’t know who sent me the message or why.”

“What was he doing?” Frey set the firewhiskey aside, leaning forward, his interest well and truly peaked. The questers were due to set out tomorrow, whoever sent Percy that message did it for a reason, even if that reason was as simple as rattling Percy and throwing him off his game. But Frey would venture that it was a bit more involved than that, or else why the subterfuge of the collect Iris-message?

“He was making a deal with his…father.” Percy grimaced, joined by Frey. Neither of them was the biggest fan of the Lord of the Underworld. “To bring his mom back to life…” He trailed off then sighed. “Zeus killed her while trying to kill Nico and Bianca.”

Frey growled a bit, sending a furious glance up at the ceiling, but knowing now wasn’t the time to take his lover to task over shedding innocent blood.

But believe him…there would be a reckoning between them before long.

“What were the terms?”

“Hades would bring Nico’s mother back to life…” Percy shifted. “In exchange for the life on one who has cheated death.”

“And you think that’s you?” Frey arched a brow. “That’s a bit of a leap. Granted, there’s been a few close calls…but you’ve never outright cheated death.”

“Well.” Percy muttered a bit. “Nico kinda still blames me for Bianca joining up with the Huntresses and leaving him alone so…”

Frey shook his head, falling back against the armchair with a sigh.
“Look, Percy.” Frey told him with steady calm. “You’re getting a little paranoid. Not without cause,” Frey assured him when the younger half-blood looked mutinous. “You’ve had a lot of stuff happen the last couple of years. But as someone who has been given a quest to hunt down a soul that had cheated Death…” He trailed off, shaking his head. “Trust me, you don’t qualify. Come on.” He motioned Percy up and escorted him over to one of the bunks that he’d added once his cabin became an extension of the “unclaimed/death deity” area from the Hermes Cabin. “You can sleep here tonight. I’ve woven so many wards around this place it’s one of the safest rooms there are in this universe.”

…

“You can’t seriously still be upset over the Prophecy?” Frey arched a brow at Zeus, green eyes flashing a warning while Ganymede choked back a laugh at the putty – yes, the King of the Gods was pouting – look on their lover’s face. “Let alone your brothers breaking a pact not one of you should have ever made given your collective track record for staying away from tempting mortals.”

“He has a point, love.” Ganymede told him between snorts of laughter. “Look at it this way – now Thalia is able to bond with one of her half-sisters!” The beautiful cupbearer barely got the words out of his mouth before he was hunching over and holding his sides, guffaws pouring from his lips.

Zeus scowled.

This wasn’t exactly what he’d had in mind when the three of them retired to his chambers after Frey arrived from standing guard over Camp Half-Blood.

Though given that Poseidon had become increasingly chilly the last several months as the focus was put more and more on the Western front and less on protecting his brother’s underwater realm…not to mention Hades steadfast refusal to participate at all in the offensive against their father.

Zeus had been ranting about his brothers – which led to a rant about their two sons who could fulfill the Prophecy – when Frey had cut in.

“Which reminds me.” If Zeus had thought he’d seen Frey angry before, it was nothing compared to now when his eyes began to glow an eerie bright green and power seemed to crackle and spark from his skin. “Where in the hells do you get off killing an innocent to get back at Hades? Maria di Angelo was guilty of nothing but loving Hades and you killed her.”

“I’m hardly the only one guilty of that, godling.” Zeus ground out, his own formidable temper roused at his lover’s – and more importantly one of his strongest allies – words.

Ganymede groaned and flopped over onto his stomach as his lovers went at it hammer and tongs, their power rumbling and shaking and cracking all throughout Olympus and making many of the lesser gods and goddesses abandon the palace for their favored Earthen haunts rather than risk being caught in the crossfire between Zeus and whoever had drawn his ire this time. The Cupbearer was unsurprised over the title given to Frey by Zeus, over the years he’d been joining them in their chambers he’d figured it out for himself. Still, he kept it to himself, as he did the rest of Zeus’s secrets.

That was his vow and promise to his love, to keep his secrets, no matter how explosive or vile.

Though on days like today, when Hera had been particularly vicious before taking her leave of Olympus for a time, or Frey managed to get Zeus right hacked off, he often wondered why it was he’d been willing to tie his lifetime to the sometimes foul-tempered creature he called love and king.
Then Zeus would look at him with those liquid brown eyes, lightning cracking in them and promising untold delights, and he would remember.

... It was an exhausted – both from the fight and the making up that came after it – but exhilarated Frey that shadowed back down to Camp Half-Blood the next morning, only to walk out from his cabin into a mess far more troubling than Zeus’s ongoing and innate lack of self-control when it came to his vengeful tendencies.

A darkness had come over the camp, as real and visible to Frey’s senses as thick fog, though invisible to his eyes.

Breaking with ease from his normal graceful stride into an athletic run, Frey hit the porch of the Big House and burst through the front door into the dining room, only to find a red-eyed Annabeth and several crying campers, along with a saddened Chiron and Luke, while Silena and Annabeth worked on a death shroud that laid on the table before them.

He quickly made note of the trio that were missing from the scene: Tyson, Grover, and worst of all, Percy.

“What has happened?” He demanded, eyes shooting to lock with Chiron’s mournful gaze.

“You heard, no doubt, of the explosion at one of Hephaestus’s forges that was previously taken over by the Titan forces.” Chiron stated, though it was a partial question, the centaur continuing once Frey nodded. He’d thought as much, but then, Chiron was perhaps one of the only beings at camp who actually knew where the enigmatic godling went during the nights he wasn’t patrolling, with the others limited to his best friends Luke and Silena. “Perseus was…lost during the explosion. Annabeth survived.” Chiron waved to the stoic but clearly distraught inside teen girl. “And reported the loss of a hero as well as the decimation of the enemies at the forge.”

Frey rocked back on his heels for a moment, then closed his eyes, reaching out to the life that he’d come to know over the last three years.

Atlas had been right, though he would never know it, Frey taking on the curse of holding up the sky had slowed down his becoming…but it hadn’t hindered powers he already possessed, just extended the timeframe a few years until he would freeze into his immortality.

And some of the first powers he’d developed had all revolved around life and death.

So it was with no little amount of relief that he smiled after a long moment and then said:

“No,” Frey chuckled. “I’m afraid he’s not dead after all. Lost, perhaps. But have a little faith that he’ll find his way home, yeah?”

“What?” Annabeth’s head snapped around so fast Frey was tempted to check her for whiplash.

“Percy’s alive.” Frey told them with a nonchalant shrug. “I can’t get a bead on where, but his thread is still whole, it hasn’t been cut. Probably ended up in one of the pockets of space that’s between one world and another.”

That made most everybody blink, save for Chiron who already knew of what Frey was speaking of and the couple of Luke-and-Silena who had heard him speak often of the places between places.

“What, like Limbo or something?” Clarisse asked, confused. There wasn’t anything like Limbo in
the Greek pantheon, instead they had the Fields of Asphodel which weren’t quite the same thing. Still, most anyone raised in the western world knew of the concept from Catholic myth and legend.

“Nothing so prosaic.” Frey snorted. “There are pockets and pathways and holes in the fabric of the various ‘verses that allow someone with enough power – or who has had power worked upon them – to slip through either for a time or permanently.”

“And you think Percy is stuck in one of these…time-space pockets?” Annabeth asked, brow puckered as she considered the possibility even while most of the others looked lost beyond knowing that Percy was alive but somewhere else.

“Mmm.” Frey hummed in agreement. “Or under some seriously powerful wards that is hiding his signal.”

Looks were exchanged all around before Michael from Apollo spoke up and asked: “How powerful would they have to be to block you?”

Frey just smiled and said:

“I think it’s time I did a little…work on the warding scheme for the Labyrinth entrance. Make sure that all the campers stay in their cabins and away from that area – including those who are supposed to patrol the grounds – tonight.”

A look of understanding crossed Chiron’s face, though the others reminded a bit bewildered by the subject change.

“Who are you going to have help you?”

“Oh…just a few friends…” After a fashion, anyway.

…

Chiron stepped up beside the still form of who he was tempted – though he’d yet to do it – to deem the finest hero he’d ever mentored.

The immortal trainer of heroes, Chiron had had students who had lifted him high with their deeds, who reminded him each and every time his mind turned towards their memory why he watched over the half-blooded children of the gods.

Then there were the others.

Those, who like the soul Frey had been sent to collect piece-by-piece, who had been great…but terrible.

His favorite half-bloods, quite often in fact, were those who fell between the two extremes, neither shining symbols of good nor cautionary tales of evil, but just…people who fought and loved and lived without making it into the tales of the Muses.

Half-bloods like Silena, who had been a kind girl who had grown into a strong woman and the rock that most of the camp – knowingly or not – leaned on in times of trouble and stife, or Charles, the head camper from Hephaestus who was quiet and kind and protective without the flash and dash of Luke or Percy or Frey.

But Frey…
Chiron shook his head as he eyed the tall figure that had grown from the small, wounded child Thanatos had brought him to look over all those years ago.

Frey was a different creature entirely from the rest of those he’d taught in the past – and likely any that he would teach and mentor in the future.

Raised to be both prince and poet, warrior and healer, general and diplomat, Frey’s mind worked in intricacies that Chiron couldn’t even put a name to or label on such as “genius” or “artist”, and at a speed that shamed most modern computers.

His favorite half-bloods might be who got him through his times of being ready to give up, but those like Frey and Percy were why he’d taken up this charge in the first place, heroes who could – and often did – change the face of the immortal world for the better.

“You realize.” Chiron had to point out. “That among the monsters and the Titan forces will be half-bloods. Children, likely even some we both have mentored and trained, who have been lured to the false-promises of Kronus.”

“Yes.”

Chiron sighed. The acknowledgment was nothing less than terse. Frey knew that if he tightened the wards – or as Chiron feared militarized them, turning them from a passive defense into a full offensive measure – it would likely catch not just the enemy but those who have simply turned down a poisoned path. Demigods and goddesses that might still be turned back.

But with that single word, Chiron understood something himself.

It wasn’t warrior Frey, or poet Frey, or his student Frey he was dealing with this night, but the scion of an ancient house, a Prince and a General, and yes, a becoming immortal.

One who would give no quarter.

Not that Chiron was surprised, as Frey had been born into war, it had marked him from his very beginning.

While the godling was capable of mercy, of kindness and forgiveness, it was that of a victor or a mentor or a friend, not of an opposing general or an enemy.

As his vicious destruction of Voldemort had shown, as relayed by Chiron’s brethren in the Forbidden Forest, Frey was nothing less than a merciless tactician and general.

Rolling his eyes, almost able to see Chiron’s thoughts on the subject, Frey relented a bit: “They’re going to be blood-wards, Chiron. They’ll only be lethal to anyone non-human. Monsters, giants, Titans, etc. Half-bloods will be in a world of hurt…but still alive as long as they don’t do anything particularly stupid.”

Frey had just finished speaking when a series of pops sounded in the clearing surrounding the Labyrinth entrance, Chiron doing a double take at the strange group of beings that had arrived almost simultaneously, who Frey was smiling and clasping arms with or being swept up into vigorous hugs and exclamations of joy.

It was an interesting group, Frey would be the first one to admit, but powerful…and more importantly powerful in a way that Kronus or the Titan’s wouldn’t expect, going back to some of his first teachings in tactics:
Engage people with what they expect; it is what they are able to discern and confirms their projections. It settles them into predictable patterns of response, occupying their minds while you wait for the extraordinary moment — that which they cannot anticipate.

Sun Tzu’s Art of War had been – and still was – one of the reasons why his Far had grown fond of humanity long before he had his son with a pair of human wizarding kind, and he had used it as both bedtime-story and strategy primer. Hence, Frey had donned masks for Kronus and Voldemort before him, being a wizard when confronted with magic, being a half-blood – if an extraordinary one – when facing a Titan. A demigod in one land, a wizard in the other, only rarely had the two met – and hardly ever in battle.

Frey’s defeat of Atlas was an excellent example of such, beating the great – and infamous – Titan general through only strength of arms and mind, not an ounce of magic used in their fight.

He’s faced Kronus – always – as a demigod, and now the time was coming to spring the trap that he’s laid to cost them an easy victory and perhaps turn some of Kronus’s allies who might waver in the wake of Atlas’s death, Krios’s bondage, and Percy’s destruction of the Mount St. Helen’s forge.

Kronus was arrogant, believing anything short of divinity was no match for himself or his forces.

Frey would make certain it was his undoing, whether in this coming battle or another.

“Frey.” Chiron stamped a hoof to gain the godling’s attention. “If you would be so kind as to introduce your friends…other than Lord Apollo of course, who needs no introduction.” Chiron nodded in respect to the sun god – among many other things – and likely the reason why Frey had been so insistent on the campers remaining inside.

“Chiron.” Apollo smiled, though it lacked the shine that usually beamed from the often-casual god. This was a serious matter, one that he was glad to lend his strength and power to…for more than one reason. The others were focused on Kronus to the extent of all else. He wasn’t. With the potential loss, by the Styx, with the loss that they have already been dealt with this newest war, of the lives of their children, Apollo refused to ignore the Camp and their hour of need the way the others have chosen to do.

He would not lose another child because he was too detached from them, that he had begun seeing them as some of the others did – as mere pawns in the never-ending game of the divine.

That it gave him an opportunity to once again stare-er-inspect Frey away from Olympus was besides the point.

“Apollo is here to monitor the outer wards and make certain they don’t lash out at those I’m going to weave over the Labyrinth opening. They are…” He sought the right words to explain – both to Chiron and those who had answered his call for aid – purely defensive, warning in nature. They welcome all of divine heritage and drive off those who are a danger to them, among other things.”

“Like Hogwarts then.” A blond wizard that Chiron recognized from Frey’s descriptions as his former father-in-law mentioned, one elegant hand’s fingers tapping idly on the cane at his side, while another wizard all in black – Severus Snape, or Chiron was a mule – both nodded and shook his head at the connection his friend drew.

“Yes and no.” Severus drawled, then introduced himself and Lucius before continuing. “Hogwarts is usually a defense warding structure…but she has offensive measure woven in that can be activated…they just have never been needed as yet.”
“What would you haf of us, Frey?” Viktor asked in his accented English, after exchanging a deep hug with his former lover.

“Chiron, this is Viktor Krum,” Chiron nodded in greeting to the large wizard who he would dare say could be described as hawkish. “Lucius and Severus have already been introduced: a trio of the finest Dark Wizards I’ve ever met.”

“Well met.”

“And this trio:” Frey pointed to the others. “Cedric Diggory, Neville Longbottom, and Luna Lovegood, Light Wizards – and witch – all.”

“I am beginning to see your plan, young Frey.” Chiron nodded, then stepped back. “Very well. However, please do keep in mind that whatever choices the combatant half-blood have made – this is still Camp Half-Blood and their home.”

With that, the centaur whirled and cantered away, leaving the seven magicals to eye each other, not to mention Frey and Apollo, with no little amount of curiosity.

Frey had made a rather intentional choice of leaving Draco and Blaise out of this…project of his, the same with Sirius and Remus.

Severus and Lucius on the other hand, at least understood the idea of discretion, if not being the very soul of it.

Cracking his neck, Frey set to arranging the others, having them stand in a circle around him as he kneeled on the rock above the Labyrinth entrance, laying their wands with the tips making a spiral if seen from above, the tip of Viktor’s wand just brushing the crown of Frey’s head with Severus’s on his, then came Neville’s cheery wood wand, Cedric’s, Luna’s, and finishing with Lucius’s wand to finish – Dark anchoring Light to power the offensive blood-wards Frey was casting, each of them adding a thread to the weave.

Viktor brought strength of resolve, Severus the fierce protectiveness and creativity that had become his trademarks – making the wards uniquely flexible and able to read intent – Neville’s ferocity in battle and unrelenting goodness standing as both judge and jury, Cedric’s streak of vengeance that he kept carefully concealed from even those who knew him best, Luna’s quick mind and ability to See, and last Lucius’s viciousness to threats against his family all woven in and around and between Frey’s spellwork to both protect his charges and to punish those who would harm them.

Over an hour of chanting and bloodletting later, it was a tired Frey who stood and was steadied by Severus before bidding the others goodbye and giving his thanks for lending their power and signatures to the wards.

Severus left last, casting one last worried look at the boy who was still giving him grey hair, only slightly mollified by Apollo coming to Frey’s side and walking with him back towards Frey’s New York home.

…

“Chiron won’t be pleased by that last addition to the wards, Frey.” Apollo warned with a quirk of a golden brow standing just a smidge too close for mere acquaintances – or even friends – as he made certain that the half-blood who so frequently caused the god of Prophecy’s vision to cloud. “But…” He drawled, with a put-upon sigh. “As a father whose children it will help protect, I’m glad you prevaricated.”
Frey gave a half-hearted shrug, still a bit uneasy over not being as honest as he could have been with Chiron.

“I’ll take them back down once the war is over.” Frey groaned a little as he stretched and saw his cabin coming into sight. “Until then…blood or not, they’re the enemy. None of them are children who have joined Kronus. Mislead – certainly. But I won’t allow a danger to the camp to remain. No matter how pissed off Chiron gets at me over it.”

Chiron’s parting words had put Frey on notice that he was risking more than his mentor’s ire over the last twist he’d put into the wards. He was risking his relationship with the centaur entirely. And as Chiron had been one of two forces of stability Frey had had all growing up – the other being his companion Heidi the Harvestmaiden – that was one hells of a risk to take.

He simply had to hope that after Chiron’s temper cooled and the war was over with less casualties that the centaur forgave him.

If not…well.

Frey knew what he was risking after all.

And he’d done it away.

He would mourn Chiron’s friendship and companionship – perhaps even his own welcome at Camp Half-Blood.

But he believed that _innocent_ lives were worth the price he would potentially pay to save them.

Apollo read much of Frey’s thoughts in his silence.

“For what it’s worth.” Apollo reiterated, shining, unearthly-blue eyes serious and almost seeming as if they would pierce straight through Frey and down into his very soul. “I thank you for it.” Then, as if a switch had been flipped, the moment of seriousness was over. “On the other hand, I’m definitely beginning to see what all the fuss is about you, Frey Haraldr.”

A smirk was Frey’s only warning as they both climbed the steps to his cabin and paused before the door, Apollo unable to enter what was effectively still Thanatos’s domain without the elder god’s permission, before he was swept up with an arm banding like steel against his waist and a hand like silk but with the hint of an archer’s callous rough against his neck and tilting his head to meet searing-hot lips.

Apollo’s kiss blazed like the sun he was lord of, it was sense-stealing and intoxicating, leaving Frey dazed long after the Lord of the Sun had stepped back, winked irreverently, and disappeared in a shower of gold and white sparks, no more than a streak against the near-dawn sky that flared for a split-second at the eastern horizon just before the sky began to lighten with the rising sun.

…

Chiron was furious alright.

So furious that he was still giving Frey the silent treatment nearly a week later when Percy finally arrived bearing tales of meeting Calypso and staying with her on Ogygia…and a little baffled over the sudden disappearance of a dozen campers he’d seen before leaving for the Labyrinth.

It was Annabeth in the end – after squeezing the stuffing out of him – that explained it to him.
“Frey told us all to stay inside the cabins while he checked the wards for whatever holes might be letting the monsters so close to breaching Camp.” Annabeth told him with a sigh. She was of two minds over Frey’s actions herself so it was a bit hard to explain without coloring the information with her own biases on the subject. “He…added something to them.”

“What?” Percy asked with a puzzled frown. This still wasn’t quite explaining to him why Chiron was giving Frey the cold-shoulder.

“Camp Half-Blood is supposed to be open to anyone with divine blood.” Annabeth said, then grimaced thinking over the screaming knock-down-drag-out fight Chiron and Frey got into at the Big House. The words weren’t audible to those who hadn’t been in the room but…that didn’t really matter. Everyone knew that things had nearly been bent beyond repair between the two main heads of the camp with Mr. D so often gone. “Frey…sort of…rescinded that. Through the wards.”

“What?” This time the word was a shout as Percy took a double take at Annabeth’s drawn face. “He can do that?”

“He has probably the most control over the wards except for the gods themselves…so yes.” Annabeth nodded with a pinched frown. “While we were sleeping he used the wards to search our minds somehow and expel anyone who had sided with Kronus but was staying here to spy or report back or undermine our defenses.” She rattled off, seething, though this time over the betrayal and not Frey’s actions. “He sent them – or so he said – to just outside the wards but they weren’t there when we woke up the next morning.” She shifted, biting at her cheek. “We mostly figure that they had a way to contact Ethan and got picked up.”

“Oh…well.” Percy scratched as his head. “That’s a good thing isn’t it? He did it to keep us safe I mean…”

“Yes and no.” She blew out a breath. “Chiron takes the sanctity of his oath to train us and watch over us very safe…and he feels like Frey made him unintentionally betray that by trusting him to tweak the wards. Plus…” And this was where Annabeth did tend to agree with Chiron. “All we have for proof is Frey’s word that that’s what he did so…”

“But.” Percy interrupted her, startled to realize that for once he was being the rational one of the two of them. “They were gone, picked up. Do you really think Ethan would have done that if they weren’t on his side.”

“No, I don’t.” Annabeth agreed. “But Frey didn’t give them a second chance either. He just…banished them, like that.” She snapped her fingers. “And only on his own authority.”

“I hate to say it.” Percy rolled his eyes. “But given who he is – and his connections up there,” he pointed towards the sky – and Olympus. “He kinda is the authority down here for how to handle this…this war with the Titans. Chiron’s not a general, Annabeth, you’ve said that yourself. He’s a trainer of heroes.” He shrugged and wandered off to find the half-blood in question before heading out after the clear-sighed Rachel to help him see through the maze. “Frey, however, is a general. And a good one so far. If the others who sided with Kronus want to come back after the war is over, then we should have some say then about it. Now?” He shook his head. “I’m with Frey on this one.”

“Calypso, huh?” Frey rubbed at the back of his neck a bit sheepishly. “She hear about her father yet?”
Percy snorted. “I know I’m younger than you, but I’m not a total idiot. She didn’t know and I wasn’t about to tell her considering that I was on the other side of the fight that got Atlas banished to Tartarus.”

Frey couldn’t help but wince.

Annabeth was already dealing with the fallout of having a goddess pissed at her – Percy certainly didn’t need a fucking witch who was also a goddess with an axe to grind for him. Say what you liked about Calypso, she was a loyal female, even when her father had abused her loyalty for his own ends. While Percy obviously felt something for her – as most of the heroes who end up in her care for a time do – and she him, it wouldn’t be enough to protect him if she found out he was involved Atlas’s slaying, even though Frey was the one who wielded the sword.

For Frey’s part…he hoped she stayed on her little paradise…otherwise he was planning on being a universe or two away once she was freed.

“That’s good.” Frey heaved a sigh. “Very good. Your clear-sighted friend is a good plan – the best you’re going to get anyway, short of the String to navigate the Labyrinth. Best make haste.” He advised the younger half-blood. “Ethan and Kronus have been too quiet lately, even with running into the Titan forces below-ground. The battle is coming soon…wouldn’t want you to miss it.”

“Ha ha.” Percy rolled his eyes. “This will just be so much fun. Annabeth and Rachel trying to find Daedalus before Ethan when they can hardly stand to be in the same room. Yay.”

“Could be worse.” Frey offered after a moment of silence sounded in the cabin, each of them sipping at either their cold soda or on this occasion elf-made wine.

“How?”

“You could have gotten your brain nearly snogged out by your lover’s son.” Frey resolutely refused to look over at Percy, even as the younger male stared goggle-eyed at him before bursting into laughter upon realizing that his semi-mentor was being utterly serious.

“By the Styx, Frey.” Percy had to set the soda down before he either spilled it or tried to take a drink and snorted it all over himself. “Only you, I swear to Zeus…”

“Please don’t.” Frey’s tone was nearly a whine. “Since it’s his bloody handsy hot-mouthed son that’s going to get me zapped like one of those electrified fly-swatters!”

That description didn’t quite help Percy get a hold of himself, Frey still ignoring him even as he started muttering into his wine and making Percy’s laughter worse with each description or disparagement of Apollo and/or Zeus himself.

…

It seemed like barely any time had passed when Frey felt a sudden surge of death-magic emanating from the West and looked over at Chiron with a curious half-grim half-proud smile.

“What is it?” The centaur asked, no longer giving Frey the silent treatment but still not over their argument either.

“Unless I’m mistaken.” Frey cocked his head to one side and gave a whoop once he felt the life-cord of Percy and the others still whole and undamaged. “The Ghost King has finally shown his hand.”
“But you’re…” Chiron started to say, then realization broke over his unaging face. “Nico…” He said it like a blessing.

“Mhmm.” Frey nodded, grinning.

“I could have sworn it meant you.” Luke commented from where he was sitting on the sparring-yard fence, the three of them having been watching – and coaching – some of the younger campers on their swordwork.

“When it comes to Prophecies.” Frey snarked, having more than a little experience with the fucking things. “I’ve found the obvious answer is rarely the foretold one. Oh, there’s exceptions.” He tapped the faded outline of the rune Sowilo that was still marking his forehead. “But often, prophecies are fulfilled in ways that are both self-evident and unexpected. Like Nico being the Ghost King instead of me or King Minos who betrayed him, or even his father Hades.” He waved a hand in a rolling gesture. “And so on.”

“What about the rest of it?” Luke asked, then called out a correction on a stance to one of their young charges, listening to Frey and Chiron break the current state of the Prophecy down.

“You shall delve into the darkness of the endless maze,
The dead, the traitor, and the lost one raise.
You shall rise or fall by the ghost king's hand,” Frey quoted, then ticked items off one by one. “The maze is self-evident, and now the third line as well with Nico’s intervention in their favor…though how then wandered back into Mount Othrys I’d really love to know.”

“The Labyrinth is just that.” Chiron noted, folding his arms over his chest. “And it has access points quite literally all over the surface world.”

“Noted.” Frey nodded then continued. “I think that the last one has been fulfilled, possibly twice over.”

“That’s And make an enemy far worse than Death, right?”

“Yes, and like I told Percy…” Frey sighed. “Death really isn’t all that bad.”

“From your perspective, Frey.” Chiron counselled him. “To most beings, especially young men and women, even those of divine heritage…death is something to be loathed and feared.”

“I know, still doesn’t make me any better able to understand it.” He answered. “But Annabeth did piss off Hera, as evidenced by her divine sigil leaving presents all over camp when she was here…”

Luke snickered at that and even Chiron had to hide a grin. Frey wasn’t much better. After all, Hera’s sacred animal – or one of them anyway – was the cow…and the bovines had been leaving their patties all over camp during the short week the girl had been in New York while Percy was on Ogygia.

“And well…” Frey sighed and then retold Percy’s tale of meeting Calypso, ending with: “and he didn’t inform her about her father, or anything really. So, that could be it too, a woman scorned both of them.”

“Calypso…” Chiron sighed. They were cousins…after a fashion, as Chiron was the son of Kronus and nephew of Atlas while Calypso was Atlas’s daughter. Still, it was hardly a relationship either claimed, like most children of the Titans who hadn’t been punished alongside them. “She’s as mercurial and unpredictable as the seas she rules…but given her very nature I would wager that you are in much more danger from her than Percy ever will be, Frey.”
“Yeah,” Frey groaned, covering his face with his hands before shaking it off and going out to train the kiddos on some drills. “I kinda figured that…”

Luke watched him walk away then mentioned to Chiron: “that still leaves two lines unfulfilled.”

“Don’t.” Chiron flicked his tail in annoyance. “Given the wording of those two lines…I’d rather not think on them before they come true.”

…

“They’re coming.” Annabeth burst out, and Chiron lifted his horn, giving three sharp blasts to summon the campers to take up arms.

“Correction.” Frey said, unsheathing his sword and summoning his spear, twirling them idly before coming to a rest position with the head of the spear angled towards the ground while the shaft laid diagonally across his back and up between his shoulders, sword edge resting on one shoulder as his clothes faded away, leaving dragonhide armor in its wake. In his mind he heard the thrum of the wards – particularly those surrounding the mouth of the Labyrinth. “They’re already here.”

“To arms!” Chiron shouted, a cry taken up by each of the cabin heads – and the captains of the half-blood army. Bow strung and an arrow on the string, Chiron ran for the rocks, not one doubt in his mind that Frey was absolutely correct, the half-blood in question keeping the pace while the others, Nico among them, fall behind, already winded and tired from the rush to beat the army to the camp.

Horns and war-cries sounded through Camp Half-Blood, as for the first time in memory a war came right to their doorstep with the shouts of a monstrous army that had been swelled by the absent-minded neglect of Olympus and flooded with disenfranchised lesser gods and half-bloods, many of whom barely warranted a thought to the Olympian Council let alone any real concern.

A foolish – and arrogant – oversight that Kronus was more than happy to reap the rewards of.

To give the Titan King credit where it was due, Kronus never once underestimated the damage his own flesh and blood were capable of – not that it had saved him from being torn to pieces in the end, a slight the Lord of Time was more than willing to avenge.

All the while, as campers were forming up and Chiron took his place commanding the archers and the rear guard while Frey took his commanding the vanguard as general, Luke at his side with Silena hidden far from New York – a safety measure she’d been infuriated by but one neither Luke nor Frey would relent over given her pregnancy – Frey kept his inner gaze locked on the wards and the army that was throwing squad after troop at to breach.

“Will they do it?” Luke asked in the sudden hush before the sharp plunge of first-blood.

Frey nodded, mouth tight and eyes bright.

It had never been a question of if, but of when and at what cost?

His goal had simply been to make it as costly as possible for Ethan and Kronus, along with a hidden something that Lucius and Severus had helped him fashion.

Let them come.

He had a surprise waiting.

Luke gave a blood-thirsty grin, blood pumping in anticipation. “Good.”
He had an axe to grind of his own against the Titan forces, and before now it had been far too
dangerous for him to risk going on any of the quests to meet the enemy. Now that they’d come to
him…well. That was a differently thing entirely, wasn’t it?

“Hold steady!” Frey ordered, nodding once in a wordless wish to stay safe and fight well to Luke,
then continuing through the crowd until his was standing at the very top of the rocks – and directly
above the crevice where in mere moments monsters and enemy half-bloods alike would come
pouring out onto them like waves crashing against sea-stacks. “Hold steady!”

By now even the furthest-flung camper could hear the sound of the army that laid just feet away on
the other side of the magical entrance to the Great Labyrinth, the cries and crash of the horde that
wanted to destroy their home, for many of them the only safety they’ve ever known, something Frey
wasted no time in reminding them.

“They’ve come to kill us!” He cried. “They’ve come to destroy our home! What will be our
answer?”

“Death! Death! Death!” The camp shouted in answer.

“For our home!” He cried back, raising his sword and pointing towards New York City and the
disguised Olympus. “For Olympus! May Ares bless our weapons and Lord Thanatos cut down our
enemies! For Death!”

“Death! Death! Death!”

Frey nodded, lowering into a crouch and whispering under his breath: “For Death, and for my Far.
May this army fall and flounder. Custódiet nos Di immoratles nobis.”

Watch over us the immortal gods.

…

“My favorite knife and a month’s worth of stable duty that the Warrior Mage has a trap hidden in
those wards.” Loki said as soon as his son’s brief call to battle was finished.

As had become almost a custom, the Aesir nobles were gathered to watch – and bet – over the
newest trials of his son.

That certainly didn’t help his nerves, nor did the knowledge that Frey had most definitely faced
longer odds and scenarios more likely to be undoing than a simple pitched battle against monsters…
but he had face to keep, and a reputation that given his “close” relationship to his former-acolyte’s
offspring, couldn’t withstand the scrutiny that a closer look at his behavior regarding Frey.

“Done.” Sif took him up on the bet with a sneer. “He’s a warrior through and through. He’ll abide
by honorable combat rather than mere parlor tricks for all that he is a mage.”

Loki snarled at her, his temper hardly helped by the barely-veiled jab over his own abilities – and
how he often uses them to either keep his brother, and by extension Lady Sif and the Warriors Three,
alive or to clean up after one or another of their messes before Odin finds out and ends up banishing
his adopted-brother’s friends to the furthest reaches of the Yggdrasil.

“Friends, remember?” Fandral drawled, arching a brow with a significant look at the still smiling but
not as loudly joyous Thor.

“Of course.” Loki gave a polite nod towards “Lady” Sif. “I’m sure she meant nothing by it – as
usual."

“Shh!” Volstagg hushed them. “I think I see some yielding in the wards!”

With that, the betting picked up apace, though Loki would like no wager so much as the stable-duty Sif was about to have to serve.

He wasn’t even cheating – this time.

Communication between them was once more done in the utmost of secrecy given the renewed interest Asgard had shown in Loki’s son after the dual against Ares, and the longer the two sides clashed – Olympian and Titanomachy – the higher their fervor grew.

He grimaced into his mead horn.

The sooner all this was done and over with, and his son could go back to world-hopping, teaching budding heroes, and being a father himself, the better.

…

Asgard wasn’t the only observer of Frey at that pivotal moment - the first sortie between armies and not just skirmishes between groups for the conflict thus far.

Hardly.

Krios beneath the sky howled – and was again mocked by his fellow Titans – as they watched from the Titan-side of the conflict – while on Olympus the Council and many other gods watched from on high, all with bated breath and apprehensive looks.

Save between Zeus and Ganymede, especially between looks shot at Apollo.

There was a fresh…fire in Frey, something that had been banked and smoldering since the godling had nearly been taken over by the essence of a Dementor a few years prior.

And if Apollo was the cause…well.

Zeus was selfish – he knew he was – but he was rarely jealous save over his power and Ganymede.

If giving his permission for Apollo to pursue Frey would warrant a return more often of the fiery general who could rouse an army to battle in moments more often, then it might be in Zeus’s own best interest to take a small step back and allow things to run their course.

It wasn’t as if Frey had proven unwilling to have multiple lovers, and sharing him with one more would hardly be a hardship with most of Zeus’s attentions focused on stuffing his dearly unlamented father back down the dark hole he’d crawled out of in Tartarus.

…

Zeus wasn’t the only one to notice the change in Frey.

Luke couldn’t help but grin, even as he cheered and cried along with the others at his best-friend’s speech, and seeing the fire back in Frey’s eyes, the sheer life that had been missing for a long time… he was ecstatic for his friend even as he worried over the target Frey was painting on his own back with every word and action against Kronus.

It was almost as if…blue eyes shot wide.
No, there was no if about it.

Frey was doing it on purpose, painting that target and drawing Kronus’s ire away from Percy.

Trying to keep the light inside Percy – some strange combination of innocence and hope and joy that had been snuffed, at least temporarily, in Frey – going strong, even when his own had almost disappeared under the weight of the destiny Frey had both been born into and actively chosen.

Luke smiled to himself.

The sly fucker.

And very much like the man who had faced down a Titan head on – twice – to save someone he cared about, first Luke when he was struggling with Kronus for control of his very self, and then to save the entire quest group last year.

For all the grand gestures and heroic deeds that Frey seemed to act out the way others ate breakfast – with habitual regularity – it was the little things that no one ever noticed and Frey never mentioned that showed Luke time and time again that when the moment came, godhood wouldn’t really change Frey one little bit.

Like trading a massive debt from Zeus so his best-friends could have their divine parents at their wedding.

Or drawing the fire of a Titan King and general to buy someone else time to find a way to end them once and for all.

Both completely in character, and both done with zero intention of ever being noticed doing it or thanks for it – just because from Frey’s point of view, they were what was right.

The barrier bent and flowed out, bringing the Titan army with it even as Luke laughed quietly to himself.

It was things like that, the quiet things, unnoticed and underappreciated, that to Luke screamed out Frey’s parentage for all the worlds to see…though it seemed no one ever did.

After all, they wouldn’t be the tricksters they are, let alone father and son, if Frey and Loki couldn’t their audience blind to their sleight of hand.

…

A roar of triumph was the sign Frey had been waiting for, the godling swiping his hand – in which he’d poured out the contents of the vial he’d been wearing around his neck since setting the wards on the Labyrinth, the mingled blood of himself and the six who’d lent him their power – across the grounding rune and activating the first part of the “surprise” for the advancing force, making the wards seem to break – but instead bend and flex and ripple around them as they rushed from the underground tunnels, blind to the lines of power that wrapped neatly around them as they paid no heed to barrage of arrows and spears raining down on their heads from the campers.

The first wave fell in moments, the second not long after, but it was with the third – and the arrival of Kampe, snake-haired winged centauroid creature who is half-woman, half-dragon with the heads of various mutated wild animals growing from her human torso. She was a monster who imprisoned the Hundred-Handed Ones and Cyclopes during the First Great War, feared by all, and had a grudge against Percy and Annabeth as they had fought and evaded her grasp in her lair in the Labyrinth, including helping to free many of her prisoners. Kampe was also one of Kronus’s fiercest generals
with Krios imprisoned and Atlas slain and banished to Tartarus.

With her at the knife-point, the Titan forces were finally able to break through the wall of death-from-above and engage Frey’s vanguard of swordsmen, led by Luke and positioned in classic phalanx with shield-bearers carrying spears covering and protecting Luke and the best they had to offer with a sword darting out to cut down the enemy before retreating to the safety of the shield wall.

Cracking his neck, Frey leapt from the boulders, flipping in mid-air and thrusting his goblin-forged spear straight through the wing-joints of Kampe, grounding the monstrous bitch with a roar.

Shrieking curses in her rage, her snakes hissing insults that Frey stored away for later use – creative creatures these ones – he landed before her with a light step, twirling his sword in his hand, all the while waiting, waiting, there was something, some strand of Fate that he couldn’t see, that was staying his hand and keeping him from springing his trap…at least not yet.

Bodies fell and swords drank blood, and the Titan forces seemed unending, when a massive cry – and the ear-deafening bay of a hellhound – shook the forest.

Daedalus and Mrs. O’Leery, his massive pet hellhound, had finally arrived, bringing with them someone – or perhaps something – that Frey never thought he’d see in all his life, no matter how long it managed to be.

“It’s Briares!” Percy shouted for joy.

Briares, the last of the Hundred-Handed Ones, the progenitures of the cyclopes and the mightiest of the gigantes.

More importantly, someone with a massive bone to pick with Kampe, who no longer knew whom to focus her rage on – the prey in front of her who had wounded her so grievously, or her escaped pet who she had kept cowed and afraid for years beyond memory, all the way back to the First Great War between the Titanomachy and the Olympians.

With a roar, Briares picked up stones with his hundred hands and began pelting them at Kampe after she unwisely taunted him, leading to Frey making a swift retreat – he had no desire to be buried alive, as Briares was in the process of doing a rather spectacular job of doing to the Titan general.

Lowering his sword, Frey looked around, seeing that the momentum was beginning to swing once more in their favor as he saw Mrs. O’Leery shaking a Scythian Dracaenae, humanoid females with twin tails who made a large portion of the Titan forces from their information, and the archers were being harried by a group of cannibal Laistrygonian giants, among other battles being fought, many – far too many – between demigods on opposing sides.

Before Frey could act, another noise sounded, making Frey’s head whip around in shock.

It was a Panic, the power of the great Lord of the Wild who Percy and the others had finally found through the Labyrinth before returning to camp. He was the lost from the prophecy, faded now, but not before bestowing a gift on all who had been there to witness his passing, save for Nico who as a being of death was anathema to all Pan had been. Grover had apparently been given a little more than the others, as the Panic ability had helped win the First Great War in the hands – or voice – of Pan, making all his enemies scatter and run in fear.

Perfect timing, Frey smiled, and whispered a single command:

“Levicorpus.”
For those with at least a fraction of human and divine blood – read: demigods – and encased in the wards, the spell worked as designed, lifting them by their ankles to hand helplessly in the air.

For those not demigods, such as giants and dracaenae…well.

At least monster bodies disappear easily once they’ve been beheaded, Frey using Lucius’s vicious protectiveness to turn a simple pranking jinx into a lethal garroting curse.

However, he’d keyed it specifically into the camp wards surrounding the Labyrinth entrance, so anyone who had been wise – in other words, the most dangerous among the Titan offensive – and fled with Kampe’s entombment weren’t affected.

Panting a bit from the sudden magical drain, Frey wobbled, then plopped ungracefully down onto one knee, using his sword to steady him and keep him from toppling over completely, his spear now buried with Kampe.

The sound of hooves on grass had him lifting his head and paying attention to his surroundings, able to hear the cheers of the camp, over the rushing of blood in his ears.

“I am sorry, Frey.” Chiron said with true regret as he stared down at the exhausted Frey. What had seemed like moments and hours all at once had in reality been close to an hour of open battle. A battle that had been won…but at a heavy price of lives on both sides of the field. “I should have trusted you.”

Frey laughed, more than a hint of bitterness in the sound as he lifted his weary head to stare up at the unchanging face of his former mentor.

“Why?” Frey asked, a bit breathless as he struggled back to his feet, shrugging off Chiron’s offered hands. “I wouldn’t if I were you.”

“You didn’t turn the wards against the others, not fully as I feared…” Chiron began to explain.

“I should have.” Frey cut him off. “On another day I would have. I can, I could. I have that in me, Chiron.” He gave a quirk of his lips far too world-weary to be a smile. “Not everything I got from my parents was good. You didn’t trust me. Good. You never know, that distrust one day might keep you alive.”

With that he wandered away, at least the appearance of graceful, predatory ease returning that was his hallmark, to assist Nico with the maneuver he was attempting, freeing Daedalus’s soul from its construct to level the Labyrinth – and ensure it could never be used against anyone ever again.

And leaving behind him a thoughtful – and strangely proud – centaur to think on his words…and what they implied about the mystery surrounding the divine parent of one Frey Haraldr, chosen of Thanatos.
Chapter Thirty-One

Lokison

Author’s Note: As I’m certain my Facebook lovelies already know, this is the last “real” chapter for Lokison, with only a short epilogue coming after it to set up for the next installment in the Frey of Asgard saga. Yes, I’ve dubbed it a saga as it has grown and gotten away from me in ways I’m still goggling over.

That said, this chapter is a beast so I wouldn’t sit down to read it unless you’ve got some time on your hands.

Credit where it’s due: as usual, the Oracle’s Prophecy is taken almost entirely from the Percy Jackson books, as are some portions of dialogue or descriptions of the more unique PJ characters as well as a big chunk that is almost word-for-word from the book when we get to the end...you’ll probably know it when you see it if you’ve read the book.

All that said, please enjoy!

(Second Note: for those of you not up on PJ cannon, Hitler was a half-blood.)

Chapter Thirty-One: Of Legends and Legacies

“Wars don’t simply go away. They are only postponed to someone else’s advantage.” - Nicolo Machiavelli.

…

In the aftermath of the Battle, Frey had faced a serious dilemma: what to do now that he’d yanked the tiger’s tail for good and all?

As Luke had confronted him over once the post-battle furor had died down, he’d painted himself as a target, one that had seriously undermined Kronus’s hold over his troops and allies, and with that came a level of danger Frey would never willingly subject his children to.

Which had made for a very…intense discussion via paired mirrors with Draco over Frey’s decision to stay in New York until Kronus was defeated, with an unspoken dark or hanging over their heads, one where Frey never came home because his father’s fears were fulfilled and he failed to live long enough to become immortal.

The attacks on the camp by Kronus’s army had stopped – which only made Frey and the others suspicious of what, exactly Kronus had planned, a paranoia that hadn’t been alleviated in the weeks since the Titan King had faced a devastating loss thanks to the combined efforts of Frey, Percy, Nico, and the now-dead Daedalus who had allowed Nico to release his soul from his golem to destroy the Labyrinth and fulfill the Annabeth’s quest from the Oracle.

Hermes was harried beyond belief running between the Western front where the Olympian gods were battling the great elder monster Typhon, who had sired many other monsters with the “Mother of Monsters” Echidna, and the Eastern front beneath the waves where Poseidon’s realm was under constant attack from Oceanus, the Titan Lord of the Ocean. The latter news of which was rather disheartening, as with many others Oceanus had not taken up arms against Zeus during the First Great War. That he – and others – had chosen to support Kronus now, was merely more fuel to the
fire surrounding Zeus’s imbalanced, selfish rule.

As for Typhon…well.

He’d been imprisoned and sleeping beneath Mount St. Helens…but had nearly been awakened by Percy’s destruction of the forge, allowing Kronus to finally find the elder monster.

Between the two fronts, storms were slamming both sides of North America, so such an extent that even the Myst didn’t suffice to keep mortals blind to the danger they were in as their country became the battleground between the two ancient armies.

Not all the half-blood had decided to remain based at Camp, several such as Percy who lived in the City tended to commute back and forth between home and Camp as needed for missions to harry the Titan lines, as Hermes stopped often between the two fronts to bring news to the Camp and relay points where their forces might be of help.

Nico, in his way, had disappeared not long after the Battle, only popping back in to congratulate Percy on living to sixteen and officially becoming the bearer of the Great Prophecy…as well as a rather cryptic message regarding his uncovering the secret of Ethan’s near-invulnerability.

The enemy leader had faced off against Percy several times, including in open combat at Mouth Othrys where he fell from a great height – a height that should have killed him, only for Frey to disabuse them of that notion after he’d sought the son of Nemesis’s life-string and confirmed him as still among the living after each and every confrontation.

From his father, Percy had been given a sand dollar that he wore on a cord around his neck, Poseidon’s version of the tattoos that Frey had been given on coming of age – though being Norse and not Greek, Frey’s rites of passage had been at thirteen and not sixteen like Percy’s.

Honestly, if it weren’t for Zeus, Ganymede, and Thanatos running interference with the other gods and using the Myst to cloak some of Frey’s essence, he would have been discovered as a Norse half-blood ages ago, Loki likewise using his powers upon the Aesir nobility to help keep them from growing too curious about the strange warrior-mage that had become the equivalent of their favorite reality tv star.

“Hey, Frey!” Charlie Beckendorf called out from the pegasi paddock. “Ready to head out, you coming?”

Frey called back an affirmative, slinging his pack over this shoulder and making for Knave, his favorite among the winged horses, Percy’s Blackjack taking wing along Knave and Charlie’s mount Diamond.

Percy wouldn’t thank them for interrupting his time away from camp…but they had a lead and they needed to act on it before the chance was lost to deal Ethan one hells of a blow, even if it still wasn’t equal to the losses of Atlas and Krios, it would hopefully curb their numbers if nothing else.

For long moments, Frey just closed his eyes and let the wind rush over him, enjoying the freedom down to his toes.

He didn’t often fly, even after he’d taken up with Zeus, but every time he did it was almost impossible for him to force himself back to the ground and the responsibilities that waited for him there.

Far too soon for his taste, they were coming up on Mrs. Jackson’s car that the newly licensed Percy had taken out for a drive…apparently with company.
Frey winced at seeing the seething glance Rachel cast them for interrupting her “moment” with Percy, if his ears were working right – and of course they were – then she’d just been inviting the handsome half-blood to come with her on her yearly vacation with her family down in the Bahamas.

Rachel was a conundrum to Frey.

She was clearly more than a garden-variety mortal, her clear-sight ability that saw through the Myst as if it wasn’t even there was one hell of a clue after all, even if you ignored her willingness to step up and fight to help Percy and the others escape from Mount Othrys…even if her weapon of choice at the time had been a plastic hairbrush that she threw with great accuracy and nailed one of the Titans in the eye.

Wealthy – and hating every moment of it – she was an artist and not the socialite her family would have preferred.

Her interest in simple – to a mortal anyway – Perseus Jackson had been shrugged off by her distant parents as just another rebellion.

Frey was a little worried – for her sake – just what it was she’d had to trade in order to get Percy an invitation to the Bahamas…especially now that they were about to wreck those plans before they even came to fruition.

Well…Annabeth might finally stop acting like a bear with a sore paw after she hears that Frey and Charlie kept Percy from going off with the mortal girl…though likely would be more than a little miffed that the young man had been hanging out with her anyway.

For a girl that wasn’t dating Percy, and still called him Seaweed Brain more often than his name, she certainly didn’t act like it.

“What is it?” Percy sighed. He was a little bugged that they’d interrupted his meet-up with Rachel…which he was now realizing was more like a date than he was entirely comfortable with. Yeah, he liked Rachel. She was pretty, and smart, and funny. She also wasn’t a demigoddess with all the baggage that came with it.

But he always got a little uncomfortable when she did things that made him think she liked him as more than a friend…and with the world being like it is he wasn’t sure about to do about it.

And all of that was before you added Annabeth into the equation.

“Time to go, Perce.” Charlie told him, Blackjack nudging the half-blood insistently.

Charlie felt for the guy, he wouldn’t like it either if his date with Cassie, daughter of Demeter, was interrupted.

Still, they had a mission, and given that it was the Princess Andromeda, the ship that they knew from previous encounters carried a large number of Titan forces and had been spotted off the New Jersey coast…well.

They needed to haul ass and blow the fucker sky-high, which was Charlie’s job.

Frey and Percy’s was to guard him and help him scatter the charges all over the ship.

They had the perfect plan, and the element of surprise.

Which meant, naturally, that everything went straight to hell in short order.
They made it on the ship and down to the forward engine room without trouble other than a handful of telekhines which weren’t much of a match for a trio of half-bloods, Charlie while not being as vigorously martial in his training as Percy had been from the start and Frey could be at times, was still a blacksmith like Hephaestus his father, and had the massive strength from long hours at a forge to prove it, swinging both sword and hammer with an ease that well-deserved to be feared.

At that point, after spotting a diagram of the ship in the engine room, it was decided that they make the same mistake that had taken down many a character from horror films – they had to split up.

Percy volunteered to venture down into the belly of the ship and plant charges along the hull to ensure the swift-sinking of the vessel – and its monstrous cargo – while Frey and Charlie would take care of the secondary engines in the rear of the ship.

All in all, it should prove to make on hell of a boom.

Charlie had rigged them with a short timer and the detonator was in his watch, so having Frey to guard his back was paramount or the whole operation would have been for nothing.

That said, he still cursed the air blue when a voice resounded through the ship.

“**Intruders.**” The smooth male voice rang with power and made the hair on the back of Frey’s neck rise.

He knew that voice.

He’d heard it twice before – once from a golden glowing coffin pulsing with divine essence in Mount Othrys, and the other booting out a squatter from his best-friend’s mind.

Kronus had finally regenerated and taken living form.

“**By the Styx.**” Charlie cursed, echoing Frey’s unspoken thoughts. “They’ve got Percy, that has to be it.”

“**Probably to buy us time.**” Frey agreed, eyes grim as they met Beckendorf’s. “C’mon then. Let’s wrap this up and then go haul his fish loving ass out of Kronus’s slimy paws.”

“**This is the last one.**” Charlie told him, rushing over to the tank on the far side of the smaller engine room – a fuel tank or Frey would eat his sword scabbard and all. He fiddled with the squarish, brown-paper wrapped package a moment, before sliding it down to jam between the tank and the outer wall. “And done. Let’s go ruin Kronus’s day, shall we?” He asked, hefting his warhammer in one hand and a short sword in the other.

“Let’s.” Frey gave a vicious grin that echoed Beckendorf’s own, unleashing his Peverell sword from it’s place at his back.

There were only two friendlies on this ship after all, not like the Labyrinth.

He could keep **two** people clear of his poisoned blade while still being effective, dozens was a different animal entirely.

“**Captain’s cabin is this way.**” Charlie started down a hallway with sure feet. “Let’s hope Percy can keep him busy while **not** driving Kronus to murder all at the same time.”
“Here’s hoping.” Frey laughed a little. “But given how smartassed the little fucker can be I wouldn’t count on it – better make haste.”

…

Getting close to the Captain’s office where the generals and Kronus had gathered – along with Percy – was easy enough thanks to Frey’s ability to cloak them in shadows.

Dealing with the fact that a boy Frey had helped train since he was a skinny little shit of a ten-year-old had been completely taken over and subsumed by Kronus who was possessing him…that was hard.

All that had made Ethan Ethan was absent in those glowing golden eyes – well, eye.

Sometime between poisoning Thalia’s tree and meeting him at Mount Othrys over a year ago, Ethan had lost his right eye, and now the figure of Kronus-in-Ethan wore a golden patch over the empty socket.

No one knew how it happened – not even Chris Rodriguez, one of the disenfranchised half-bloods that had been won over by Kronus, and later found in the Labyrinth half-mad by Percy and Annabeth, had any idea.

Still, it was eerie, worse by far than facing Kronus inside Luke’s mind had been.

Percy was taking it rather well, but then he’d barely known Ethan, not like Charles who had known him for years, and Frey who had trained and taught him for years more than that.

It gave Frey a unique perspective on what it must be like for Chiron each and every day to train heroes, only to have them become people of myth and legend that he didn’t even recognize any more like Heracles or Hitler.

The trio of empousai with their beautiful faces a discordant note when placed on their bodies that had one leg of bronze and another like that of a goat answered Frey’s question of how Percy had been found – the leader, Kelli, had faced and been slain by Percy before…and had remembered his scent. Empousai were similar to vampires, and preferred to feast on beauty – whether male or female. Kelli, it seemed, was currently begging “The Great Lord Kronus” to gift her with Percy’s death.

“Dude…” Charlie whispered in disbelief. “Are those demonic cheerleaders?”

Frey bit back a laugh at that.

Yes, the empousai were dressed as cheerleaders.

The why he had no idea of…but somehow he found it rather fitting.

In answer, Frey reached down and hit the start on the detonator, ignoring Charlie’s shocked look, then with a “follow-me” look, sprinted down the hall and towards the deck, flicking a minor pinching hex towards Percy as he went.

He would just have to trust that as a son of Poseidon, Percy would be able to make his own way home – which is exactly what he told Beckendorf when the other half-blood bellowed at him mid-swing of his hammer as they fought their way to where they’d left the pegasi.

“This barge is warded!” Frey shouted back. “Kronus knows about my shadow-stepping after I used it at Mount Othrys and has protected both the mountain and this ship against it! We have to go,
now! Percy’s a big boy in the middle of the ruddy ocean with all the powers of a Poseidon-sired half-blood at his fingertips! He can take care of himself!”

With a final kick-to-the-head of a fellow half-blood, one who’d chosen the wrong side and that he would mourn later in private, Frey leapt up onto the back of Knave and cut the line tying Blackjack to the deck, Beckendorf following seconds behind him.

As they launched up and to the east, Frey saw a figure dive off the poop deck with a celestial bronze sword in its hand.

With a laugh, he urged Knave further away as a quiet *beep* sounded from Beckendorf’s watch and the *Andromeda* blew sky-high.

“Let’s go!” He called.

“Not to be a broken record.” Beckendorf called back ill-tempered by the rash – but effective – run for their lives. “But *what about Percy!?”

Blackjack snorted in agreement, the feisty Pegasus looking like he’d like nothing more than to give Frey a mighty kick to his ass.

In answer, Frey jerked his head towards the sea surface, where a whirlpool was forming with a limp figure in the very center before sucking it down and away, then disappeared.

“I think he’s due for a meeting with his old man.”

…

Frey was right, if a little overconfident in Percy’s skills as he’d not quite cleared the ship far enough and took some backlash from the *Andromeda* explosion.

Still, considering that immediately prior to waking up in his father’s palace beneath the waves the last thing he remembered was booking ass away from a giant crab that he’d killed – by going for the underbelly with Riptide…and that had been a raunchy smell that made him glad his clothes apparently didn’t survive the explosion other than his camp necklace – and enraging Kronus to new heights before jumping off the nearest railing and into the sea, he couldn’t really blame Frey for starting the timer on the charges and leaving a son of Poseidon to escape via the sea.

Not that he wouldn’t deck him – or try anyway – later for the stinging hex to his ass, but that was more principal than anything.

It was something that he and other half-blood appreciated about Frey, no matter their other issued with their fearless and Olympus-appointed war-leader.

He trusted them to do their part, no matter how small or large, no matter the age or powers or determination (read: divine parentage) of the half-blood in question.

You signed up for a job, he let you do the job.

And if you fucked it up?

Well…he’d run your ass ragged in the training ring until your only desire in the *universe* was to never have to climb into the ring with Frey in that *disappointed*-but-determined-to-save-your-ass mood ever, ever again.
Annabeth had told him once, that not too long after she came to Camp she’d done some digging on why a young beanpole of a kid – her words – was training and helping and going out on missions when nobody else his age did. He’d been, like, *eight* something when he’d saved Annabeth and Luke and helped turn Thalia into a tree, so he could see why she’d been curious. What she told him she found had blown his mind.

Frey was their general, their leader, because he’d been living – and actively *training* – at Camp Half-Blood since he was fifteen months old.

The only half-blood in *history* to have had a monster draw or that kind of tragedy in their life prior to Frey was Heracles.

That was it.

Two half-bloods in all the history of the Olympian pantheon, but while Heracles had gone on and been raised among mortals, Thanatos had brought Frey to Chiron and given him a rotation of pretty but seriously *scary* teachers from the Harvestmaidens in addition to his main caretaker, a Harvestmaiden captain named Heidi who was gone before Percy ever made it to Camp the first time.

He’d been trained, almost from *birth*, to survive a prophecy that had killed his mortal parents.

It kinda helped Percy get a bit of perspective on his own destiny-of-doom hanging over his head, especially with his father refusing his help to stay and fight Oceanus’s forces and sending him back to hear the Great Prophecy for himself…and maybe, *finally*, understand both why it’s been kept from him and why everyone fears it so much.

Percy at least got to be a regular kid up until one of his teachers turned out to be a Fury and the other one a centaur.

Frey never really got that.

The only *regular* in Frey’s life from the little Percy was allowed to see of it every now and again, was probably contained in the single photo on Frey’s nightstand in the cabin, which showed a white-blond haired guy who was so *pretty* he could be on of Aphrodite’s children being held from behind by a laughing and smiling Frey, an expression that was rarely seen on the often-serious half-blood unless he was pulling a prank with Luke or the Stoll brothers or being teased by Silena. Cradled in both men’s arms – and Percy *still* didn’t know how it was possible but had been told that Frey and his boyfriend back in England had somehow used *magic* to have kids, how that happened he didn’t even…anyway – were three swaddled bundles, two in green and one in purple, all with the still-scrunched but not too red faces of almost-newborns. Percy would be a year’s kitchen duty with the harpies that if they opened their eyes, one of the kids probably had eyes like quicksilver after their one dad and jewel-green like the other, with a genetic-throw back for the third.

*Happy* was rarely a word used in conjunction with Frey of the line of Thanatos…and Percy really couldn’t think of anything sadder than that as he easily swam to the last bit to the water’s edge, bidding the hippocampi that had given him a lift goodbye.

Tyson, who he’d also reunited with beneath the waves, as well as getting a look at his father’s wife and their son-and-heir Triton…both of whom had been understandably unimpressed with *his* presence in *their* home…had remained to work in the forges of their father’s palace, helping the best way he knew.

Other than filling Percy in on the state of the war – Typhon ever-moving and growing more powerful, Oceanus and Aigaigos (Oceanus’s partner) were attacking relentlessly, Hades staying
stubbornly secluded in the Underworld, and lastly Aigaigos protecting Kronus and several others from going down with the Princess Andromeda when Poseidon had lashed out at the wreckage in retaliation for nearly killing his son – and insisting that it was time to hear the prophecy, Poseidon had been rather...weary.

Well, that and epically pissed off at his brothers for leaving him to fight and defend his kingdom alone.

Shaking it off, having too much already on his plate to worry himself to death over a god that’s been kicking Titan ass since not long after the formation of their universe, Percy set his jaw and marched determinedly up to the Big House.

It was time to get some answers.

Answers which were apparently kept in a beaded leather bag hanging around the nearly-mummified remains of the Oracle of Delphi.

Which was just...eww.

…

“He’s back?” Frey asked Chiron as he joined the council-in-progress in the Big House dining room. The centaur had sent out the call as soon as Percy had entered the cabin and beelined straight for the attic stairs. Chiron nodded, the two of them keeping their own counsel as the cabin leaders for Ares and Apollo – Clarisse and Michael respectively – devolved into yet another argument over a stupid spoil of war.

Granted, even Frey thought the flying chariot they’d liberated from the Titan forces last week was pretty fucking awesome, but you didn’t see him losing sight of the big-picture for the sake of wounded pride either.

He was going to have to do something about Clarisse, especially as he could almost visibly see her getting ready to dig in her heels and pitch a wobbly.

At this point he was simply hoping that whatever rash decision her temper led her into – like many children of Ares – that it was one that was remedied with a smack to the face with reality and not one he’d have to take drastic measures to correct.

When Percy came down the stairs, leather pouch held tightly in one hand and a crumpled piece of aged paper in the other, teeth clenched so hard Frey could nearly hear his molars crying out in pain, the array of squabbling teenagers – plus a watchful Luke – instantly silenced. As if moving on automatic, Percy opened his mouth and repeated the words that had already burned themselves into his consciousness. Granted, Frey could still say his own prophecy word-for-word even now that it had been fulfilled for years so it wasn’t like he could talk.

“A half-blood child of the eldest gods
Shall reach sixteen against all odds
And see the world in endless sleep,
The hero’s soul, cursed blade shall reap
A single choice shall end his days,
Olympus to preserve or raze.”

“Raise?” Connor Stoll, one of Luke’s younger half-brothers, perked up. “That’s not that bad is it?”

“The word is a homonym.” Annabeth pointed out with a strained voice, her perpetually-serious gaze
looked on washed-out sea-green. She went on to explain at once, used to using words around some of the campers that had to be given context for them to understand what she was saying. “One that is sounds the same, but has different spellings and meanings. *Raze*, with a z and no i, means to destroy or complete entirely.”


“Oh…” Connor whispered, white-faced and serious for once. The Stoll twins were the living personifications of Hermes’s “mischief” title at times, but they were fierce fighters and shockingly good thieves…not that that last bit was encouraged but…*sons of Hermes* after all, they tended to get a bit of leeway, if spending a lot of time running from irate campers who hadn’t yet figured out how to booby-trap their cabins well enough to keep them out.

“Percy.” Frey said with command. “Do we have to repeat the conversation I had last year with Annabeth about reading too much into Prophecy?”

“No.” Percy whispered roughly, shoving down the knee-jerk reaction of panic and fear in the face of Frey’s unimpressed and signature eyebrow lift. The guy could give Spock lessons on vocal brow raises. He shuddered out a breath, trying to expel the terror at the same time. It helped – if only a little – the faces of the head campers and the trio of Frey-Chiron-Luke doing more than any platitude regarding prophecies being wooly or hard to figure out in the moment or whatever. “No, you don’t.” He said stronger, straightening his shoulders and coming to stand at the table which was covered with a map of New York. “What’s going on with the campaign up here?” He asked, diving into the war with both feet. He’d freak out some more later over being possibly reaped by a “cursed blade.” “Has Grover reported back yet?”

After getting tossed out of the Council of Clover Elders by the stick-in-the-mud satyrs who had accused him of blasphemy for reporting Pan’s fading – even with a trio of half-bloods and Tyson to back him up – Grover had gone out to spread the news of Pan-in-us-all to encourage the creatures of the Wild such as satyrs and centaurs and nyads and nymphs to take up the charge of protecting the wilds, and standing against Kronus’s destructive ways.

“No.” Annabeth nibbled at her lower lip, distracting Percy for a split-second before he dragged his mind back into focus on the war and not the gutter. Having ADHD was a bitch when they weren’t in battle and able to use their hard-wired abilities as they were meant to be used – to keep them alive. “I was talking with Juniper,” Grover’s girlfriend who was a dryad, “last night while keeping watch and she’s a wreck. He hasn’t reported back now in weeks. Do you get anything over your sympathetic connection?”

Percy and Grover for some reason – either their friendship or having saved each other again and again – had a sort of telepathic connection that usually manifests through visions. Annabeth and Chiron were certain it had more to do with Percy’s power, many powerful half-bloods often had visions – sometimes inconsequential and sometimes not – and Percy was certainly that. He also tended to have more – and more accurate – visions than most. A fact that he was pretty sure had something to do with Apollo trying to get around the curse Hades had placed on the Oracle than anything else.

Apollo and Artemis were hands-down Percy’s – and most half-bloods’ – favorite gods for being much more active and helpful than the others, often including their own divine parents.

Percy was no different, except that his dad came first on his very short list of favorite deities.

But since he’d actually been able to *meet and talk to his dad*, and more than just at the yearly Solstice meet-up, he wasn’t a normal sample of half-blood either.
Closing his eyes, not unlike how Frey would often do the same to focus on someone’s living-or-dead status, Percy felt for the link that existed in his mind and finding…nothing.

Well, not entirely.

“He’s sleeping.” Percy frowned, opening his eyes to the expectant looks on his fellow-campers’ faces. Except for Clarisse who was some form of half-worried-about-Chris, who she’d taken a shine to while helping him recover, and half-pissed. “Like, really, really deep. I’m not even getting an impression of dreams or anything. It’s…odd.” He settled on that, it was the best he could describe the feedback he was getting from the connection.

Setting it aside for the moment, Percy reported what his dad had told him about Typhon, and that another Titan had entered the war and was helping Oceanus against his dad and had saved Kronus and some of the Titan army from going down with the ship.

“Oceanus taking the field, like many others, is not a good sign by any means.” Chiron sighed, shifting restlessly. “Neither is the constant division among the Olympian ranks. They only last time because they were united against Kronus. I fear the outcome of this war if they’re not able to put their squabbles behind them.” He finished with a pointed stare first at Clarisse and then Michael.

Which only served to start Clarisse back up and into her rant against the “injustice” of the Apollo cabin being granted the flying chariot.

She was halfway through a threat to force the Camp to fight without the Ares half-bloods when Frey shut her down—hard.

“Clarisse.” His voice was soft. “That’s enough.”

“You can’t!”

“I can.” He said, cutting her off again and making her face turn an unattractive shade of purple. “And I have. Now get up.” He stood. “We’re going to take a walk.”

Silently, the war council watched as one of the most temperamental leaders left a step behind one of the most rational…well, most of the time anyway.

The quiet rang through the Big House for several long moments after the bang of the front door slamming behind the unlikely pair.

“I’ve never seen him like that.” Percy whispered, as if Frey could hear him still and drag him along for Clarisse’s imminent “come to Jesus talk” as his mother Sally would put it. “That anger…it was so…”

“Cold.” Luke groaned out a sigh, slumping forward to rest his forehead against the wooden table. “He’s going to tear her a new one.”

“You’ve seen him like that before?” Annabeth asked, mystified.

She wasn’t alone, the rest of the campers traded perplexed glances over the abrupt end to both Clarisse’s rant and their meeting.

“We both have,” Luke wobbled a thumb between himself and Chiron. “Frey’s temper may be hot but his true fury, his rage?” He clicked his tongue under his breath. “Ice cold. That is how you know the shit is really going to hit the fan.” Luke shivered a bit, remembering the one time he’d seen it—when Luke had left him behind and nearly gotten killed by Ladon on his stupid failed quest.
There was nothing in the world that would entice him into trading places with Clarisse in that moment.

No way in Tartarus would he ever face Frey like that again.

Not if he could help it.

…

“Where are we going?” Clarisse snapped, only to shut her mouth with a click of teeth at the roiling temper and icy fury locked up tight in the gaze that Frey leveled on her.

She was a child of Ares, she knew bloodlust and a warrior on the edge of berserker rage when she saw it.

And Frey was dancing on the knife’s edge, her words back in the Big House setting light to something she was ninety-nine-point-nine percent certain she wouldn’t survive if it was unleashed upon her.

So, she shut up and followed, even if her feet started to slow and drag when she realized just where Frey was taking her.

Half-bloods didn’t go for graves, or graveyards.

When they were gone, unless their mortal parents decided to put up a headstone somewhere, the Camp just burned a shroud and let their spirits go on.

Partly, because it was tradition.

However…in part because if they did bury their dead and set up a memorial, Camp Half-Blood would be nothing but a graveyard, packed cheek-to-jowl by tombstones.

Only a few exceptions to that rule existed, often erected in the forest after a number of half-bloods died at the same time, and by the same cause.

Frey was taking her to the newest.

It was a ring of yew trees that he’d planted from seeds and then convinced the Demeter campers and the dryads to help grow into a towering ring of trees, using his powers to help shape them into living embodiments of the campers who had fought – and died – at the Labyrinth…both fighting with the Titans and against them. Each tree had taken on the likeness of a dead half-blood, as seen through Frey’s eyes. And Frey’s eyes had seen quite a lot.

There were thirteen in total, only three from the Camp forces, the other ten from fighting against them.

Here was that girl’s smile, there a boy with a sword in one hand and a playstation controller in the other with a cheeky grin often seen on Hermes half-bloods.

They faced a simple piece of white marble that had the sigil of Daedalus engraved upon it, and the date that they had all fought – and all died.

A carpet of laurel made up the ground between the ring of trees and the marker, the flowering bush growing low to the ground and somehow never higher – Frey’s magic she would guess, like much of the memorial.
None of the campers ever saw the passionate general shed so much as a tear, they never saw him
mourn.

But the day after they burned thirteen shrouds, honoring their dead, they had woken up to Juniper
waiting to escort them here, to Frey’s living proof of the depths of his grief.

Two of the half-bloods he had killed himself, the rest dying by another’s hand or another cause.

If two of the trees were done in finer detail and the utmost of care, no one commented on it.

“The time for games and powerplays is over, Clarisse, do you understand me?” Frey whispered the
question, even as his gaze turned from staring in silence at the trees to burn upon her disquieted face.

“Over. And done.”

Biting back a reply that would only come out as petty or petulant in the face of his living pain, she
nodded, once.

After all…in the wake of what they’d already lost to Kronus, what more needed to be said.

With one last glance at the grove, Frey spun on his heel and walked away with his cat-like grace,
leaving Clarisse to stand with silvery tears coasting down her cheeks at the visage of her youngest
half-blooded sibling starting out from her in yew wood.

Her littlest brother and cabin mate, Darius hadn’t been one of the three casualites from Camp Half-
Blood during the Battle.

And Clarisse swore then and there that she would make Kronus pay for that – for forcing her to
make and burn his shroud for a boy only twelve years old – in an ocean of his army’s blood.

…

“What did you say to her?” Luke asked idly as they watched Percy slip off into the shadows in the
company of Nico de Angelo, likely to go make good on his promise of information regarding
Ethan’s ability to house Kronus without burning to cinders.

Frey would follow in a moment, Nico had asked for him to tag along – at least for this first part – and
help with getting the person they sought to speak with them.

First, he’d stopped by the Big House to fill Luke in, only to see his whip-smart best-friend watching
them with a half-smile from the porch.

“Enough.” Was all Frey told him, then stepped away into shadow with a mock-salute for his
brother-in-arms.

“Reticent fucker.” Luke muttered under his breath, staring up at the moon and thinking wistfully of
his wife and unborn child, tucked away in the safety of Peverell Castle along with Frey’s family
before turning to go back inside and at least try to get some sleep.

It was a commodity that seemed to be in short-supply these days, for everyone.

…

Frey stepped out of the shadows to the sight of Percy and Nico carrying on a low-pitched – and very
tense – conversation by the side of an isolated temple in Northern Attica.

Looking around he pegged where they were – and why Nico had needed him to tag along.
There were few temples solely dedicated to Nemesis – goddess of vengeance in modern times, though her original purpose, even her name meant “to give what is due.”

Worshipped by mortals before Zeus was even born, and the daughter of Nyx, she was also the mother of Ethan Nakamura…and Frey believed he was beginning to see where Nico was going with his little show-and-tell.

Someone had been talking to the souls of past heroes.

Clever little fucker, though some information – like that of Horcruxes – should remain only among the dead.

*This* secret wasn’t nearly so terrible, but it was equally as deadly…especially considering that as the Avatar of Necessity, which was often called Balance by mistake, and an ally of Thanatos, Nemesis was one of the few deities who hadn’t yet chosen a side in the war, despite her son’s alliance with Kronus.

A situation that could change in a blink if they pissed the goddess off…especially here, in what equated to holy ground.

Frey cocked his head as he followed the other two into the temple, smiling a bit at the statue which bore a striking resemblance to Aphrodite – only with great wings and holding both a dagger and whip rather than the more modern scales and measuring rod.

Nemesis’s temple was a *primal* place, hardly having anything in common with the nearly-demure aspect the Renaissance artists and sculptures “gifted” her with.

“Woah.” Percy whispered, eyes shot-wide at they came to the foot of the massive sculpture. “This is bigger than the statue of Athena we saw at the Parthenon reproduction in the States.”

“Early Greeks worshipped Nemesis – and feared and respected her – in equal measure.” Frey commented, tucking his hands into his pockets as he watched Nico set up an offering to the goddess with wary eyes, even as Percy started to help him arrange the wood in the brazier and set out herbs and meat and wine for the goddess as her due. “With good reason – a big part of her duties was punishing those whose fortunes were too good, or were seen as overly gifted without reason, or guilty of hubris.”

Percy let out a soundless whistle at that.

No wonder no one spoke much about Nemesis at Camp Half-Blood, hubris being many a demigod’s fatal flaw.

Nico’s next words confirmed that thought: “Nemesis has smote more half-bloods than most other gods and divine beings combined. Only Hera and Hades have higher body-counts, though with this war Kronus will overtake her soon.”

Which considering that Hera hated half-bloods on principal since most deities were married, and Hades just hated *everybody* not his wife or lovers or children…that was saying something.

“Considering that he has taken over my son.” A voice as dark and rich velvet as midnight with an underlying smoker’s rasp came from the shadows before Nico could even set flame to the offerings, scaring half the life from the younger two half-bloods while Frey just arched a brow at their surprise. “I wouldn’t count on his being alive and kicking too much longer.”

“I keep telling you guys that names have power.” Was all Frey said to the pair who were still gaping
at the goddess made flesh who was watching them from fathomless dark eyes.

Nemesis was a beauty – as her statue suggested – though dressed nothing like Aphrodite, to whom her resemblance often gave rise to speculations on their being related – which no deity has ever confirmed one way or another. Her hair and eyes were both black as her mother’s name, Nyx, the darkness. Skin was a perfect sun-kissed gold, and her form was small but packed with feminine muscle and lithe curves poured into skin-tight black leather pants that clung to her hip bones and a cropped red vest that failed to cover much more than her breasts and part of her ribcage.

A dagger could be seen tucked into both belt and the top of her boots, and her whip was coiled at her left hip – she was right-handed then.

“My lady.” Frey bowed low, Nico and Percy waking from their shock long enough to echo him.

“Chosen of Thanatos.” Nemesis nodded genially, then eyed the two with him with nothing short of amusement. “Half-bloods and heroes…my my, aren’t I popular tonight.”

“My lady,” Nico stepped forward, more hesitant in the face of her than he’d ever been before his father or lady Persephone, who despite her rolling eyes and loud sighs at the sight of him treated him much better than he’d ever expected – even if he did get tired of her mother Demeter trying to stuff cereals down his throat. “We have come…”

He was cut off by the lady in question.

“I know why you have come, child of Hades.” Nemesis said, eyes narrowed and sharp. “You face my son…who is not my son all at that same time. You wish to know how to defeat him.”

“Yes.” Percy said, elbowing Nico in the ribs with a firm jab when the ghost-king would have prevaricated. “We do.”

“And what will you give in return?” She arched a brow. “My son gave his eye for the chance to bring balance to the world. What will you give now for the chance to stop him?”

“What will it take?” Frey asked, holding up a hand to silence his companions. “Lady and avatar of Necessity.”

“Smart lad.” Nemesis nodded in approval. She could see why Thanatos favored him so. “Nothing much – a life for a life.” Her smile was nothing more than wicked. “Kronus has burrowed himself deep into my son, entwined himself into him like the parasitic disease he is. But he’s an Avatar, like myself and,” she nodded towards Frey. “Thanatos. He won’t be easy to kill.” White teeth flashed in the darkness of the temple. “Nonetheless – that is the cost. Kronus’s life for my son’s. Fail and…” Her chuckle was dusky and terrifying, sending a chill up each of their spines. “It’ll cost each of you yours.”

“Done.” Frey said at once, without even pausing, all the while knowing that his father – and Thanatos most likely – were railing at him for being so bloody stupid as to agree with a pact from Nemesis. “How do we kill him?”

“Ethan’s body was too weak to withstand Kronus.” Nemesis pulled out a clove cigarette from the pocket of her jeans and lit it with an absent flick of her fingers, setting the offerings ablaze as she was at it in wordless acceptance of the gesture. “He needed to be something else, something more. I took his eye in exchange for my blessing, but even that didn’t stay him from his course.”

“He did it then?” Nico leaned forward on his toes, excitement spilling from every pore. “He took on Achilles’s curse?”
“He did.” Nemesis blew out a stream of smoke, her power lacing it and shaping it into the scene of a form stripping off its armor and descending into a dark river. “Though what he used as anchor I do not know.”

“Thank you, milady.” Frey nodded, and held out his hand to the others in wordless command, who thanked her as well before grabbing hold.

“Don’t.” She bit out sharply, flicking away the ash from her smoke, eyes glittering with feral light in the darkness. “Don’t ever thank me for giving you the key to destroying my own child. Even though my very nature demands it. Right the balance – that’s all I ask should you succeed. And I’d hurry.” She advised as shadows rose to cover their lean forms. “The board is set – the pieces are moving. All that’s left is to see where they fall.”

…”

“This is where I leave you.” Frey told Nico and Percy, a thoughtful look on his face as Nico slumped – just slightly – with relief at his words.

They’d reappeared in the hall outside Percy’s apartment, where Mrs. O’Leary was guarding – and getting many belly rubs – from Mrs. Jackson, the indomitable Sally taking well to the tamed hellhound that Daedalus had asked Percy to look after before sacrificing his life to bring down the Labyrinth – the two being tied together.

Something was up, that much Frey knew just from reading Nico’s body language and how…insistent he’d been on getting Percy to come along on this mini-quest of his.

But this wasn’t Frey’s journey, not this time, and all he could do is let them go – wherever it might take them.

Gods above, he was turning into Chiron!

He vowed then and there to sow some mischief amongst the Titan forces, lest he sink further into respectable stoic-ness.

“They need me at Camp, and the Underworld is one of the few places the Titan’s aren’t actively battling so it should be safe enough.”

“I don’t know what you mean.” Nico tried to say, only to be met with twin snorts from his companions.

“Someone has to take a dip in the Styx to equal Kronus,” Percy said, with a roll of his eyes. “And since I’m the only one with a mother handy – no offense,” “none taken,” Frey murmured, Nico going blank-faced. “It looks like I’ll be getting a head-start on that prophecy.”

Clapping the younger man on the back, Frey jerked his head towards the door.

“Better get on with it then.” He winked at Percy. “It isn’t every day one becomes invulnerable after all. Just make sure you pick a good anchor point, yeah? Something better than the back of your heel.”

The crux of Achilles’s curse – as Frey knew full-well having been tutored under the great warrior who was now going as “Alexios” one of Thanatos’s Shadow Warriors – was his heel or rather the anchor point where his mother had held him by the heel and dipped him into the Styx. Each of the rivers flowing through the Underworld had their effects, the most well-known of which was the Lethe which would empty a being’s memory in nothing more than a moment, leaving them a shell of
their former selves. Achilles was merely the first warrior to be given his “curse” – or attempt it anyway, though it was done to Achilles/Alexios and not by him.

Mortal forms were not made to be invulnerable, even a half-blood’s, so as the Styx burned away their mortal shells, a single point of vulnerability was left behind, a point that which if wounded would undo the “curse” and leave the afflicted wounded and weak.

Achilles, after all, didn’t die of a wounded heel, but of an arrow to the heart after being brought low by one through his anchor point.

Which meant that Ethan – and Percy if he both gained Sally’s blessing, a key component of the curse, and survived the Styx – had a weakness.

Good news, considering who was swanning around wearing him as a suit these days.

They simply had to find it…which would be easier said than done.

…

Percy and Nico walked into the apartment, only to see that they’d acquired an additional guest in the time Percy had been gone on his missions.

It takes Percy a minute, but he places where he’d seen the young girl sitting beside the hearth before.

“You’re the girl who tends the bonfire at Camp.” He states, wondering a bit about how and why she was here. “But I never see you around…”

“My name is Hestia,” the girl morphed into a pretty woman before their eyes, still beautiful like all the goddesses Percy had met, but somehow…softer, even than Hera who was more matronly than Aphrodite or Nemesis or Artemis. “The Goddess of Hearth and Home and Family.”

“My Lady.” In echo of their words in Attica, both demigods bowed – but much lower than they had to Nemesis.

“I was the First-Born of Kronus and Rhea.” She continued, stroking one hand down the back of Mrs. O’Leary who had obligingly shrunk down in size to sit at the goddess’s feet, panting happily at the attention. “And of them all, all my siblings, it was I who my father feared most, though I never have taken up arms…do you know why young heroes?”

“No.” Nico answered, brow furrowed. “You…you gave up your throne, even, didn’t you? When Mr. D had grown up?”

“Yes,” she smiled, the warmth of the hearth-fire flames dancing in her dark eyes. “I did. Peace. Warmth. Comfort. Those are the powers of the home. To fight is not in my nature, though I understand why others do. What my father would bring to this world…” She sighed, shaking her head as she scratched being Mrs. O’Leary’s ears. “It is contrary to all I am. So I have come to give you what comfort – and counsel – I can.”

“Yes, my lady.” Percy stepped forward, coming down to kneel at her feet, Nico following though with much more hesitation, even as Hestia waved her hand and a lunch of their favorite foods appeared on the coffee table, even with blue soda for Percy and a root beer float for Nico. “We will listen.”

“I hope you do.” She said with a glance at Nico before focusing once more on Percy. “There is a power that you have yet to learn young heroes – a power you will need to win this war.”
She waited a moment or two until they had started eating at a look from her warm eyes before continuing.

“You are strong, and fierce, and powerful. And that is good and just. But my father is also strong and fierce and powerful, as are my uncles and cousins and all the Titanomachy. To defeat them you must become what they are not. Do you understand?” She asked, holding in a sigh at their confused glances. They were young, there was still much for them to learn…though little enough time to do it in. “As you said, young Nico, I gave my throne to Dionysus. I yielded to prevent a struggle upon the council. And yet,” a mischievous smile flirted upon her lips. “I am still the First-Born. Still the most powerful. I lost nothing a’all for having the grace and power to know when to yield. My voice is still heard, my counsel treasured. They come to me – one and all – for healing or care or comfort or wisdom and I give it to them without prejudice. You must learn to do the same if you wish to bring balance back to this world.”

With a flick of her finger, she banked the flames in the hearth before stepping into them with one last caution: “you cannot stand alone, young ones. Learn to yield, to embrace the power of others if you wish to win this war.”

…

When next Frey saw Percy, he noted the difference immediately, though only commented on it with a: “guess you got Sally’s blessing after all…I was starting to wonder,” in reference to the extra time it had taken Percy to return from the Underworld thanks to Nico’s double-dealing with Hades.

Not that Percy could really blame Nico for trying to please his father and get information about his mother, who must seem like the only family he had left with Bianca’s abandonment for the Huntresses and Hades being…well…kind of a dick.

Still, he had helped spring Percy from the cells in Hades’s palace, and stayed behind to try and convince his old man to help with the war, so it wasn’t as bad as it could have been.

Percy brought with him the missing Grover…and some interesting if dire news.

“It was just…weird.” Grover reported, scarfing down burrito after burrito with Juniper petting as his curly brown locks. Sleeping for weeks straight built up one hells of an appetite. “Last thing I remember is this strange guy walking through Central Park then…boom, naptime.”

“That sounds like Morpheus.” Chiron pinched the bridge of his nose. “Another minor god gone over to the Titan’s side if he wasn’t off fighting Typhon like the rest. His abilities over sleep and dreaming would have been invaluable to the Olympians…and give the prophecy…”

Well the rest save for Hades, Poseidon, and Hestia but that was beside the point.

“And see the world in endless sleep.” Frey murmured the line of the prophecy as Percy winced next to him. “Does he have the power?”

“To cast a spell over all the world?” Chiron snorted. “Not likely, even with whatever other tricks Kronus has up his sleeves. But a city…” He drawled meaningfully. “That might be possible.”

“New York is undefended.” Percy breathed out, eyes wide with horrified realization. “The Olympians are all gone.”

Clarisse cursed under her breath, joined by many of the others as they saw what he did – Olympus was undefended.
Typhon, Oceanus – mere distractions.

If Kronus could take the Olympian’s power base from them...the war would be far shorter and with
a different outcome than Zeus was counting on, seeing Typhon’s release as merely the newest salvo.

“Okay, Percy.” Frey said, taking a figurative step back a small smile on his face. Yeah, the kid was
coming along just fine. “What’s our play?”

“We defend it.” Percy said, fire in his eyes. “We hold Olympus until the gods can be convinced to
return and face the real threat.”

“Good luck with that.” Frey muttered under his breath. “Hope you have better luck than I did
convincing Zeus’s inflated head to part with his asshole.” Thunder and lightning cracked overhead,
causing Frey to scream up to the sky: “Yeah! You heard me shithead! You’re being a stupid prat!”

When the others stared at him, jaws hanging low, he simply shrugged and turned towards Chiron.

“So, holding New York against the Titans.” He continued on, his tone as cheerful and carefree as if
they weren’t discussing a massive siege and he hadn’t just screamed obscenities at the King of the
Gods. “Think we should import some allies now, yeah?”

Standing in the elevator that led to the 600th floor of the Empire State Building and Olympus, Frey
leaned back against the wall and closed his eyes.

They’d been quiet in their arrival – as quiet as a group of over sixty half-bloods could be – while
Grover had gone off to rouse the wild creatures that still populated the island – if sparsely – and
Chiron was off to recruit some of his brethren.

Frey had taken care of sending a message to the Forbidden Forest, saving the trainer of heroes one
stop at least.

Percy had sent a message to Zeus…but Frey was afraid it would do all the good of talking to the
wall.

His lover was many things.

Rational wasn’t always among them.

They would have to prove that the threat was real before they had any real hope of convincing the
king that he’d fallen for a diversion…and even then he likely would never thank them for it.

Arriving in Olympus was jarring for Frey after so many visits with it bustling with life.

Only a few minor beings remained, and glancing at Percy and Annabeth he knew they felt just as
unsettled as he did, though the sight of Hestia in the throne room tending the sacred hearth was a
balm to their strung-tight nerves.

Before they could speak, Lady Hestia beat them to the punch:

“I am here because when all else fails, when all the other mighty gods have gone off to war, I am
all that's left. Home. Hearth. I am the last Olympian.”

With that, the rich red flames flared and she disappeared into them, an exhausted Hermes popping
into existence a mere moment afterward.

“By the Styx, Dad.” Luke muttered, coming over and giving his old man a shoulder to lean on. Wrapping one arm around the god’s lean waist, he ignored the bright grin his pops gave him for the action. “What the hells? Zeus can’t give you a break now and then?”

Hermes gave a dry laugh.

“Not so much. At least not right now.” Straightening up, he nodded towards Annabeth. “Besides, it’s that one’s mother that sent me.” Dusting himself off, he detached from his son with visible reluctance, savoring the rare moment of feeling between them. Luke would never forgive him for leaving him with his mother, or even for allowing her to try and take on the Delphic essence after Hades cursed the Oracle when his Maria di Angelo was killed by Zeus, blaming her Prophecy for the pact and Zeus’s retaliation for breaking it. Still, thanks to Silena and even Frey, the wound was slowly healing. “Athena – and I for that matter – agree with you that Typhon is a distraction. We’re working on the great lunkhead, believe me, but Zeus isn’t easy to sway unless you’re Ganymede and well…” Hermes scratched at his head. “He’s a little tied up right now…”

Literally, Zeus having resorted to stashing his love away somewhere and tying him to the bed.

It wouldn’t kill him, Ganymede was a god, but oooh was Zeus going to pay when the Cupbearer was finally freed.

Frey snorted a laugh, reading what Hermes wasn’t saying and being well-aware of that particular dynamic.

Hells, now he hope they won just so he can watch Ganymede dish out punishment for the next century or so until he got over it.

“Athena says to use Plan 23 to defend New York.” Hermes reported with a snappy little salute at Percy. “General, sir, Athena says remember the rivers and stay away from my daughter.” With a wink and a laugh for the bright-red blush on both Annabeth’s and Percy’s faces, Hermes poofed into his typical golden dust, off to return to the war of attrition with Typhon.

Annabeth smacked at both Luke and Frey for snickering, then explained “Plan 23” as they descended back down in the elevator to gather in a park nearby – which was when the reality of the situation came crashing down and sobered them when they saw that while they’d been busy with Hestia and Hermes on Olympus, Kronus had begun his devastating plan, putting all the mortals in Manhattan Island asleep, and somehow slowing time leading to the island to prevent more mortals from coming and interfering.

“Fuck.” Frey summed up all their thoughts with a weary sigh as he looked around, even the arrival of the Huntresses led by Thalia and Percy dividing everyone up to guard the tunnels and bridges didn’t quite bring him out of his reverie until Luke nudged him when the others began to depart.

Focusing on Percy, he gave him the good/bad news.

“I can move them.” He said. “Maybe even heal some of the injuries while getting them out of the killing zone but…” He waved his arms helplessly.

“It’s a big area to cover, and a hell of a lot of people.” Luke finished the thought for him, the most familiar of the group of leaders with Frey’s powers and how they worked. “You won’t be worth shit after – maybe not for days.” He groaned, rubbing at his eyes. “It’s a bad time to be out of commission.”
“Yeah, no shit.” Thalia agreed, crossing her arms over her breastplate – which Thalia being Thalia was worn over a Ramones t-shirt instead of chainmail. “What’re you going to do shadow-boy.”

Rolling his eyes at the nickname, Frey focused on Percy.

“That’s up to Percy.” He said simply. “Your plan – your play.”

Percy rolled it around in his head, then focused on what Hestia had said about knowing when to yield, when not to fight, and decided.

“Do it.” He ordered. “From Olympus so I know you’ll be safe and Hestia can help you if you collapse after. We’ll have to struggle along without you…somehow.”

“Aye aye.” Frey smirked, bowing a little. “Knock ‘em dead, champ.”

... 

Nodding to Hestia as he passed through the Throne Room and out to the balcony overlooking the city, Frey ignored her otherwise as she fell into step beside him.

“You could have prevented this, you know.” She mentioned, apparently her idea of idle chit-chat.

“So could you.” Frey pointed out with a lifted brow. “But Fate does like to have her way in the end, doesn’t she?” He posed the question to the Olympian Avatar of Life.

Unlike the primordial beings they represent, Avatars could be any race, any gender, from any pantheon, though strictly limited to one per universe per primordial.

Thanatos was Death’s – male to Her female or gender-neutral self depending on the day.

Kronus for Time – male to gender-neutral, and Eros – though Frey only knew it from Thanatos, the others being kept in the dark about the love-god’s true nature – had been chosen by Chaos…which really explained a lot when you thought about it.

Hestia was the fourth Avatar of this ancient universe, that of Life, and female to His male, and perhaps in another universe was the consort of Thanatos as Life was to Death…but in this universe Hestia was a virgin goddess, and Thanatos had a harem…hardly a match made in Elysium.

Not all universes had a complete set of Avatars either – the paired Yggdrasil/Cosmic multiverse certainly didn’t with Loki as the Avatar of Magic and Hela as Death’s being the only two…though it was still a relatively young multiverse as such things go.

Nemesis’s position was Avatar of Necessity gave this universe five out of six Avatars alive and actively in play – a rarity as most only have three or four at one time.

“That it does, young godling, that it does.” She agreed with a comforting smile. “Tell me – how long are you going to stay away from your family?” She arches a brow. “Children need their fathers, much as fathers need their children. This half-life can’t be sustained forever – something will have to give.”

“Tell me something I don’t know.” Frey muttered, though not bad-temperedly, as Hestia’s words were meant to be kind.

“The meaning of life is 42.” Hestia snarked back, snickering when given a shocked look from enchanting emerald-green eyes. “What?” She asked with mock-indignation. “A goddess can’t
He laughed along for a minute than focused on his task, power building in his eyes and crackling along his skin.

“Do me a favor?” He asked, Hestia humming in response. “Cloak me?” He glanced down into understanding flame-red eyes. “It’s been too long since I’ve…ah…” He blushed a bit, well-aware of her virginal status.

“Borrowed some of my brother’s – and his love’s – signature?” She suggested with a knowing – and entertained – life of her brow.

“Yes, that.” He sighed in relief that she wasn’t going to make him say it in front of her. He normally wasn’t bashful or unsure, but something about her make him as clumsy as Sirius in Padfoot form after one too many firewhiskeys.

“You’re doing what you can to protect my family.” Hestia told him. “I’m more than prepared to return the favor.”

“Thank you, Lady Hestia.” He nodded his head then lifted his hands, ready to begin. “That means more to me than you know.”

…

“What is that?” Annabeth asked as she and Percy rode Blackjack to begin activating Plan 23.

Plan 23, designed by Daedalus was simple – and intricate – all at the same time.

Taking a page from Hephaestus’s book, Daedalus had worked with his mother Athena to secretly commission and plant automaton all around New York in the form of the many famous or infamous statues such as the majestic lions outside the New York Library or the misogynistic testament to Wall Street – the Bull. Once she commanded enough of the human-formed automatons to activate, they will awake and begin activating their brethren and so on and so forth, until there was a veritable army of machines ready to defend Olympus from attack. Ingenious, really. She wished she’d thought of it, but then hubris, like many other half-bloods was her fatal flaw.

Percy’s – she knew – was the inability to sacrifice another, his great heart and compassion that led him into often stupidly-suicidal heroic acts.

Luke’s was his rage, Clarisse’s her easily offended pride, and so on.

The only one she didn’t know for sure was Frey’s…but given what she knew of him she was banking on it having more to do with either Percy’s or Luke’s than her own.

“Frey.” Percy said simply as they watched the mass of sleeping mortals seem to levitate into the air at once – looking like some scene from a bad alien abduction movie, and move towards random buildings all well-out of the path between any of the island’s entry points and Olympus. “He’s actually managing it.”

“I know I’ve said this before.” Annabeth commented with no-little amount of wonder. “But just how powerful is he?” She waved a hand towards the limp and floating bodies in emphasis. “Who has that kind over power outside the gods?”

“That’s the million-drachma question, isn’t it?” Percy murmurs thoughtfully, an idea occurring to him before he pushes it away for consideration another time. “C’mon. We’ve gotten a good start on
the statues, let’s let them take it from here. Michael could probably use our help on the Williamsburg Bridge.” He decided, looking off towards Brooklyn where fighting had already broken out.

“You’re the boss, Seaweed Brain.” Annabeth told him as she jumped back up behind him on Blackjack. “Lead the way.”

…

Frey wobbled, catching himself against the balcony railing as Hestia watched in concern.

He could see what Percy did – the largest force of the Titan vanguard was attacking the Apollo campers.

But he could barely stand, let alone fight, after moving a literal million people back to safety.

“Come.” Hestia commanded, lifting the massive warrior into her arms as if he was no more than a babe. “You must rest. Ah!” She hushed him before he could even make the weakest of protests. “You asked me for my help, now I’m giving it. You’ll rest, and recharge.” She arched a brow. “You honestly don’t expect this to be over with a single skirmish do you? And they’ll need you to be able to fight when the next round comes or I don’t know a thing about my father.”

…

Hestia ended up being right – and almost wrong all at once.

How Annabeth had figured out where Percy’s Achilles point was he’d never know…but she’d taken a knife for him, leaving herself seriously wounded at the strike by Miles, one of Ethan/Kronus’s half-blood commanders, one a bit older than most of the others, and with a grudge against the divine parent who had never claimed him.

It also – when combined with Michael’s tumble from the bridge at the hands of one of Kronus’s minions – left Percy seriously pissed off.

He hadn’t gotten used to his own strength yet – which with his dip in the Styx had grown to near-legendary levels.

“Retreat!” He called out, the others taking it up as they saw him tear through a handful of empousai with barely an effort. “Retreat!”

It was an order easily obeyed as the Titan forces parted and showed the form of Ethan – still with one glowing golden eye.

Kronus himself had at last taken the field.

Not that it would do him any good.

With a smirk, Percy leapt up and then plunged down in a massive show of strength, burying his sword to the hilt and breaking the bridge, cracks appearing and spiderwebbing out, and the unwary Titan minions plummeting into the river while the smarter ones quickly dodged back from the now-useless bridge.

“Search for Michael.” Percy orders some of the missing captain’s half-siblings who scatter at one look from sea-green eyes.

Moving over to where Annabeth was being tended by one of the Apollo healers, he asked: “how is
she?"

“Rough.” The demigoddess answered, barely looking up from her work with the knife wound. “But she’ll make it. Where are we going to make camp tonight?”

At random, Percy decides on one of the hotels bordering Central Park, as he rather doubted any of the gods would be happy if they started squatting in Olympus when there were other options, finding himself just…drained as he stared at the post-battle drained and grieving campers all around him, many crying over a handful of bodies that had been draped with sheets pilfered from a nearby apartment building.

*Rough,* he decided, was the best description he’d heard in his life for the controlled-chaos surrounding him.

…

When Frey awoke the next morning, he didn’t know which disturbed him more – that Rachel had arrived despite the dangers inherent in her trip, or that she was somehow *getting along* with Annabeth.

Making his way to where – with the advancement of the Titan forces – the wounded had been brought, he arched a brow at the two girls surprisingly talking congenially…only to find that Rachel had symbolically “bowed out” of her former pursuit of Percy, stating that she had something else waiting for her, something she just hadn’t found yet.

Brought up to date – sixteen combined losses between the campers and the Huntresses, *sixteen* – Frey blew out a breath and with more than usual effort magically switched out his clothes for his armor, spear and sword at hand and hip, going out to join Percy who was rounding up a contingent to head towards Central Park thanks to another of his visions.

Seriously, the kid had more people shoving messages into his head than Frey’s old friend Luna had wrackspurts.

Though when they met the Titan forces, Frey was glad of it, as they’d brought with them some big-guns this time: the Titan Hyperion.

Wearing armor of living flame and standing at over ten feet high, it was almost on par with a fire-giant from Muspelheim…though shorter.

Cracking his neck, he nodded at Percy, already knowing where this was going to go, and strengthening his glamor that kept him from being recognized by Asgard as having distinctly Loki-ish features…or in this case that of a Jotun.

“Oh, look.” Frey smirked, pointing at the Titan who had stepped out *on* to the lake, using his powers to walk across the water, the lake hissing and sizzling when coming in contact with his fire. “He’s making it easy for us.”

Percy shared his smirk, the others cheering them on as they broke into a loping jog and easily repeated Hyperion’s feet, Percy walking on the water while Frey froze it under his feet, much like he did during the Triwizard Tournament.

Both sides cheered, each content – for the moment – to watch their champions go at it, Hyperion yelling insults at them and proclaiming how they would fail to defeat him. That Atlas was weak and Kríos a fool to fall to either of them.
It made no difference to them, as they quickly engaged the Titan, Frey just a fraction slower than normal from his great feat of magic the day before...though he always was noticeable sticking to his Jotun abilities with ice and his weapons which had Percy side-eyeing him a bit in concern, as was Luke watching from the shore.

Then Frey went high, Percy low, and you would have never known that the two of them had spent all the night before collapsed in heaps of exhausted unconsciousness.

“What in the…” One of the younger campers near Luke breathed, eyes wide, as they all watched the spectacle, a hush falling over each group until only the sounds of bronze on iron rang across the lake accompanied by the banter and roars of the three battling figures, almost seeming that if they didn’t know better they weren’t just watching one Titan do battle but three, so powerful were the auras pulsing off of Frey and Percy.

Eventually Hyperion realized that taking on a son of Poseidon on the fucking water wasn’t the brightest idea he’d ever had and broke for the shore – too late.

His fiery boots had barely touched ground when Frey let out a blast of super-cooled air, Percy gathering it up into a maelstrom and hitting Hyperion full-blast with his newly-formed hurricane, the torrential downpour dousing the Titan’s flames as Frey’s ice climbed quickly up his body in eerie resemblance to the exact same act a few years before in a graveyard – though not with the same outcome as Grover charged in with satyrs and dryads at his hooved heels, chanting quickly and linking hands to make a circle around the semi-frozen and wet Titan Lord of the East, Frey breaking off his ice in relief as vines and roots shot up from the ground, seeming to swallow the Titan whole even as he raged.

Within minutes, where the Titan of the East had stood, was a massive oak tree with an alarmingly lifelike face open in a roar, though Frey had felt it when Hyperion’s life-line had snapped and banished the Titan to Tartarus.

Laughing in deep relief that his glamor had held – and that Hyperion hadn’t tried to out him as a godling the way Atlas almost had, though it hadn’t been purposeful – Frey clapped Grover and Percy on the back with each hand, joking:

“Welcome to the club, Titan-Slayers.”

Percy groaned a little, rolling his eyes and then lifted one hand to his neck where a sand dollar still hung as the Titan forces were chased from the park by the demigods, realization crossing his face as he stared off towards where the Hudson met the East River.

“I’ve got an idea guys…” He told them, whistling for Blackjack. “I’ll be back.”

“Huh.” Frey grunted watching Percy run off. “So that’s what this feels like.”

“Well.” Luke jostled him with a smirk. “Annoying as hell isn’t it, watching someone heroically run off into certain danger on a wild idea that they won’t explain?”

Frey just rolled his eyes and told his best-friend as they made their way back towards the Empire State Building where they – well, Luke more than Frey given that he’s been unconscious most of the time – helped sort out the various demigods and huntresses and other beings that were helping with the defense of Olympus.

“You need to get laid.” He commented. “You’re starting to get snarky – like Sev snarky and that’s never a good thing.”
“I’d love to, Frey, I really would.” Luke snarled at his best-friend, who was less-than-sympathetic to his plight. “Except my wife is in England and she’d have my balls on a hibachi if I ever even breathed the words open relationship in her direction you polyamorous bastard.”

“Touché.”

Pushed back to the blocks surrounding the Empire State Building, the holding force nonetheless cheered as they watched the River gods Percy had gone off to bargain with – Hudson and East who were apparently rivals – overturn ship after ship of Titan reinforcements, even though it didn’t do much in the long run to stem the flow of monsters into the city, as Kronus/Ethan kept watch from a highpoint just beyond the reach of their forces.

Frey eventually ended up passing out again in the wake of Clarisse finding her inner berserker and destroying a drakon, then when waking after a short nap, went out to join Luke…where he was watching a still raging-Clarisse roar up and down the street in her chariot, the drakon she’d defeated being towed behind her as she threatened the Titan forces.

“Well.” Frey propped one shoulder against the doorway. “This kind brings back memories…not all of them good.”

“Stories of your uncle?” Luke guessed, shooting a look at Frey’s pensive face. Percy was passed out again upstairs, probably in the throes of another vision like the one that warned of Kronus unleashing the drakon in the first plan.


During his nap Frey had missed Percy doing one of the smartest moves he’d known a half-blood offered temption to make – giving the Spirit of Hope still trapped in Pandora’s pithos to Hestia for protection.

In Percy’s words: “Hope is strongest beside the hearth.” And he “refused to give up hope that they would get through this.”

Smart lad.

Jumping up onto his old man’s thrones and nearly getting barbequed just to make a point?

Not so smart…though apparently effective, as when Typhon finally reached New York despite the other gods’ best efforts, Poseidon was there to greet them with his undersea army, forsaking his own kingdom to help them keep theirs, and together with his younger brother Zeus finally bringing the “Father of Monsters” down and sending him to Tartarus where he belonged, as shown to all the campers via Iris-message, though they were in the midst of a battle of their own.

Poseidon wasn’t the only Olympian to pull the stick out of his ass, as when Kronus had at last made a great push for Olympus, spurred on by the defeat of Typhon and his soon-to-arrive children and their offspring, unleashing all of his forces only to have them met by centaurs – both those from the Forbidden Forest and their cousins the “Party Ponies” – campers, Huntresses, and the mighty ghost army led by Hades himself, his son’s pleas finally breaking through his thick skull.
Not that it mattered or kept Kronus at bay, the Titan King making it all the way to Olympus – though only him alone – before finally being confronted by the quartet of a wounded Annabeth, Percy, Frey, and his one-time pick for his meat-suit: Luke.

“You’re out of time, Kronus.” Luke couldn’t help but smirk and make the obvious pun. “You’ve lost and they’re coming. They’re going to send you right back to Tartarus where you belong.”

Kronus/Ethan chuckled harshly.

“You think so, you insignificant speck?” Kronus spat, grinning evilly, Backbiter, his massive scythe of mixed celestial bronze and Stygian iron spinning in his hand. “You who could have been my finest General?”

“Yes,” Frey drawled tsking. “We’ve seen your finest and have to say – not all that impressed.”

“You…” Kronus seethed, eyes flashing.

“Yes, me.” Frey taunted before leaping out of the way of a vicious arc of the scythe.

“Guys!” Annabeth shouted, figuring something out. “He’s stalling! He’s not in full control yet!”

“Ha!” Kronus roared with laughter, even as he batted her aside, sending the wounded Annabeth crashing into the foot of Athena’s throne. “This one is so weak he could barely withstand me! Soon there will be nothing left but my glorious form!”

“Oh, fuck.” Percy breathed. “He can’t attain his divine form while Ethan is still alive in there…he’s trying to burn him out.”

“Di immortales.” Luke cursed, knowing from his brief encounters with Kronus in his own mind that Percy was right. Divine forms and mortal forms are mutually exclusive – and once Kronus was capable of assuming his true form he would have no use of Ethan’s “shell” anymore…and the process would likely burn them to cinders where they stood. “Quickly! Attack!”

As one, the trio harried Kronus, called up all the power at their hands…which considering the half-bloods in question was quite a lot, the battle beginning to literally shake the wrecked Olympus that Kronus had ravaged as he rampaged his way to the throne room.

A bit too much for the Titan King who even then was yet to reach full-power, a strike from Percy’s Riptide sending Backbiter spinning through the air to land in the sacred fire.

Batting Luke out of his way, Kronus charged for it, the son of Hermes rolling with the swing and avoiding a nasty collision with either wall or throne.

But when Kronus went to reclaim his weapon, his First-Born’s power – and displeasure – were made known, as they watched the eyes of Hestia peer out from the flames, and the super-heated scythe literally melt and burn Kronus’s invulnerable hands.

With a shriek, Kronus fell to the ground, eye flashing between golden and dark brown as his daughter’s power weakened him temporarily.

Falling back at a slash of Frey’s sword that did little more than ruin his tunic, Ethan looked up from out of his own eye for the first time in weeks.

“I only…” he gasped, fighting with the wounded Kronus who was reeling from his “weakest” daughter’s full displeasure at his actions. “I only wanted…them…to finally see us.”
“I know.” Luke said crouching next to the downed figure, Percy and Frey joining him. “When I said yes, for that one moment, all I could think about was if only they all had cabins. I hated, I hated so hard and so long it was almost impossible to think beyond, and I had Frey and Silena there to slap me upside the head and pull me out. You?” Luke shook his head. “You got dealt a crap hand. The only question is – what are you going to do about it?”

“Where’s the Achilles point, Ethan?” Percy whispered softly. “I know Miles told you mine. I saw it in a dream. Where’s your’s?”

“You, you can’t…” Ethan gasped out, Kronus enraged by the question almost as much as he was by Ethan taking control – for however brief a period. “He, he won’t let you. Even now…I…”

Weakly, Ethan untied the armor that covered his shoulder and underarm, raising it as his eyes flickered between brown and gold.

“He’s almost…there.” Ethan whispered. “You have to choose…”

Percy looked down at the dagger Frey had given him just that morning, that he’d tucked absently into his belt with no idea of the significance until Luke had recognized with a sad look in his eyes calling it a “Cursed Blade, something that might even work against Kronus, Frey made it himself… with a little help from my old man.” Another scene played through his head then another.

Rachel, coming to warn him about the drakon: “You’re not the hero, Percy.”

Then Hestia: “Sometimes, the greatest power isn’t anything flashy or impressive. It’s to be able to yield.”

Glancing into the flames, he met the watchful red eyes and nodded, then unsheathed the blade, the very aura of which had Ethan’s body convulsing as Kronus tried to retake control from his host, and pressed it into Ethan’s hand.

“Make…” Ethan stuttered, even as he lifted the blade to his armpit and held the point there, just resting, while he gathered his conviction. “Make sure…they know. They can’t…forget about us…anymore.”

“I will.” Percy swore, and Ethan plunged the dagger – Frey’s dieumort, his godkiller, into his Achilles point, the enchanted blade parting skin like a hot knife through butter.

It was silent save for the crackling of flames as five sets of eyes – Percy, Luke, Annabeth, Frey, and Hestia – watched as Frey’s Cursed Blade began to glow and then pulse as if it was sucking Kronus right out of Ethan’s body.

The pulses sped up faster, and faster, until they were nearly strobing as one brilliant golden light, then a faint ringing was heard, the magical pressure rising and forcing the watching half-bloods to their knees, as the blade pulsed one last long beam of dark light and then shattered, the gold tint leaving Ethan’s eye and then the hero breathed his last – freed of Kronus’s taint forever.

Within moments the ringing in their ears from the magical explosion died down, and the white and black spots left their eyes, Frey the first among them to notice that the shards of the dieumort had joined with the molten puddle of metal from Backbiter and were draining into the sacred fire – Hestia’s work, no doubt.

Before they could really take in that it was over, the wards that Kronus had originally placed around all of Manhattan with help from Hecate and Morpheus and then pulled in to just surround a square block around the Empire State Building, trapping a small group of heroes as well as his vanguard
inside, collapsed and the gods came rushing into the Throne Room, prepared for either Kronus to have achieved his goal of total regeneration – and fight him if so – or for the hero of the prophecy to have overcome him and been victorious.

“Percy…” His father called, voice cracking a bit at the sight of the body on the floor and the blood dripping from each of the four who had taken on the Titan King…and won. “Percy…what is this?”

Percy turned and faced the Olympians.

“A shroud!” He called, a tear dropping unhindered from his eye. “A shroud for the son of Nemesis!”

…

In the wake of the battle – and Ethan’s body being taken by the Fates themselves – the Olympian Council convened once the wounds of the half-bloods and satyrs and the like had been tended to.

Percy was more than a little spooked by the three Fates, both when he’d first seen them cutting a life-thread, and again now, even as one of them held up the blue yarn and faced him, her eyes flashing and a thought that wasn’t his own flashing through his mind:

It is done.

Years before, he’d thought that it was his life they’re spun and measured and knitted into a weave before cutting it far too short.

But it hadn’t thought he’d been on the right path.

They’d been showing him what it would take – the cost of a life that it would require to set things right.

He’d just thought – especially with the prophecy – that it would be his own.

Instead…it was Ethan and all the others that had paid the price, and now Percy stood among the other heroes of the day to be lauded and feted and given gifts by the gods he’d saved.

As the Fates carried out Ethan’s body now wrapped in a black and red shroud – his mother’s colors – Nemesis called for them to wait.

Just…wait.

Wait as she unwrapped his face, so peaceful in his death’s response, as he’d been at peace in those final moments.

Wait as she, arrayed in her black wings and blood-red toga with a golden whip around her waist, bent down to murmur something in a language Percy couldn’t decipher – though if he read the look on both Frey’s and the other gods’ faces, they all could – and then press a final kiss upon his brow.

Wait as she rewrapped him, and pressed something onto his chest that Percy couldn’t see…but would wager was a golden eye.

As they left, Percy thought about the Great Prophecy. The lines now made sense to him. The hero’s soul, cursed blade shall reap. The hero was Ethan. The cursed blade was the knife Frey had given Percy, a knife that was cursed because it could kill even a god, or an Avatar. A single choice shall end his days. Percy’s choice, to give him the knife, and to believe, as Luke had, that he was still
capable of setting things right. *Olympus to preserve or raze.* By sacrificing himself, he had saved Olympus. Rachel was right. In the end, Percy wasn't really the hero. Ethan was.

The gods set about repairing the throne room while the half-bloods and others were healed or rested, which went surprisingly fast with twelve divine beings at work. Connor and Travis Stoll had made it through with only minor injuries. They promised they hadn't even looted the city much...Frey and Luke just laughed at that as they sat side-by-side and watched Percy hover over Annabeth, despite Apollo healing her after she passed out from pain.

Their “best-friend vibes” as Apollo put it were only broken up by the arrival of a laughing – and rather round – Silena who had been fetched to attend the Council and watch as her husband was honored.

Nico di Angelo came into Olympus to a hero's welcome, his father right behind him, despite the fact that Hades was only supposed to visit Olympus on winter solstice. The god of the dead looked stunned when his relatives clapped him on the back. Frey snorted at the flabbergasted look on the swarthy face. He rather doubted Hades'd ever gotten such an enthusiastic welcome before.

Clarisse marched in, still shivering from her time in the ice block, and Ares bellowed, "There's my girl!" The god of war ruffled her hair and pounded her on the back, calling her the best warrior he'd ever seen. "That drakon-slaying? THAT'S what I'm talking about!" She looked pretty overwhelmed. All she could do was nod and blink, like she was afraid he'd start hitting her, but eventually she began to smile.

Hera and Hephaestus passed the small group, and while Hephaestus was a little grumpy about Percy jumping on his throne, he thought they'd collectively done "a pretty bang-up job, mostly."

Hera just sniffed in disdain. "I suppose I won't destroy you and that little girl now."

"Annabeth saved Olympus," Percy told her. "She was the first one to realize how to stop Kronos."

"Hmm," Hera whirled away in a huff, but everyone figured our lives would be safe, at least for a little while.

Dionysus's head was still wrapped in a bandage. He looked Percy up and down and said, "Well, Percy Jackson. I see Pollux made it through, so I suppose you aren't completely inept. It's all thanks to my training, I suppose."

"Urn, yes, sir," Percy agreed with a bemused look.

Mr. D nodded. "As thanks for my bravery, Zeus has cut my probation at that miserable camp in half. I now have only fifty years left instead of one hundred."

"Fifty years, huh?" They tried to imagine putting up with Dionysus until they all were old men – woman in Silena’s case, assuming they lived that long.

"Don't get so excited, Jackson," he said, and Percy realized he was saying his name correctly. "I still plan on making your life miserable."

Frey couldn't help smiling. "Naturally."

"Just so we understand each other." He turned and began repairing his grapevine throne, which had been singed by fire.

Grover stayed with them.
From time to time he would break down in tears.

"So many nature spirits dead, Percy. So many." Percy put his arm around his shoulders and gave him a rag to blow his nose. "You did a great job, G-man. We will come back from this. We'll plant new trees. We'll clean up the parks. Your friends will be reincarnated into a better world."

He sniffled dejectedly. "I... I suppose. But it was hard enough to rally them before. I'm still an outcast. I could barely get anyone to listen to me about Pan. Now will they ever listen to me again? I led them into a slaughter."

"They will listen," Silena promised with a soft smile. "Because you care about them. You care about the Wild more than anyone."

Grover tried for a smile. "Thanks, 'Lena. I hope... I hope you know I'm really proud to be all of your friends."

Frey patted his arm. "Luke was right about one thing, G-man. You're the bravest satyr I ever met."

"Hey."

Luke protested, weakly, as Silena laughed at his mock-offended expression.

Grover blushed, but before he could say anything, conch horns blew. The army of Poseidon marched into the throne room.

"Percy!" Tyson yelled. He charged towards his brother with his arms open. Fortunately he'd shrunk back to normal size, so his hug was like getting hit by a tractor, not the entire farm. "You are not dead!" he said.

"Yeah!" Percy couldn't not laugh at the tone of surprise. "Amazing, huh?"

Tyson clapped his hands and laughed happily. "I am not dead either. Yay! We chained Typhon. It was fun!"

Behind him, fifty other armored Cyclopes laughed and nodded and gave each other high fives.

"Tyson led us," one rumbled.

"He is brave!"

"Bravest of the Cyclopes!" another bellowed.

Tyson blushed. "Was nothing."

"I saw you!" Percy said. "You were incredible!"

Frey honestly thought poor Grover would pass out. He's deathly afraid of Cyclopes after his misadventure in the Sea of Monsters. But he steeled his nerves and said, "Yes. Um... three cheers for Tyson!"

"YAAARRRRR!" the Cyclopes roared.

"Please don't eat me," Grover muttered, but didn't think anyone heard him.

The conch horns blasted again.

The Cyclopes parted, and Poseidon strode into the throne room in his battle armor, his trident glowing in his hands.
"Tyson!" he roared. "Well done, my son. And Percy—" His face turned stern. He wagged his finger at Percy, and for a second Frey was afraid he was going to zap his own kid. "I even forgive you for sitting on my throne. You have saved Olympus!" He held out his arms and swept Percy up into a hug.

It felt so good, Percy was willing to admit he teared up a little. Until that moment he hadn't allowed himself to realize just how terrified he had been the last few days, even with people like Luke and Frey there to support and help him.

"Dad—"

"Shhh," he said. "No hero is above fear, Percy. And you have risen above every hero. Not even Hercules—"

"POSEIDON!" a voice roared. Zeus had taken his throne. He glared across the room at Percy’s dad while all the other gods filed in and took their seats. Even Hades was present, sitting on a simple stone guest chair at the foot of the hearth. Nico sat cross-legged on the ground at his dad's feet. "Well, Poseidon?" Zeus grumped. "Are you too proud to join us in council, my brother?"

Luke looked like thought Poseidon was going to go off, but he just looked at Percy and winked. "I would be honored, Lord Zeus."

Apparently, miracles do happen.

Poseidon strode over to his fishing seat throne, and the Olympian Council convened.

While Zeus was talking—some long speech about the bravery of the gods, etc.—Annabeth woke up and stood next to Percy. He though she looked good for someone who'd recently passed out.

"Miss much?" she whispered.

"Nobody's planning to kill us, so far," Luke whispered back. "First time today."

Percy cracked up, but Grover nudged him because Hera was giving them a dirty look.

"As for my brothers," Zeus said, "we are thankful"—he cleared his throat like the words were hard to get out, but given that Ganymede was glaring up at him from where he stood hip-shot beside the throne with his arms crossed and finger rattling against one arm, he knew better than to test his Cupbearer’s temper right at that moment—"erm, thankful for the aid of Hades."

The lord of the dead nodded. He had a smug look on his face, but most figured he'd earned the right. He patted his son Nico on the shoulders, and Nico looked happier than even Frey had ever seen him, and they didn’t have nearly as contentious a relationship as Percy and Nico still did.

"And, of course," Zeus continued, though he looked like his pants were smoldering, probably from the ever-darkening look on Ganymede’s face the longer he stalled, "we must . . . um . . . thank Poseidon."

"I'm sorry, brother," Poseidon said. "What was that?"

"We must thank Poseidon," Zeus growled. "Without whom . . . it would've been difficult—"

"Difficult?" Poseidon asked innocently.

"Impossible," Zeus said. "Impossible to defeat Typhon." The gods murmured agreement and
pounded their weapons in approval. "Which leaves us," Zeus said, "only the matter of thanking our young demigod heroes, who defended Olympus so well—even if there are a few dents in my throne."

He called Thalia forward first, since she was his daughter, and promised her help in filling the Hunters’ ranks.

Artemis smiled. "You have done well, my lieutenant. You have made me proud, and all those Hunters who perished in my service will never be forgotten. They will achieve Elysium, I am sure." She glared pointedly at Hades.

He shrugged. "Probably." Artemis glared at him some more then shot a pointed look over to where the three present Avatars – Thanatos for Death, Nemesis for Necessity, and Hestia for Life stood.

"Okay," Hades grumbled when Thanatos arched a brow at him in wordless command. "I'll streamline their application process."

Thalia beamed with pride. "Thank you, my lady." She bowed to the gods, even Hades, and then limped over to stand by Artemis's side.

"Tyson, son of Poseidon!" Zeus called.

Tyson looked nervous, but he went to stand in the middle of the Council, and Zeus grunted.

"Doesn't miss many meals, does he?" Zeus muttered, only to give a soft yelp when a stinging hex hit him from the audience, which had Ganymede nodding in thanks towards the watchful form of Frey. He cleared his throat and continued, trying to hold onto his dignity with the tips of his fingers.

"Tyson, for your bravery in the war, and for leading the Cyclopes, you are appointed a general in the armies of Olympus. You shall henceforth lead your brethren into war whenever required by the gods. And you shall have a new . . . um . . . what kind of weapon would you like? A sword? An axe?"

"Stick!" Tyson said, showing his broken club.

"Very well," Zeus said. "We will grant you a new, er, stick. The best stick that may be found."

"Hooray!" Tyson cried, and all the Cyclopes cheered and pounded him on the back as he rejoined them.

"Grover Underwood of the satyrs!" Dionysus called.

Grover came forward nervously.

"Oh, stop chewing your shirt," Dionysus chided. "Honestly, I'm not going to blast you. For your bravery and sacrifice, blah, blah, blah, and since we have an unfortunate vacancy, the gods have seen fit to name you a member of the Council of Cloven Elders."

Grover collapsed on the spot.

"Oh, wonderful," Dionysus sighed, as several naiads came forward to help Grover. "Well, when he wakes up, someone tell him that he will no longer be an outcast, and that all satyrs, naiads, and other spirits of nature will henceforth treat him as a lord of the Wild, with all rights, privileges, and honors, blah, blah, blah. Now please, drag him off before he wakes up and starts groveling."

"FOOOOOD," Grover moaned, as the nature spirits carried him away. His friends all shared
laughing glances, figuring he'd be okay. He would wake up as a lord of the Wild with a bunch of beautiful naiads taking care of him. Life could be worse.

Athena called, "Annabeth Chase, my own daughter."

Annabeth squeezed Percy’s arm, then walked forward and knelt at her mother's feet.

Athena smiled. "You, my daughter, have exceeded all expectations. You have used your wits, your strength, and your courage to defend this city, and our seat of power. It has come to our attention that Olympus is . . . well, trashed. The Titan lord did much damage that will have to be repaired. We could rebuild it by magic, of course, and make it just as it was. But the gods feel that the city could be improved. We will take this as an opportunity. And you, my daughter, will design these improvements."

Annabeth looked up, stunned. "My . . . my lady?"

Athena smiled wryly. "You are an architect, are you not? You have studied the techniques of Daedalus himself. Who better to redesign Olympus and make it a monument that will last for another eon?"

"You mean . . . I can design whatever I want?"

"As your heart desires," the goddess said. "Make us a city for the ages."

"As long as you have plenty of statues of me," Apollo added.

"And me," Aphrodite agreed.

"Hey, and me!" Ares said. "Big statues with huge wicked swords and—"

"All right!" Athena interrupted, with an exasperated roll of her eyes. "She gets the point. Rise, my daughter, official architect of Olympus."

Annabeth rose in a trance and walked back towards the group of friends.

"Way to go," Percy told her, grinning. For once she was at a loss for words.

"I'll . . . I'll have to start planning . . . Drafting paper, and, um, pencils—"

“Luke Castellan!” Hermes cried, interrupting Annabeth’s rambling before she could get lost in her architect’s daydream.

Taking a bracing breath, as the rewards were only going to get bigger now that they’d gotten to the four heroes who had stood alone against Kronus, Luke squeezed Silena’s hand and stepped forward, though rather than kneeling, he stood with his head high and locked gazes with his father – which had more than a few of the sticklers for propriety grumbling before a tch from Hestia had then minding their manners…even if Luke wasn’t interested in minding his considering he’d risked never seeing his wife again, or never seeing his child period by staying to stand against the Titanomachy.

“My son.” Hermes breathed. “You who stood strong against Kronus, even when he tried to taint you. I realize – even if none other does – that it could have just as easily been your body carried off by the Fates today.”

“That was actually the original version.” Apollo chimed in, getting a scowl from the others for the interruption…though many were surprised to hear that it could have gone another way. “Would
have been waay harder to beat too. Good thing someone decided on a rewrite.” He winked at a stoic Frey.

Ignoring his idiot half-brother, Hermes continued.

“All great heroes must be rewarded.” He announced, using words that would become a refrain for all three of the half-bloods who had actively fought against Kronus. “Is there anyone who denies that my son is deserving?”

Many of the half-bloods waited with baited breath. The gods, let alone the Council, never agreed completely on anything.

“It is decided.” Hermes announced with a grin that promised nothing but trouble – just like his sons and daughters who all seem to inherit it.

“Luke Castellan.” Zeus said. “You shall have one gift from the gods.”

“Any gift?” Luke asked, cocking his head to the side in thought, turning a bit to look at his wife who was beaming at him – half-proud and half-sad. There was a usual gift that those granted anything ask for, in fact Zeus was about to point it out when Luke continued. Living forever wasn’t for him…not if he couldn’t have Silena and their child – she’d whispered it was a daughter after Hera had told her mind-to-mind after sniffing at Percy – weren’t with him. “Then I wish for there to be a half-blood children welfare program – and a place at Camp to house them if their mortal parents are deemed unfit.” Luke locked eyes with Frey, knowing that his words would dredge up old wounds that had everything to the future Thanatos had described would have been his if the Avatar of Death hadn’t stepped in. “I never want there to be another half-blood abused and frightened by their parents when there are monsters out there. Home should be a safe place for us, since everywhere else so rarely is.”

Hestia looked fit to burst her buttons with pride for the boon he’d asked, even as a deep sadness crossed Hermes’s face, and Hades looked away from the accusing bright blue eyes in shame, as it had been his curse that had cost Luke that knowledge of what having a safe home was supposed to be.

This request caused a stir among the Council, with Hera being the most vocal in support of it.

Family, after all, was kinda her deal.

And she’d seen enough bad ones over the years to realize the need for such a thing as Luke asked.

“It shall be done.” She announced before the Council could delve into full-on bickering. “We gave our word.” She scolded them with a frown. “And we shall keep it. My priestesses shall serve as the council you ask, and a cabin shall be built and staff by nature spirits such as the dryads and naiads that call Camp Half-Blood home to watch over those children too young to be looked after by their siblings.”

Luke bowed and stepped back, clearing the way for the next hero…and having thoroughly ruffled more than a few feathers.

“I’m so proud of you, love.” Silena whispered, standing on tippy-toe to kiss her husband’s whiskered cheek. Luke must have been falling down on his shaving with her away. She almost shuddered in fear of what their rooms at the Big House looked like.

Probably old dirty clothes and leftover pizza everywhere.
“Frey, legacy of Thanatos!” The Avatar of Death stepped forward and called, Frey stepping up until he was toe-to-toe with the progenitor of the Peverell line and the two clasping arms – as equals, which nearly had the Council in as big of a tizzy as Luke’s request and failure to kneel all at the same time. “A hero without equal, the Titanslayer, forger of the Cursed Blade of Prophecy,” with each title, the eyes of the audience grew larger as his deed were unfurled for their consumption – as well as that of Asgard who he could feel spying on the moment, and liking raking in the results of won bets. “You have exceeded all of my expectations when I took you for my own. And as Hermes said: a great hero must be rewarded.”

“Is there anyone that would deny that Frey, legacy of Thanatos, is deserving?” Zeus checked, checking Frey in his blood-flecked armor out in the process, a look of desire he saw on more than one face among the Olympians, among which were Ganymede and Apollo, though others were not as expected. “It is agreed, Frey of the line of Thanatos, what reward shall you have for your deeds?”

Zeus – and the few others who knew of his close-held godling status – were honestly curious for what he would ask.

They needn’t have been.

It was the exact thing he’d been planning on asking for ever since he’d heard the Great Prophecy, after learning that at some point he would have to sire heirs…heirs who would be wizards only, without the protection that his eventual immortality will grant him.

“Anything?” He arched a challenging brow.

“Anything, so mote it be.” Zeus promised knowing what his cunning lover was waiting on. Though he didn’t expect the shining golden cord to snap into being between Frey and the rest of the Council, including himself. Though he probably should have since he’d been speaking as the Head of the Council in that moment, not just as Zeus.

“I want amnesty.” Frey announced, stunning the Council and crowd alike into silence. “Safety, and protection for my children by Draco Malfoy, legacy of Hecate,” – and when he’d figured that out, it had explained a lot about how cocky the Malfoys always were…even though they were sworn to Loki, he’d never been a jealous god, and he couldn’t blame one of his acolyte for bedding a beautiful goddess like Hecate. “From this day, until the Twilight of the Gods takes this universe and every living thing with it – so mote it be.”

…

On Asgard, Loki hid a cheer and a smile of pride behind a timely cough, never prouder of his son than in that moment, the moment where he checkmated Odin’s plans…before they’d ever even been formed.

…

"PERCY JACKSON!" Poseidon announced after the uproar of Frey’s demand had died down.

Hera had looked mad enough to spit, let alone a few of the other gods who weren’t exactly on Team Frey.

Not that there was shit they could do about it now – through his children at least.

And ever since he was old enough to know, to understand what being the son of Loki meant for them, though they’d yet to be born, someone hurting them or using them to hurt him had been the only thing he’d truly feared.
Now that fear was gone.

And he’d never felt more free in his life, even when he’d won free of his own prophecy.

The name echoed around the chamber. All talking died down. The room was silent except for the crackle of the hearth fire. Everyone's eyes were on him as he stood between Annabeth and Luke—all the gods, the demigods, the Cyclopes, the spirits.

Percy walked into the middle of the throne room, Hestia smiling at him reassuringly. She was in the form of a girl now, and she seemed happy and content to be sitting by her fire again now that the issue of Frey—the one most likely to cause trouble needing her intervention—was over. Her smile gave him courage to keep walking.

First, he bowed to Zeus.

Then knelt at his father's feet, not nearly as cheeky—or suicidal—as the older two half-bloods who had been rewarded for facing Kronus with him.

"Rise, my son," Poseidon said.

Percy stood uneasily.

"A great hero must be rewarded," Poseidon said, the words spoken for the third time that evening. "Is there anyone here who would deny that my son is deserving?"

He waited for someone to pipe up, especially after the last two requests. The gods never agreed on anything, and many of them still didn't like him, but not a single one protested.

"The Council agrees," Zeus said. "Percy Jackson, you will have one gift from the gods."

Percy hesitated. "Any gift?"

Zeus nodded grimly. "I know what you will ask." He sighed. Finally, someone was sticking to the script. "The greatest gift of all. Yes, if you want it, it shall be yours. The gods have not bestowed this gift on a mortal hero in many centuries, but, Perseus Jackson—if you wish it—you shall be made a god. Immortal. Undying. You shall serve as your father's lieutenant for all time."

Sea-green eyes stared at him, stunned. "Um... a god?"

Zeus rolled his eyes, even the threat of the combined displeasure of Ganymede and Frey not enough to hold his tongue this time.

"A dimwitted god, apparently. But yes. With the consensus of the entire Council, I can make you immortal. Then I will have to put up with you forever."

"Hmm," Ares mused. "That means I can smash him to a pulp as often as I want, and he'll just keep coming back for more. I like this idea."

"I approve as well," Athena said, though she was looking at Annabeth.

Percy glanced back. Annabeth was trying not to meet his eyes. Her face was pale. He flashed back to two years ago, when he'd thought she was going to take the pledge to Artemis and become a Hunter. He'd been on the edge of a panic attack, thinking that he'd lose her. Now, she looked pretty much the same way. Percy thought about the Three Fates, and the way he'd seen his life flash by.

He could avoid all that. No aging, no death, no body in the grave. He could be a teenager forever,
in top condition, powerful, and immortal, serving my father. He could have power and eternal life. Who could refuse that? Then Percy looked at Annabeth again, and thought about his friends from camp: Michael Yew, Clarisse’s littlest half-brother, Miles who he’d seen tossed aside like a rag doll in the atrium of the building, so many others who were now dead. He thought about Ethan Nakamura and how Luke was almost lost to Kronus, even with Frey’s help. And he knew what to do.

"No," he said.

The Council was silent. The gods frowned at each other like they must have misheard.

"No?" Zeus said. "You are . . . turning down our generous gift?" There was a dangerous edge to his voice, like a thunderstorm about to erupt.

What the fuck was wrong with heroes these days? Many of the Council thought, perplexed. Did no one want to live forever anymore?

"I'm honored and everything," Percy said. "Don't get me wrong. It's just . . . I've got a lot of life left to live. I'd hate to peak in my sophomore year." The gods were glaring at him, but Annabeth had her hands over her mouth. Her eyes were shining. And that kind of made up for it. "I do want a gift, though," he said. "Do you promise to grant my wish?"

Zeus thought about this. "If it is within our power."

"It is," Percy said. "And it's not even difficult. But I need your promise on the River Styx."

"What?" Dionysus cried. "You don't trust us?"

"Someone once told me," He said, looking at Hades, "you should always get a solemn oath."

Hades shrugged, smirking. "Guilty."

"Very well!" Zeus growled. "In the name of the Council, we swear by the River Styx to grant your reasonable request as long as it is within our power." The other gods muttered assent. Thunder boomed, shaking the throne room. The deal was made.

"From now on, I want to you properly recognize the children of the gods," Percy said, with a hint of disapproval that they had to be made to do so. "All the children . . . of all the gods."

The Olympians shifted uncomfortably.

"Percy," Poseidon said, even as Frey and Luke were exchanging a complicated set of high-fives that had Silena covering her face in embarrassment, "what exactly do you mean?"

"Kronos couldn't have risen if it hadn't been for a lot of demigods who felt abandoned by their parents," he said, rightly. "They felt angry, resentful, and unloved, and they had a good reason."

Zeus's royal nostrils flared. "You dare accuse—"

"No more undetermined children," he said, voice firm, unyielding. "I want you to promise to claim your children—all your demigod children—by the time they turn thirteen. They won't be left out in the world on their own at the mercy of monsters. I want them claimed and brought to camp so they can be trained right, and survive."

"Now, wait just a moment," Apollo said, but Percy was on a roll.
"And the minor gods," he said. "Nemesis, Hecate, Morpheus, Janus, Hebe—they all deserve a general amnesty and a place at Camp Half-Blood. Their children shouldn't be ignored. Calypso and the other peaceful Titan-kind should be pardoned too. And Hades—"

"Are you calling me a minor god?" Hades bellowed.

"No, my lord," Percy covered quickly. "But your children should not be left out. They should have a cabin at camp. Nico has proven that. No unclaimed demigods will be crammed into the Hermes cabin anymore, wondering who their parents are. They'll have their own cabins, for all the gods. And no more pact of the Big Three. That didn't work anyway. You've got to stop trying to get rid of powerful demigods. We're going to train them and accept them instead. All children of the gods will be welcome and treated with respect. That is my wish."

Zeus snorted. "Is that all?" The tone was clear, and clearly Ganymede thought so as well if the arch of a golden brow that had Zeus gulping and shrinking back was any indication.

"Percy," Poseidon said, "you ask much. You presume much."

"I hold you to your oath," Percy said. "All of you." He got a lot of steely looks.

Strangely, it was Athena who spoke up: "The boy is correct. We have been unwise to ignore our children. It proved a strategic weakness in this war and almost caused our destruction. Percy Jackson, I have had my doubts about you, but perhaps"—she glanced at Annabeth, and then spoke as if the words had a sour taste—"perhaps I was mistaken. I move that we accept the boy's plan."


"All in favor," Hermes said. All the gods raised their hands.

"Um, thanks," Percy said and turned, but before he could leave, Poseidon called, "Honor guard!"

Immediately the Cyclopes came forward and made two lines from the thrones to the door—an aisle for him to walk through. They came to attention.

"All hail, Perseus Jackson," Tyson said. "Hero of Olympus . . . and my big brother!"

... 

"Well," Zeus asked with a sour look on his face, staring up at Frey from where he was gleefully helping Ganymede tie him to the bed with more than a little magic. "Did you get what you wanted, lover?"

“Oh yeah.” Frey smirked, and flicked his fingers to clean his armor of dirt and then banished it, leaving him naked and with one hell of an arousal. “And if you don’t piss Ganymede off too soon... so will you.”

“And Apollo?"

“Oh…maybe.” Frey decided, not wanting to think too much about that when he had said god’s father tied up and waiting for him. “But I’m here now... what more can you really ask for?”

“He’s Zeus.” Ganymede pointed out drily, coming over just as naked as his lovers and draping his arms around Frey from behind as he placed a hot kiss to that long, lean neck. “Don’t give him openings like that or the next thing you know you’ll end up spirited away and made his Cupbearer for all eternity.”
Author’s Note 2: As stated before, I took a chunk of the book, specifically Chapter 20, and reworked it to fit with this version of the story. It’s not mine and I don’t take credit for anything but my version of it which was basically turning it into third-person POV and adding in Luke and Frey, as well as some of the relationship dynamics. Everything else belongs to Rick Riordan and I’m just playing with it.
Epilogue

Author’s Note: Well darlings, we’ve come to the end of part one of this journey I set out on over two? I’m pretty sure it was two years ago now…maybe almost three. Anywho…a lot of tears went into writing this, it carried me through a messy divorce, two jobs, and opening my own business. I hope you’ve enjoyed the ride as much as I have. Have no worries, this isn’t even close to the last you’ll see of Frey and Co., in fact I should have Doors of Death, the next installment, started uploading here soon. It’ll be much shorter than this, three-parts at most, then there will be a five-part side-story that’s pure Frey adventure, then comes That Was Tingly which is a one-shot that I already posted some time ago, and then we’re on to the events of Thor which I’ve already written and will only need to tweak. Lots of story darlings, after all, we haven’t even gotten to Frey’s godhood yet!

Epilogue – Passing the Mantle

Frey walked slowly along the edge of the Black Lake, staring off towards Hogwarts in the distance with the Forbidden Forest looming behind him.

He didn’t know how long he’d been standing there in this dreaming – it could have been moments or hours, when the scene changed and Hogwarts in all her beauty was replaced with the gleaming golden edifice of Asgard and soft footsteps sounded behind him.

Turning, Frey smiled into his father’s face, which with the ending of the Second Great War on his son’s current home planet had relaxed from the stress and fear that had encompassed much of the last few years.

“Your grandbera and the rest say hello.” Loki told his son as he moved to stand shoulder to shoulder with the young man. No…he sighed to himself. Not a young man, not anymore. His little prince wasn’t so little anymore, standing inch-for-inch in height with Loki and broader through the chest and shoulder than he’d ever been, or Jotnar invidja tended to be. That was Lily and James’s influence showing, no doubt, if not Thanatos’s.

His baby boy, his Loki-son had grown up, strengthened and forged in the fires of prophecy and war into a fine man who would make an even finer immortal and god when the time came – though for the sake of his grandchildren, Loki hoped that time was still far distant, as with divinity will likely come duties and enemies alike that will suck up more time than most realize, especially in the first few years.

“I’ll come see them soon.” Frey smiled, nudging his father’s shoulder with his own. “How’s Asgard?”

Loki closed his eyes and groaned low in his throat.

“Odin makes more and more of Thor, while the idiot basks in the praise offered by Odin and the people alike.” Loki sighed, his eyes meeting their identical twins in his son’s gaze. “I fear when the Odinsleep comes again, it will be Thor that Odin makes Regent in his absence – though given the sheer popularity of Thor, I doubt it will be as easy to unseat him once Odin awakes then the old goat thinks.” Loki shrugged. “Still…it might be possible to delay things…just a bit.”

“I wouldn’t, Far.” Frey cautioned him, a far-off look in his eyes. “Your Norms like to meddle too much. To make mischief would give them an opportunity to meddle with you, something I wouldn’t
wish on another living being.”

Loki threw an arm around his son’s shoulders, squeezing him tight with a put-upon scoff.

“Very well.” Frey rolled his eyes at his father’s antics. “I suppose I will refrain, for you my not-so-little-prince.”

“I’ll take it.” They laughed together, turning as one to follow their often-trod path beside the lake. “Though I worry less, now that I’ve succeed in my mission.”

“Yes, indeed.” Loki’s tone was nothing less than smug with pride for his son’s accomplishment. He could hardly wait for Odin to learn the consequences of Zeus and the Olympian’s vows of amnesty for Frey’s three children by Draco. The old bastard would have to merely seethe in impotence at being denied the opportunity to use them against either Loki or his son. He hoped he choked on it. “Well done, my son…very well done.”

…

“Are you certain I can’t convince you to stay, or at least teach as you have in the past?” Chiron asked his young protégé as he escorted Frey back to the wardline.

In the aftermath of Kronus’s defeat, Frey had re-anchored the wards to Chiron rather than carry them himself – a seemingly odd choice at the time – which now, with Frey’s announcement, it was an act that made much sense if Chiron couldn’t convince him to stay on, at least in part.

“My time here has been wonderful, Chiron.” Frey told him with rare effusiveness, waving a hand to encompass all of Camp Half-Blood which was busier than ever constructing new cabins for all the minor – or simply not represented – gods and goddesses.

Percy’s reward had been a complex one after all, and with new half-bloods identified all the time by the Olympians, not only were the satyrs being run into the ground seeking them out, but the cabins were set to overflow any day now, even with Frey once again opening the Thanatos cabin to all comers.

Beside the Thanatos cabin that had been his home for so long, Frey spied Nico directing a bevy of skeleton works in fashioning the new Hades cabin, while a ghostly Ethan – doing penance as part of his afterlife, though he’d been offered a place on the Isle of the Blest which he had yet to accept – likely directing the creation of a cabin to house his half brothers and sisters, the children of Nemesis. Construction was all over the camp, and it had never seemed more alive than now. Rachel had cleared out the attic into an artist’s garret, and taken over the upper floors of the Big House as the new Oracle of Delphi, and Silena was managing it all with her serene dignity and the glow of a mother past morning sickness and over halfway through her pregnancy.

Frey wasn’t needed here – not anymore.

And he said as much to Chiron.

“Besides,” he laughed, reaching out and tapping the amulet he’d gifted to Chiron that worked as a two-way mirror – though strictly audio, much like a cell phone or walkie talkie. “It isn’t like you can’t contact me if needed, and I’ll always be up to come and visit my friends.” He sobered, Chiron a bit startled as always at the maturity Frey showed when called for, for such a mischievously inclined creature. “My children need me. And more…” He sighed, looking off towards the West where so much had begun changing him when he’d gone there with Luke on a lark and a quest. “I think I need them right now…more than I can say.”
Chiron nodded, that was understandable.

Frey deserved a bit of peace after all he’d done for the world.

And with the new great prophecy…it perhaps was time to pass on the mantle of “greatest hero of the age” to another.

Perseus was already shaping up quite nicely, if Chiron did say so himself.

“Be at peace, young hero.” Chiron nodded, saluting even as Frey melted into shadows and faded away. “Be at peace.”

…

The New Great Prophecy, given by Rachel as Oracle of Delphi:

Seven half-bloods shall answer the call.
To storm or fire, the world must fall.
An oath to keep with the final breath,
As foes bear arms to the Doors of Death.

…

“Papa!” A trio of voices cried as Frey stepped out of the shadows and into the family room at Peverell Castle. “Papa’s home!”

Yes, Frey smiled, leaning down to scoop up his ever-growing children, who would be off to kindergarten in a too-short time, this was exactly where he needed to be.

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