The Emerald Blade Book One: The New Trainees

by VioletEyedPrincess

Summary

DZ2’s Way of the Warrior Response: When Lily went into hiding with her husband and son, she reached out to a few old friends of hers. Now that’s she’s gone, those friends are here to make sure that her son doesn’t suffer from the manipulations of an old man who thinks himself above everyone else. Albus’ worst fears come to life when Harry comes to Hogwarts. Instead of a boy he could control; this boy is confident, strong, intelligent and powerful. How will Hogwarts react to Harry Potter-Othello who was and is being trained, not only as a warrior, but as an assassin? Chapter 8 edited!

Notes

So this is a challenge response to DZ2(fanfiction.net)'s challenge: Way of the Warrior. This is also my first crossover with Assassin’s Creed and I’ll tell you now: I’ve only played up to Black Flag and have never read any of the books. I am taking many liberties with both universes to make them fit into this story and challenge. If you don’t like what I’ve done then there’s a handy little thing called the back button…seriously, it’s located in the top left corner
of your screen. Anyway, for those who want to give this a try go ahead! If you like what I’ve
done and how I’ve set things up then feel free to let me know what you think! I strongly
recommend DZ2’s stories.

Disclaimer: Harry Potter and co. don’t belong to me. Assassin’s Creed and co. don’t belong
to me. I’m just taking some credit for the plot and original characters. In no way, shape or
form am I making money from this.

Main Story Warnings: A.U.-severe-, characters are OOC, canon is only a minor guideline,
crossover, swearing, violence, gore, character death, Grey!Harry, Assassin!Harry, modern
technology, OC’s abound, Ron!Molly!Ginny!Bashing, Dumbledore!Bashing

Pairings: James/Lily, Sirius/OFC, Remus/Tonks, Harry/Luna, Neville/Hermione,
Dean/Millicent
The Beginning

Chapter Notes

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Beta: Inuyasha-loves-Hanyou-Kagome

Edited On: 7/13/17

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Author’s Note: Well, I’ve decided to try my hand at tackling a challenge! This is DZ2’s Way of the Warrior challenge! This is also my first crossover with Assassin’s Creed and I’ll tell you now: I’ve only played up to Black Flag and have never read any of the books. I am taking many liberties with both universes to make them fit into this story and challenge. If you don’t like what I’ve done then there’s a handy little thing called the back button…seriously, it’s located in the top left corner of your screen. Anyway, for those who want to give this a try go ahead! If you like what I’ve done and how I’ve set things up then feel free to let me know what you think!

A/N 2: So this has gone through an edit thanks to my dear beta: Inuyasha-loves-Hanyou-Kagome. While things may not still be perfect, I’m not striving for absolute perfect. I also hope that those who struggled with the layout find this easier to read. Thank you all for your continued support and, while I am editing these chapters and re-working Heart and Soul, I am also slowly working on the second installment of this series. It won’t be up for some time yet but it will be done. Thank you all.

Challenge Stats:

DZ2's 'Way of the Warrior' Challenge

Plot:

On the night that Dumbledore left Harry on the doorstep, a second being was there with one purpose in mind: they knew Harry would be in a war, so they took it upon themselves to give him the strength that he needed.

Rules:

Grey or Dark Harry: Grey but good
The being that takes Harry away MUST be part of some 'warrior' race (Valkyries, Amazons, Ninja, Samurai, Magical Priests, OC Race, etc.): Assassin’s

Harry's upbringing with this race MUST be in the story (so a few chapters BEFORE Hogwarts)

The one that takes Harry away MUST either adopt Harry or give him some sort of protection, keeping him with the warriors: Adopted

Harry/Hermione, Harry/Luna, Harry/Daphne, Harry/Tonks OR Harry/OFC pairings ONLY: Harry/Luna

When Harry goes to Hogwarts, he uses his warrior abilities as well as his magical ones

Harry's strength and abilities unnerve, annoy and even frighten some people

At least ONE other student of Hogwarts (OCs included) must be from the same race. Dean, Hermione, Neville, Millicent and a few other surprising choices

At some point in the story, Harry MUST offer training to at least ONE person. Neville, Millicent and Hermione

Guidelines:

Harry is trained to become the new leader of the race: Accepted

Reasonable Creature Races (Elves, Centaurs, Goblins etc.): Somewhat

Harry's weapon can be disguised somehow: Accepted

Harry has a familiar: Accepted

The race gets Sirius free and cleared: No, is never imprisoned

Lily and/or James are actually bloodline members of the race: Lily

Crossovers: Assassin’s Creed

A prophecy speaks of the warrior wizard: Yes

Forbidden:

Slash

Any pairings other than the ones mentioned

The Dursleys raising Harry

Harry giving up his newfound abilities/powers

Weak, naive Harry

Dumbledore and/or Voldemort gaining the allegiance of Harry and his 'family'
Privet Drive was considered a relatively normal subdivision in Surrey, England. Hardly anything abnormal or ‘strange’ ever happened, in fact, only once did something bizarre happen. That had been when the woman renting out Number Ten had been evicted from her house. In some strange form a protest she had dressed in a lime green bikini and painted her exposed skin neon pink and green. She had stood outside the house screaming and ranting at the landlord until the police had been called. It had taken three officers to drag her out of the home while she kicked, clawed and screamed at them. Of course, that had all happened four years prior and nothing strange had ever happened since…that is…until November first, nineteen eighty-one.

Outside of the residence of Vernon and Petunia Dursley and their one-year old son Dudley, a small collection of people had gathered. The formerly illuminated streetlamps no longer provided their much needed light, instead the street and houses up and down the row were cast in thick shadow. Only the moon and stars in the night sky provided some light and even then it was difficult to make out too much should someone happen to peer outside their windows.

“Are you sure this is wise, Albus?” A woman hissed, shifting as her taller companion nodded solemnly.

“I am, Minerva. It is better he not be aware of his fame. Many would seek to control it and his name.”

The moon slowly slid into view from behind a large cloud, illuminating the trio who stood on the doorstep of Number Four. One was a tall, thin elderly man with long white hair and an equally long, white beard. Bright blue eyes twinkled behind half-moon spectacles which were perched on a slightly crooked nose. The man was dressed in deep purple robes which had shimmering stars and moons stitched onto it. The second person was a tall woman with deep, stern green eyes which glimmered behind her own spectacles and dark brown, nearly black hair which was held in a tight bun. She was dressed in a deep green robe which had a tartan sash tied around the waist. The last person, who was by far the most intimidating and strange, was a large man with wild dark brown hair and a wild dark brown beard which hid nearly all of his face except for glittering, beetle like brown eyes. He was dressed in a long, brown coat which appeared to have been patched up many times and seemed to possess a shocking amount of pockets.

“Are ye sure abou’ this, Albus? Lily always said ‘er sister was a right piece o’ work.” The large man asked, uncertainty in his voice as the elderly man looked down at the bundle of blankets in his arms.

“I’m positive, Hagrid. Petunia will care for Harry as if he were her own.” The elderly man, Albus Dumbledore, said.

The woman pursed her lips in displeasure though held her tongue. Albus bent down and gently set down the bundle of blankets onto the stoop. A slender stick appeared in his hand, intricately carved with small ‘bulbs’ which looked like berries going up the shaft. With a flick of the piece of wood, a
muted flash enveloped the stoop before the group stepped back and the ‘stick’ disappeared up Albus’ sleeve. The large man walked down the walk path to the street where a motorcycle was waiting and swung one of his legs over it. With a nod to the other two, he turned the engine over and took off down the street. However, before he reached a stop sign the motorcycle lifted into the air and disappeared behind a few clouds and out of sight. The woman glared at her companion before her form shifted. Where she had been standing mere seconds ago was a brown and grey tabby cat with markings around its eyes which resembled the woman’s spectacles. The tabby trotted off towards the other end of the street towards what appeared to be a wooded area.

Albus took one last look towards the doorstep before walking down to the end of the street after the tabby. However, he stopped and turned around while pulling what appeared to be a silver lighter from his pocket. Flicking it, several balls of light shot out of the opening and flew to the streetlamps. As soon as the street was illuminated once more the man stowed the device away before turning on his heel. A sharp cracking sound, reminiscent of a car backfiring, filled the air as Albus disappeared from the street. Silence settled in the area once more and it didn’t take too much longer before the sounds of crickets, frogs and the occasional raccoon resumed.

Across from Number Four, the shadows seemed to waver on the roof of the house before two cloaked figures separated from the shadows. One figure was taller and broader than the other and they moved silently across the roof before dropping to the ground in a silent crouch. Rising from their crouch they quickly walked into the light. Both wore long, hooded cloaks of dark grey in which the hoods rested low over their faces and seemed to come to a point between their eyes. Black pants covered their lower bodies while knee-high black and dark red boots soundlessly carried them across the pavement. The streetlamps overhead seemed to dim as they crossed the street and leapt over the low garden wall surrounding the front yard of the Dursley’s.

“Fools.” The smaller figure hissed, their voice higher pitched and feminine as gloved hands reaching out as they came to the doorstep.

“Calm yourself, love.” The second figure said, their voice a deep baritone as they watched the first figure bend down and lift the bundle.

“A simple warming charm that’ll only last two hours and a Notice-Me-Not ward, that’s it.” The woman spat, gently pulling back the blankets of the bundle.

Inside the bundle was a small boy with pudgy cheeks and tufts of wild black hair. He looked no older than a year old and seemed to be sleeping soundly. However, the two figures shifted and looked at the pink, fresh looking lightning bolt shaped scar on the toddler’s forehead. A simple envelope was pinned to the child’s blankets and the male figure reaching over and deftly removed it while his companion gently traced a gloved finger over the scar. However, she gasped and hissed as something evil reached out and sparked against her, making her eyes narrow from beneath the hood. Though her companion didn’t notice as he sneered as he read the letter that had been left behind.

_Petunia Dursley nee Evans,_

_It is with a heavy heart that I inform you that your younger sister, Lily Potter nee Evans, was killed the night of October 31st, 1981. As you may be aware of, a dark Wizard by the name of Lord Voldemort had waged war against the Light here in the Wizarding world. However, by some outstanding means, Voldemort has been vanquished. However, it was at the cost of the lives of Lily and her husband James Potter._

_Young Harry has somehow survived the attack on his home with only the scar on his forehead as proof. I have left him here knowing that you and your husband will take him in. You are his last_
living relatives, Petunia, therefore you can provide him with protections that will keep him safe
from those who would wish to control him or even kill him. In return for providing him room and
board, your family will be protected as well thanks to the blood wards which will surround your
property. Of course I will also provide you and your husband with a monthly allowance to ensure
Harry’s safety and good health.

Do not worry about contact from the Magical world, Petunia. I will oversee any mail Harry
should receive. All I ask is that you care for him. He, of course, will receive his Hogwarts letter on
his eleventh birthday: July 31st. Again, I am terribly sorry for the loss of your sister. Lily was a
wonderful and bright woman.

Regards,

Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore

“T-T-That bloody, incompetent old fool!” The man hissed, rage in his voice as the woman shifted
and held the child closer to her breast.

“We need to leave, Lucas. We need to get Harry to a Healer.” The woman said, urgency in her voice
as the man looked down at her.

“What?”

“There’s something…dark underneath his scar.” She said, worry in her voice as the man nodded.

Turning to face the street, he let out a sharp whistle. Out of the shadows of various houses other
figures hurried forward until they stood in a loose circle around the pair. All three of the new figures
wore similar outfits as the other two; the only difference being the colors of their outer cloaks.

“Lars, Brandon, Hector, fan out and find Sirius Orion Black. The man was the first to arrive at Potter
Cottage in Godric’s Hallow and he left shortly after he discovered James and Lily were dead. He’s
tracking Peter Pettigrew and there is no doubt he will try to kill the traitor. Do not allow Black to kill
Pettigrew. The man has too much information to let him die. Bring Black back to the estate and
Pettigrew if you’re able to. We need to get out of here before the blood wards take hold. Harrison
needs to be blood adopted before this day is over.” He said, the three people nodding in agreement as
they looked at him.

“What if Pettigrew escapes?”

“Try your best without exposing yourself. We don’t know if any Templars will be around him.
There’s a very good chance he’ll seek refuge with them now that Riddle is gone.” He said, only
relaxing slightly when he received firm nods.

Only after the others left did the male speaker turn to his companion, watching silently as she cradled
the toddler to her chest.

“Come, Delilah. We need to get Harrison to the Estate before that old fool’s blood wards take hold.
We have much to do in order to protect him.” Lucas urged, his companion nodding in agreement.

Turning from the property, they hurried on silent feet across the street before turning on the spot.
They disappeared without a sound, leaving Privet Drive like it had been moments before. A few
minutes passed in relative silence before a dimly lit red dome flickered into existence around Number
Four. The dome glowed faintly before it flickered again and fell. Inside the house in the upper floor
master bedroom, a tall, thin woman with short blonde hair and dark green eyes sat up. She blinked in
the darkness of the room before looking out the window to the street. Getting up from the bed, she silently got to her feet, ignoring the loud snores coming from the large form of her husband. Padding over to the window, she peered outside, her eyes narrowing as she looked at the yard and street.

Shivering lightly she rubbed her bare arms before closing the window and locking it. Something in her gut told her that something horrible had happened. However, she just couldn’t place what had happened. With a firm shake of her head, the woman walked out of the bedroom and across the hallway. Opening the door to a second bedroom, she relaxed at the sight of an alarmingly large toddler sleeping in a crib underneath the window in the room. She walked into the room and peered down at the toddler, reassuring herself that her son was alright before she left the room and returned to her bed. Lying back down, she closed her eyes and forced herself to relax. Whatever it was that had disturbed her she would focus on come morning when her husband was away at work.

The man and woman arrived standing inside a large entrance hall of a beautiful three story manor. The floors were a beautiful rich wood and the walls a welcoming cream. Paintings and tapestries dotted the walls and a set of sweeping staircases led up to the second story. Between the two staircases were a set of double doors while wide hallways branched off to the left and right of the large room. The woman reached up and lowered her hood, revealing long golden blonde hair, ice blue hair and golden tanned skin. She looked up and watched as her companion lowered his hood as well, revealing shoulder length shaggy light brown hair, golden eyes and richly tanned skin. Both of them looked down as a pop filled the air. A curious creature with large, bat-like ears and tennis ball shaped green eyes dressed in a smart uniform appeared in front of them.

“Master?” It asked, looking up at Lucas with curiosity.

“Jarvis, Alert Healer June she’s needed in the medical wing. Then wake Father Hendrik. We need them right away.” Lucas ordered, the House Elf bowing before it popped away.

Lucas followed his wife down the right hallway, the pair of them taking the few turns tightly due to their haste. They finally reached a pair of double wooden doors and hurried through. Through the doors was a long room with a dozen beds on either side of the room, all of them neatly made in soft white sheets. There were large floor to ceiling windows on either side of the room which allowed in plenty of natural light during the day and the floor was made from a dark grey and white checkered pattern. Each bed had a bedside table, wheeling medical tray and folding curtains which could be drawn around the bed to provide privacy.

Delilah hurried over to the nearest bed and set Harry down. While Lucas watched from over her shoulder, she undid the blankets around the one year-old and looked him over. She was glad that he had at least been dressed in a clean onesie, though the lightweight clothing was completely unsuitable for the early November night. Lucas scowled, knowing that there hadn’t been any kind of warming charm placed over the doorstep; only a simple Notice-Me-Not ward keyed to everyone bar Petunia and her husband. How could the supposed leader of the Light leave a one year-old toddler on a Muggle’s doorstep without even knocking?

Lucas was brought out of his thoughts when the doors to the infirmary opened again. An elder man with neatly combed silver hair and warm brown eyes hurried into the ward while tying his black robe closed. Beside him was a rather pretty younger woman with short dark red hair and bright violet eyes. She, too, was tying a robe closed over her nightgown. Both of them spotted the couple and hurried over, concern in their eyes.

“You called, Lord Othello?” The woman asked, a frown appearing on her lips when she noticed the toddler on the bed.
“We rescued the boy from Petunia Dursley’s doorstep.” Delilah said, making the pair look at her sharply before they looked at Harry again.

“So this is Lily’s child?” The elderly man asked, the pair nodding as the woman walked over to the bed and stood in front of the toddler.

“It’s been broadcast over the wireless that Voldemort was vanquished by James and Lily Potter’s son. The magical output has skyrocketed since Halloween.” The woman explained, a wand shooting into her left hand before she began waving it above Harry while chanting under her breath.

“There is something... evil in his scar. I have no doubt that the old fool left it in there. There’s no way a man of his supposed power didn’t sense it.” Delilah said, the elderly man frowning as Lucas nodded.

“Lucas, Delilah, if there is something in his scar then—”

“Then we’ll summon a Goblin from Gringotts. We need to go there within in the next few hours anyway. Albus had used the boy’s blood to create blood wards around his aunt’s property. Without Harry there those wards will fail and no doubt the old man will know something’s wrong. We have to act quickly and ensure he has the protection of our family. Not only that, but the old man will try to attack us through the Ministry by sealing the wills.” Lucas said, his deep voice filled with anger as the elderly man frowned and Delilah nodded.

“June, have you found anything?” Delilah asked, looking to the younger woman who was scanning runes which appeared to be made of smoke hovering above Harry’s body.

“His body temperature had dropped though he wasn’t in danger just yet. There is a rather strong magical binding on his core. It’s amazing that his core is even still pulsing. If his core went unbound then he would’ve become a Squib within a few years.” June said, anger in her voice as Lucas and Delilah scowled.

“The note Albus left never said anything about the lock on Harry’s core. Even more dangerous is that Petunia wouldn’t have taken him to get his inoculations against Dragon Pox and Vanishing Sickness.” Lucas hissed, his hands curling into fists as the elderly man placed a soothing hand on his shoulder.

“There’s no need to worry about that now, Lucas. Harrison is here with us now. Soon he shall be a part of your family with all of the protections that offers. Lily and James will be remembered and their son shall be raised knowing his place in life.” The man said, Lucas nodding as he drew a deep breath to relax himself.

“Thank you, Father. We need to act quickly about all of this. I’ll go and summon the Potter Account manager along with our lawyer.” Lucas said, striding out of the infirmary as Father Hendrik and Delilah watched him.

Delilah turned and watched June work as Father Hendrik stood nearby; his presence comforting. However, Delilah and Father Hendrik startled when June exploded, swearing violently in German as a sickly green and blood red glow surrounded Harry’s forehead. June practically sprinted to the storage room, swearing all the way while the other two watched her with wide eyes. Something was wrong and that something apparently enraged June to the point where she forgot her upbringing and lost herself to her emotions.

“June, what’s wrong?” Father Hendrik asked, raising an eyebrow as the woman hurried out carrying several vials.
However instead of speaking in English, June ranted and raved in her native tongue, making the pair frown as they struggled to understand her. Only when Delilah grabbed the woman by the arm did June realize that they couldn’t understand her and were shaken by her outburst.

“T-That bastard left a Horcrux in the boy’s head! It’s trapped just underneath his scar.” June spat, making the other’s gasp and look at the boy in horror.

“I always knew Riddle feared death but to do this…” Father Hendrik said, shaking his head while Delilah helped June get Harry to swallow a few potions as he slept.

“Any competent Healer knows that a scar created from Dark Magic has a chance of being more than a simple scar. Surely Dumbledore took the boy to see a Healer.” June said, making Delilah snort and roll her eyes.

“I doubt it. I also doubt he fully understands exactly what is behind Harry’s scar.” Delilah said, June nodding even though she looked disturbed by the thought.

The doors opened and Lucas walked in followed by two Goblins, one larger than the other and dressed in formal looking armor while the smaller Goblin was dressed in a smart business suit. Behind them was a rather portly man wearing a business suit with dark blonde hair and lake green eyes. Delilah, Father Hendrik and June bowed deeply to the taller Goblin, shocked to see him.

“Director Ragnok, you honor us.” Delilah said, rising from her bow which was returned by the large Goblin.

“When Goldspear informed me about what you wished to do I decided to come with. Dumbledore has already set up a meeting with Goldspear pertaining to the Potter accounts. He had come in yesterday evening and informed us that Lord and Lady Potter had been killed.” Ragnok said, looking at the toddler on the bed with something akin to concern and respect.

“It looks like Lily had cast some kind of protection spell around Harry. I’m detecting the traces of runic magic.” June added, frowning lightly as she looked closer at the scar on Harry’s forehead.

“Lady Potter had looked through one of the Potter vaults which contained ancient books on various forms of magic. It is possible she found something there.” Goldspear explained, causing the others to look at him with interest.

“Well, Riddle was killed by Harrison around midnight. I’m guessing that Albus took Harrison and had him checked on by someone or healed Harrison’s scar himself. Lily likely activated the runes while James fought Riddle off. The ritual likely asked for a sacrifice of some sort and Lily paid with her life.” Lucas said, sorrow in his voice as the Goblins nodded silently.

June quickly explained what she had discovered behind Harry’s scar which caused the two Goblins to swear and rage in their own language while Delilah quickly told their lawyer, Drew Holmes, what a Horcrux was. Goldspear quickly assured Lucas and Delilah that Albus had no power to seal the Potter wills, especially since the treaty Gringotts had with the Ministry prevented such a thing from happening. Lucas and Delilah knew that James and Lily left instructions as to who was to raise Harry in the event of their deaths. They, Sirius Black, Remus Lupin and the Longbottom family were a few of those mentioned in the wills and the wills also stated their son was to never go to the Dursleys because of their known hatred of anything even remotely magical. Goldspear quickly handed Drew a copy of the Potter’s wills to which the man quickly read through them before he tucked them inside his briefcase for safe keeping.

June, meanwhile, summoned a rather old looking book from one of her private storage rooms near
the main door of the infirmary. With the book in hand she summoned various vials and containers which held different colored liquids and creams. When Delilah asked her what she was doing, June explained that they needed to purify Harry’s scar and use a combination of different magical based potions and even just ingredients to force the Horcrux out of the area where the Horcrux had become trapped. Father Hendrik gladly blessed all of the potions and creams and had his personal House Elf get him a vial of Holy Water from the small church that was on the estate grounds. Goldspear provided June with his silver dagger, which was quickly purified by way of a Purification Potion and also had Holy Water poured over it.

With Delilah, Lucas and Drew standing a few feet away from the bed, Ragnok, Goldspear, Father Hendrik and June began the process of getting rid of Riddle’s soul piece. Goldspear used his dagger to reopen the wound on Harry’s forehead which began to ooze a thick black liquid with red tints. June instantly poured the Purifying Potion onto the wound, wincing as a bright green smoke began seeping from the wound. Lucas and Delilah clutched onto each other as Father Hendrik helped to add more and more potions to the wound to cleanse it. The couple knew that the only reason why Harrison was still asleep was because June had made a sleeping potion so he wouldn’t wake up during the procedure. It took nearly ten minutes before the smoke fully left Harry’s scar and let out a horrid scream.

June focused on the smoke and sneered as it took on the shape of Riddle’s face. Flicking her wand, a silver dove shot out of the tip of her wand and flew at Riddle’s shade. Delilah and Lucas quickly followed her example and a regal Philippine Eagle and a large Black Bear joined the dove. The eagle and dove drove the shade towards the bear where it tore into the shade, causing it to emit a piercing shriek of pain before it disappeared. Once it was gone June and Father Hendrik cleaned the black ooze from Harry’s face before June carefully teased the open wound close and applied some balm to it. She flicked her wand a few more times and smiled when she saw a golden light surround Harry.

“It’s gone. There are no more traces of Riddle’s soul inside of Harry.” She said, smiling as the others sagged in relief.

“Once things have calmed down we’ll sweep the vaults of known Death Eaters for any more of those…abominations.” Ragnok said, a terrifying sneer spreading across his face at the thought of Gringotts protecting a Horcrux.

“Thank you, Director. Will you both witness the blood adoption? We want to provide Harry as much protection as possible.” Lucas said, smiling as the two Goblin’s nodded.

“Come, let’s get this done.” June said, having Lucas and Delilah sit down as she summoned another vial.


The next day: November 2nd

Sirius Orion Black grunted as he was deposited into a chair. Turning angered stormy blue eyes towards the trio who had brought him to the manor, he huffed when he saw that the single female of the trio had taken his wand. With the other two men standing on either side of him, he knew that it would be futile to try and escape. Instead, Sirius took a look at his surroundings. He had been brought to a rather lavish study from the look of it. In front of him was a handsome, ornate dark wood desk with a rather comfortable high backed chair behind it. Behind the desk and chair was a wide window that looked out over a rather large and sprawling yard. On either side of the window were bookcases which were filled with books, scrolls and files. Sirius could see a faint shimmer covering the shelves protecting them from age and from others trying to remove them. When he had been brought to the study, he had caught glimpse of a small seating arrangement in front of a rather
grand fireplace.

“Where am I?” Sirius demanded, glaring at his captors though he got no response.

“Honestly, Black, I thought you were more reasonable than this.” A male voice drawled, making Sirius start.

“Wha-?!”

Sirius blinked in surprise when he saw Lucas Othello walk over and sit down in the chair behind the desk. He knew Lucas through Lily. She had introduced all of them to Lucas and explained that he and Delilah Woods had helped her after her parents had died in a car crash. Of course Sirius also knew Lucas from past meetings when he had lived with his parents. The Othello family was the oldest Pureblood line in the entire Wizarding world; dating back even further than the Potters and Blacks who had been alive during the Founder’s era. It was rumored that the Othello family had been around since Merlin was alive and that one of his children had even married into the family which had only served to increase their magical potential and prestige.

“L-Lucas?! What’s going on?” Sirius asked, blinking when Lucas sighed.

“Sirius, when you arrived at Godric’s Hallow, why did you leave?” Lucas asked, watching as Sirius gaped before frowning.

“I knew it was Pettigrew that sold James and Lily out! I had to get to him! You’re men stopped me from killing him and let him escape!” Sirius snapped, rage in his eyes as Lucas looked at him.

“No, Sirius, my men stopped you from making a grave mistake. Did the thought of your godson never cross your mind? When you saw Hagrid with Harry in his arms, did you make no attempt to take him as was your right?” Lucas asked, watching as Sirius frowned.

“Of course I did! But Hagrid refused to…let…me…” He began, his eyes widening as he realized what Lucas was trying to tell him.

“Last night at midnight, myself and my wife saw Rebus Hagrid, Minerva McGonagall and Albus Dumbledore at Number Four Privet Drive. Minerva expressed her displeasure at the idea of Albus leaving young Harrison on the doorstep of the Dursley’s. As you know, Albus was aware of the Potter wills but ignored them. He made the executive decision to remove Harrison from Godric’s Hallow and place him in an environment where Harrison would’ve been abused and beaten down. Not only that, but Albus also had a charm placed on you. It made you blind to anything but the idea of getting revenge for the Potters and most likely would’ve caused you to lose your right to take care of Harrison.

“My men and woman removed the spell on you when they found you cornering Pettigrew. I can assure you that I have my people looking for the rat. Because we prevented you from making a grievous mistake, you can report Pettigrew’s betrayal to the Department of Law Enforcement. You can also prevent Albus from getting his hands on the Potter fortune.” Lucas explained, watching as Sirius looked at him with shock.

“…L-Lily warned us that Albus couldn’t be trusted…w-we didn’t want to believe her. Would he really have-?”

“Yes, Sirius, he would have. My wife and I brought Harrison here and he was examined by our Healer. She discovered a piece of Voldemort’s soul trapped behind the scar on Harrison’s forehead. Not only that, but a powerful block had been placed on Harrison’s magical core. If the block hadn’t
been removed then it is very likely that Harrison would’ve been a Squib by the time he turned four. Goldspear and Director Ragnok along with the Othello lawyer have been made aware of what Albus has done and the Goblins even helped to remove the soul piece from Harrison. My wife and I have blood adopted Harrison; he is our legal son though we have made sure that he kept his original last name. This is to provide him the protection that our family brings.” Lucas explained, watching as Sirius stared at him dumbfounded.

“B-But…are you sure?! I mean…does Harry have the gift?” Sirius asked, shock in his voice as Lucas smiled softly.

“Yes, Harrison has the gifts. Harrison James Potter-Othello will be an Assassin and shall begin his training once he reaches a suitable age. We will insure that Harrison is raised knowing his parents and his heritage and what his duties will be as future Lord Potter.” Lucas said, watching as Sirius bowed his head.

“Thank you, Lord Othello. You’ve…you’ve done more for my godson than I have.” He said, shame in his voice as Lucas looked at him with understanding and compassion.

“Sirius, you were overcome with grief and rage which was only enhanced due to the spell placed on you. Even though you do not have the skills to become an Assassin and join our Brotherhood, we would like you to remain here. You are Harrison’s sworn godfather and one of the few who we trust with our new son. You are also perfect to help us raise Harrison and make sure that he knows who his parents were and help him keep the Marauder legacy alive.” Lucas said, grinning as Sirius perked up and look at him.

“Really?! Y-You’re sure that you want me around?” Sirius asked, hope in his voice as Lucas smiled gently.

“I may be a lot of things, Sirius, but I’m not cruel. You and Harrison need each other. However, we have a few things that we need you to do.” Lucas said, smirking as the fire returned to Sirius’ eyes as he leaned forward eagerly.

Meanwhile at Gringotts located in the heart of Diagon Alley, Goldspear prepared himself for his meeting with Dumbledore. Since learning that the old fool had knowingly left the heir of the Potter line with a cursed scar on the doorstep of someone who was known to be severely hateful towards anyone with magic, he decided not to hold back. Oh, Goldspear knew that Dumbledore had intended to make himself Harrison’s magical guardian and dip into the Potter fortune. While the Dumbledore family wasn’t poor by any means, they weren’t extremely wealthy. The Potters were one of the richest families in the Magical World and one of the most influential politically.

By naming himself Harrison’s magical guardian, he would be able to control that political power and the fortune. However, with Harrison having been adopted by the Othello family and with Sirius Black back in the picture, Goldspear could legally tell Dumbledore to bugger off. He knew that Lord Othello was already looking into getting a lawyer for Harrison to prevent people from making a prophet off the lad. Drew Holmes was already making a stop at the Ministry to ensure they knew that Dumbledore had no say in the affairs of the Potter family and to show proof that Harrison had been blood adopted by the family. With the Othello family standing behind Harrison no one would want to make an attempt for the boy in fear of bringing down the anger of the ancient and powerful family.

A knock on the door to his office brought Goldspear out of his musings. Settling himself in his chair behind his desk, he called out for the person to enter. The door was opened by a smaller Goblin, one of the tellers, who held the door open for Albus. The elderly Wizard was dressed in an outlandish bright blue robe with silver trim and golden stars. Goldspear knew that the tactic was used so others
would look up and into the man’s eyes where he would be able to use passive Legilimency.

“Goldspear, thank you for seeing me on such short notice. There is much I would like to discuss today.” Albus said, smiling as he walked into the room and sat down in front of the Goblin’s desk.

“I must say, Lord Dumbledore, it is very uncommon for the Lord of another House to ask to speak with the account manager of another family.” Goldspear said, watching as Albus nodded lightly.

“I know, I know my friend. However, surely you have heard the news that the Dark Lord has been vanquished? I am here to claim my place as Harry Potter’s magical guardian.” Albus said, blinking when Goldspear pulled a file over and opened it.

“While we here at Gringotts know that the Dark One has been killed, I cannot allow you to name yourself as Heir Potter’s magical guardian. One is that a magical guardian can only be made for Muggleborn children. Heir Potter is a Halfblood as you well know. Second is that Sirius Orion Black is Heir Potter’s sworn godfather. Third, the Most Ancient and Noble House of Othello has taken in Heir Potter and have blood adopted him as per the wishes of the former Lord and Lady Potter which was expressed in their wills.” Goldspear said, fighting down his glee when he saw shock, fear and rage pass through Dumbledore’s eyes.

“T-That is impossible! The Potter wills should be sealed!” Albus blustered, making Goldspear raise an eyebrow at the elderly man.

“As Supreme Mugwump and Chief Wizard, you should know that the treaty Gringotts has with the Ministry prevents wills from being sealed. This is to prevent theft from some of the oldest family lines. Even you cannot overrule what the treaty states Lord Dumbledore.” Goldspear said, watching as Albus floundered.

How was this possible?! Albus had been so sure that the Goblins wouldn’t question his decisions and that he had blocked the Potter wills in the Ministry. Yes, he had thought it odd when the clerk in Ministry had given him a strange look when he had ordered the wills to be sealed, but he hadn’t thought much of it. If what Goldspear said was true, then everything he’d been planning since he heard that damned prophecy had just gone up in smoke. He had expected Sirius to go after Pettigrew and potentially get caught trying to murder the other Wizard. The spell he had casted on the younger man should have had Sirius in such a blind rage that he wouldn’t be able to see reason. Not only that, but the news about the Othello family adopting, let alone having found, Harry spelt disaster.

The Othello family was one of the oldest known magical family in their world. Not only that, but they had always been a Grey family. They only stepped into wars or feuds whenever one of their own or one of their allies were in trouble and needed help. They were well respected by nearly everyone in the Wizarding World and Albus knew that no one would dare to go up against them in an attempt to pull Harry away from them. Not only that, but the fact that they blood adopted the boy would ensure that Harry couldn’t be removed from them. What worried him the most, however, was that they had somehow found Harry after he had dropped the lad off at his aunt’s. He knew that the blood wards around the Dursley’s won’t take hold without Harry there to anchor them…hell, he didn’t even know if Petunia even knew that he had dropped her nephew off at her door.

“Lord Dumbledore, I have orders from Lord and Lady Othello to ask that you return all and any items or property you have that had belonged to the Potters.” Goldspear said, breaking the man out of his thoughts as Albus blinked and frowned.

“Oh? Surely they know that Lord Potter had loaned me the use of-“

“Regardless, they wish for the return of everything that had been taken. Two of the items are
heirlooms which have been passed down through the Potter family for generations. I have been given permission to allow you a week in order to return everything. Should items still be missing then I am allowed to use any means at my disposal to see that property returned to the Potter vaults.”

Goldspear said, watching as Albus paled.

“And if I do not…remember everything?” Albus asked, his voice strained as Goldspear raised an eyebrow at him.

“That, I find hard to believe, Lord Dumbledore. You are, after all, a master at Legilimency. However, I have a full list that details everything that the late Lord and Lady Potter had…loaned you. The Potter House Elves were most helpful in keeping records.” The Goblin said, handing over a rather lengthy list of items to the stunned and worried Wizard.

Albus grabbed the list and unfolded it, already dreading as to what he would have to return. Sure enough, the list included all ten of the ancient and rare books he had borrowed from James. Not only that, but a high end pensive and the Invisibility cloak were listed as well. He had no doubt that Goldspear would ensure that everything was returned with no spells attached, which meant that he wouldn’t be able to tag any of the items with tracking spells in hopes of getting them back at a later date. Of course, he could attempt to speak with Lord Othello and Sirius about the matter of Harry’s upbringing and about the items that were to be returned. However the Othello’s weren’t the most… negotiable when it came to family matters. There was also the fear that the Othello’s had discovered the spell on Sirius or even the magical block he had placed on Harry’s core. No doubt they would draw conclusions which would lead them down the correct path.

He had hoped for Harry to be meek and starved for affection when the boy finally returned to the Magical World. Harry would look to him as a mentor and grandfather figure; which would then give him even more influence in the boy’s life. Molly Weasley had already been eager to set up a betrothal contract between Harry and her daughter. While little Ginerva was only a few months old, the girl would be perfect for Harry and would provide an heir that Albus could influence even more. Not only that, but Molly would be placated by the money her family would get from the Potter vaults. Harry would undoubtedly take care of Ginerva and, by having the lad befriend the Weasley’s youngest son, he would feel humbled by them and be more than willing to help them out. But all of that was now in shambles.

Harry would grow up aware of the Magical World and his place in it. No doubt the mail redirection ward he had placed on the toddler was gone. He couldn’t even claim that the Othello’s weren’t able to keep Harry safe. No one had ever been able to discover the location of the Othello family and their residences. They were practically royalty in the Magical World and very few stood against them. Bagnold and her likely replacement, Fudge, would practically fall over themselves to keep on the good side of the blasted family. In order to have even the smallest of chances to influence Harry he would have to rethink everything.

“Thank you, Goldspear. I shall look for the items and send them here.” Albus said, rising from the chair as the Goblin nodded.

“Very well. I do hope you’re able to find them all.” Goldspear said, watching as the Wizard nodded and walked from the room quickly.

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November 4th

“Bloody hell! You’re kidding me!” Sirius cried, his eyes locked onto the headline of the Daily Prophet in disbelief.
“Sirius! Language!” Delilah scolded, watching as the younger man flushed but still looked down at the newspaper.

“Did you read this?!” Sirius asked, brandishing the offending paper in Delilah’s direction.

“T have. Why do you think Lucas is in a meeting? Right now we’re trying to limit the damage the new Minister can possibly do. With Purebloods who had been named as Death Eaters having bought their way out of Azkaban we’re also adding more protections to the property.” Delilah said, watching as Sirius blinked and nodded.

Sirius set down the newspaper and smiled as Delilah deposited his godson in his arms. Harry’s normal jet black hair had gained light blonde streaks in it and laid a little flatter. His shockingly bright emerald green eyes also gained a ring of ice blue around the outer edges of the pupil since the blood adoption. The fact that Lucas and Delilah had blood adopted Harry had shocked him; he had never thought that they would do such a thing but was honestly grateful for it. Because of that Harry stood to inherit not only the Potter line but the Othello line as well. He would be politically and financially powerful, more so than anyone in their entire society. However, he was worried about his godson. Harry would have a lot to learn, especially since he also had the capabilities to become an Assassin. Because he’s the son of Lucas, he was also in line to take over the British Brotherhood of Magical Assassins.

Assassins were mostly taboo in their world. Yes, Purebloods and many Halfblood families knew that the Assassins existed, but they never spoke of them. Just like they never spoke of the Templars. Wizards and Witches had long since wondered if some of the wars and feuds had been between Assassins and Templars, but had never had the courage to ask. Both parties were strong and deadly along with being financially and politically powerful. Merlin, Sirius knew that Voldemort had been allied with the Templars and so were many of his Death Eaters. In a way, it wasn’t too surprising that so many ‘distinguished’ Purebloods had been able to buy their way out of Azkaban. Lucas and Delilah had told him that Cornelius Fudge was the perfect Minister for the Templars. He was a weak willed man who was corrupted by greed and the need for popularity. No doubt the highest bidder would be able to have Fudge pass laws that would benefit them instead of everyone.

“You’re worried, aren’t you?” Delilah asked, watching as Sirius bounced his godson on his knee.

“Of course I am. Scum like Malfoy, Nott and Parkinson can do a lot of damage to our world.” Sirius said, frowning as he thought of what they could do.

“My husband will be attending all the Wizengamot meetings. He will also be able to sit in Harry’s stead as Harry’s adopted father. I know he has plans on speaking with Lord Greengrass, Lady Bones and a few other allies. If things become too unstable, we shall use our….resources to set the balance once more.” Delilah said delicately, nodding as a House Elf brought out a tea service.

“Really?! You’d get the Brotherhood involved?” Sirius asked, shock in his voice as Delilah turned keen eyes towards him.

“The Brotherhood stands for justice, equality and freedom for all. The laws that the Templars would have Fudge pass will ensure others are hindered and their rights taken away. You know as well as anyone that we can make deaths look like natural causes.” Delilah said, Sirius gulping as he nodded in understanding and agreement.

Looking down at the newspaper, Sirius shook his head when he saw the second headline that drew the eye.

*Boy-Who-Lived Blood Adopted by Lord and Lady Othello!*
By Martha Winthrop

Many of you well know that the last act of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named was the attack on the Potter family at their safe house in Godric’s Hallow. This left Heir Harrison Potter an orphan at the tender age of one years old. However, what is not well known is the secret alliance between House Potter and House Othello. Lord and Lady Othello were close friends to the late Lord and Lady Potter and so, when they discovered that their friends had been killed, they instantly sought out Heir Harrison.

“We discovered Harrison on the doorstep of his Muggle Aunt’s house. We had gone there the night after the tragic attack to inform Petunia Dursley nee Evans that her sister had been killed. Upon arriving at the house, my husband and I were shocked and appalled to find young Harrison swaddled in a blanket, charmed asleep on the doorstep with only a note pinned to his blanket explaining that Lily and James had been killed and Petunia now needs to care for her nephew.”

When asked why Heir Potter was left outside and why he shouldn’t have been left with his aunt; Lord Othello had this to say:

“We have no idea why Harrison was left outside on a particular cold night in November. However, we do know the answer to your second question. Lily and her older sister Petunia were not on the best of terms. Petunia had always been jealous of her sister and had teased her mercilessly as a child; calling her Freak and a Monster because of her gift. It was well known among Lily’s friends that her sister hated her. To put it simply: Petunia despises magic. My wife and I were present when James and Lily made their wills and we know that they had written that Harrison should never, under any circumstance, go to his aunt. Lily and James would rather allow their son to live in an orphanage than to go to a place where he would most likely be physically, emotionally and mentally abused because of his magic.”

This writer struggled with the idea of even thinking that the savior of our world could have been treated so horrendously. Heir Potter’s godfather, Sirius Black, offered his own explanation and thoughts to the development.

“What Lord and Lady Othello say is true. I have personally met Petunia and she was…well what she was I dare not say in polite company. As for Lord and Lady Othello blood adopting my godson: I am overjoyed. I have been friends with Lord and Lady Othello for a number of years now and I know that they are honest, hardworking and a very loving couple. They have offered me room and board in their home so I can continue to be a part of my godson’s life and help raise him to know his future place in our society. While many may try to discredit Lord and Lady Othello, I know that they are honest and true. I will continue to fulfill my role as Harrison’s godfather and watch him grow into the upstanding young man that James and Lily had hoped for.”

The other people who were listened in the Potter wills to take custody of Heir Potter are as follows: Amelia Bones, Frank and Alice Longbottom, Sirius Black, Remus Lupin and Minerva McGonagall. All of the people listed above, bar Frank and Alice Longbottom, have expressed their agreement with the blood adoption. Madame Amelia Bones, the new director of the DMLE had this to add:

“Lord and Lady Othello are upstanding members of our society. There is no record of any crime
committed by any Othello since the Ministry had begun recording crimes and both Lord and Lady Othello have sworn magical oaths to do their best to care for Heir Potter. While I would have been honored to care for the lad, I have my hands full in caring for my young niece, taking care of the House Bones and my position. I do, however, look forward to my Susan and young Harrison spending time together in the future.”

Lord Othello has taken his place as Regent of the Potter seat in the Wizengamot until Heir Potter is of age to take his place as Lord Potter.

“How many letters has Harry gotten so far?” Sirius asked, looking up at Delilah as she took a drink of tea.

“Our House Elves have been going through the mail that has been coming in. All of the portkeys are instantly disabled and taken to the Auror department. We’re pressing charges for attempted kidnapping. We’ve also been refusing betrothal contracts; politely of course. James and Lily never wanted that for their son so we’re simply fulfilling their wishes.” Delilah said, smirking as Sirius snorted and shook his head.

“Who were some of the people?” He asked, watching as Delilah snorted delicately.

“The one who has given us the most trouble is Lady Molly Weasley. She’s recently given birth to a daughter, the first female Weasley in decades. According to her, Harrison and little Ginerva would be perfect for each other. She claims that little Ginerva closely resembles Lily.” Delilah said, watching as Sirius shuddered.

“All the more reason to turn her away. Harry is not James even though he had looked a lot like him. Not only that but I remember Molly from the Order. She’s…well a shrew. Leads poor Arthur around by his nose and controls the house with an iron fist. If Ginerva takes after her mother then I feel sorry for any man she marries.” Sirius said, shuddering again which made his godson giggle and clap.

“Lucas and I figured that Molly might have an… alternative motive as well.” Delilah said, making Sirius look at her sharply.

“Oh?”

“Molly is one of the last members of the Prewett family besides a Squib whom they don’t speak to. The Prewett’s had been rather wealthy and Molly had married Arthur because of his connection to the Black family through his grandfather. Not only that, but the Weasley’s had been rather wealthy at one point. However, Molly quickly discovered that Arthur’s brothers had squandered away all of the Weasley fortune and the Black family cut all ties to the them. Arthur is rather content in the Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office and is rather content with his lot. However, Molly longs for the way of life she had grown up with. By marrying Ginerva to Harrison, she hopes that Harrison would feel… behooved to help his in-laws. Not to mention Ginerva is a Pureblood who comes from a line that is…rather fertile.” Delilah said, disgust evident in her voice as Sirius shook his head.

“Of course we won’t have to worry about that.” Lucas said, walking into the parlor with a gentle smile on his face.

“How was the meeting?” Delilah asked, tilting her head up to accept the kiss from her husband.

“It went well. Our brothers and sisters in the Ministry know what to watch out for and I have a meeting set up with the other Houses for tomorrow at Gringotts. Melissa, who is in the department of records, has reported that Dumbledore has been trying to find a way to revoke our guardianship and return Harrison to his aunt’s. However, with this new article that should stop his effort hopefully.”
He explained, Sirius and Delilah nodding lightly with relief on their faces.

“I doubt it but he might think twice. Even Fudge thinks twice when dealing with us.” Delilah said, the wicked smirk on her face made Sirius shudder.

“Sirius, have you contacted Remus yet?” Lucas asked, sitting down beside his wife and wrapping an arm around her waist.

“I just sent a letter to him this morning. I know he left for Greece when we all went into hiding… also… I’m ashamed to say that we all thought that Remus might’ve been the spy in the Order.” Sirius said, smiling sadly at Harry tugged on his long hair.

“We were at war, Sirius. It happens but all that matters is that you admit your mistake and move past this. I have no doubt that Remus will forgive you.” Delilah said, accepting her new son from Sirius as he held Harry out to her.

“When will you begin his training again?” Sirius asked, smiling as Delilah tickled Harry and made him squeal with laughter.

“Five is when we begin training children in free running. Parkour comes around six or seven and the weapons training beings around nine. Stealth begins around the same time as free running.” Lucas answered, Sirius nodding in understanding though he looked a little worried.

“Don’t worry, Padfoot, we’ll make sure he has plenty of time to be a kid.” Delilah said, smiling as Sirius grinned sheepishly.

Before Sirius could say anything more, a rather regal looking Horned Owl flew through one of the windows. A golden plate hung around the owl’s neck while bore the Gringotts crest. Sirius stared at the owl until it hooted and lifted one of its wings, showing a letter that was attached to the harness that the owl wore. Sirius shook himself and quickly relieved the owl of its burden. Delilah summoned a small leather pouch and opened it; pulling out an owl treat and handing it to the owl. The bird of prey accepted the treat with a grateful hoot before taking off through the window. Delilah and Lucas watched as Sirius opened the envelop and started reading, his eyes wide.

Sirius Orion Black,

We here at Gringotts regret to inform you that Lord Arcturus Black has passed away last night due to illness. As you are the last male of the Black family, the position of Lord Black falls to you. The late Lord Black has left a will and we encourage you to come to Gringotts to read the contents of the will along with accepting your right as Lord Black.

Sincerely,

Dragonfang

Black Account Manager

“Sirius?” Lucas asked, concern in his voice as his friend looked at him with wide eyes.

“M-My grandfather died…and named me Lord Black.” Sirius said, shock in his voice as the couple looked at him with surprise.

“I thought your mother disowned you.” Delilah said, frowning as Sirius nodded.
“Same here. She blasted my name off the family tree and everything.” He said, frowning as he ran a hand through his hair.

“Of course, it makes sense.” Lucas said, shaking his head as he chuckled.

“What makes sense?” Sirius asked, frowning as his friend smiled.

“I’m guessing that your grandfather was thinking ahead. With Andromeda disowned, Bellatrix a rather…insane woman and your brother dead, your grandfather either never approved of your mother disowning you or brought you back into the family. You’re the eldest in your family thus you will be Lord Black.” Lucas said, smiling as Sirius shook his head.

“I-I’m not cut out for this! I’ll-“

“Sirius Orion Black don’t you even start. You’re an upstanding young man and you have the knowledge to do a world of good with the Black name. You’d be able to bring back your cousin Andromeda back into the family and kick out Narcissa and Bellatrix. People will listen to you and you can further prove that you’re Light or even Grey like us by making alliances. You’ll be able to help Harrison even more as well.” Delilah explained, watching as Sirius blinked before he looked down in thought.

As they watched Sirius, they saw realization dawn across his face before determination set it. Sirius nodded his head, making Lucas and Delilah smile. There was so much they could do with the help of Sirius; especially when it came to getting laws passed. Delilah stood and carried Harry to his room as the toddler became fussy, leaving her husband and Sirius to talk about what Sirius should do right away after accepting his position as Lord Black. There was no doubt that Walburga would cause trouble and Sirius admitted that, with work, Grimmauld Place could become a rather nice home and he could even offer it as a safe house for the Brotherhood. Lucas was overjoyed with this idea as there were very few safe houses where the Assassins could go to recover or hide from their enemies.

-Now, to get rid of the old war horse.- Sirius thought, frowning as he thought of his mother.

Sirius was busy for the next few days claiming his lordship and settling his grandfather’s affairs with Dragonfang. His grandfather had been pretty decent in ensuring that their family had some of the fortune remaining, but it had certainly dwindled down over the years. He remembered some of the advice Lily had given James in the stock market and had Dragonfang acquire stocks in certain Muggle businesses. Of course then there had been the matter of his mother being informed about who held the new lordship. She had gotten hysterical when Dragonfang had told her that her ‘disgrace of a former son’ was the new Lord Black. Dragonfang actually had to have her escorted out of the bank at spear point which only served to set the mad Witch off more. She had stormed to the Ministry and demanded to look into the records. The poor clerk was beside herself in dealing with Walburga’s temper and actually called on the Auror’s when the crazed woman drew her wand. The Auror’s fared no better and escorted Walburga out of the Ministry and barred her from entry. Of course they floo-called Sirius and informed him of what happened.

Sirius, armed with Dragonfang and a few Auror’s, went to Grimmauld Place where he confronted his mother. Walburga began screaming and cursing her son as he calmly explained that he was having her removed from Grimmauld Place and relocated somewhere more comfortable and private. The Auror’s were forced to disarm her and stunned an old, half-crazed House Elf when it appeared beside Walburga and charged Sirius in an attempt to kill the Pureblood lord. Sirius made a portkey to the small house he had purchased for his mother a few days prior and handed it to her after she was revived and informed her that his new House Elves would bring her things as the house was already
furnished. Instead of accepting the portkey, Walburga lashed out, striking her son across the cheek and drawing blood with her nails. The Auror’s acted quickly and soon had her handcuffed as she spat curses with an insane light gleamed in her eyes.

“Lord Black, what do you want us to do?” One of the Aurors asked, glancing at the crazed woman with concern as she glared hatefully at her son.

“My mother was always an extreme woman. I can see that living on her own after my father and brother’s death was detrimental to her health. If you will accompany me, I want her admitted to St. Mungo’s psychiatric ward.” Sirius said, the Aurors nodding as Walburga screamed at him before she was quickly and thankfully silenced by one of the Aurors.

“What about the Elf?” Another asked, frowning down at the unconscious House Elf.

“I cannot trust him with anything. He’s fiercely loyal to my mother. Keep him under the body-bind and I’ll deal with him when I return.” Sirius said.

Apparating to St. Mungo’s, the healers were quick to agree that Walburga had gone insane. A healer quickly treated the scratches on Sirius’ cheek while a team of healers took Walburga away to calm her down and get her showered and changed into different clothing. Sirius thanked the Aurors for their help and watched as they left. Looking to Dragonfang, Sirius nodded. Dragonfang nodded back and disappeared, heading back to Grimmauld Place to dispatch Kreacher. Sirius drew no comfort in knowing that Kreacher would be dead in a matter of seconds but he knew that it needed to be done. If he released Kreacher then the House Elf would seek out his mother and attempt to break her out of St. Mungo’s. Worse, Kreacher could attempt to go to Narcissa and tell her the whereabouts of Grimmauld Place and could even make an attempt to get Bellatrix out of Azkaban. He didn’t want to take any chances with the deranged House Elf and the new Elves he had taken on were more than ready to strip the house bare so it could be repaired and changed into a place that Sirius would be proud to call his own.

“Lord Black, if you would fill these out please.” A healer said, handing Sirius a small stack of papers and a quill.

“Thank you. How is she?” Sirius asked, accepting a self-inking quill from the young man who sighed.

“She’s been sedated. A few Mind Healers are performing scans while a room is prepared for her.” The healer answered, Sirius nodding as he read through the papers.

“I never thought she would become this bad. She was always a…extremist but the death of my younger brother and father pushed her over the edge.” Sirius said, shaking his head lightly as he began to write.

It took him a few minutes to fill everything out before he handed the papers back to the healer. He looked through them before nodding and assuring Sirius that everything would be filed quickly. Apparating out of the hospital, Sirius reappeared outside of Grimmauld Place and walked inside, spotting Dragonfang in the dining room. Stepping into the dimly lit room, he scowled at how dark it was before focusing on the Goblin who was going over the blueprints to the house.

“So?” Sirius asked, watching as Dragonfang looked up at him.

“Everything that you wish to do will be possible. Once the Elves put everything away and you lower wards the construction company can come in and renovate the entire place. They won’t remember the location once the job is finished and won’t be able to tell anyone about it of course.” Dragonfang
said, Sirius nodding his head.

“Thank you my friend. What of Bellatrix?” Sirius asked, raising an eyebrow as Dragonfang gave him a rather fearsome grin.

“After you annulled her marriage, since she didn’t provide an heir after a year of being married and reclaimed her dowry, the vault was closed. The Lestrange’s weren’t very rich to begin with so you cleaned them out. We also found one of Riddle’s Horcruxes in the vault. It was inside of Helga Hufflepuff’s lost cup. We removed the leech and destroyed it of course with no harm to the item. It’s waiting in your vault for you to do with it what you will.” Dragonfang said, Sirius nodding as his mind reeled with the information given to him.

Lucas and Delilah had told him all about the Horcrux inside his godson and their assumption that Voldemort likely made more than one. This proved that theory and there was no telling how many the madman made. After talking with Dragonfang for a few more minutes, he and the Goblin left and parted ways; Sirius thanking the Goblin once more. Sirius apparated to Othello Estate where he informed Lucas and Delilah about what he had accomplished thus far. Lucas and Delilah were shocked to hear that Walburga was now residing in the psychiatric ward in St. Mungo’s. However, they understood the reasoning and supported him. Sirius and Lucas then headed to the Ministry for a Wizengamot meeting. They made it through security and split up at the member’s hallway to their separate offices. Both men stepped out minutes later dressed in the dark plum and black robes with their family crests on their right breast.

Walking to the antechamber off the Wizengamot chambers, they nodded to their peers and sought out their allies. It was Adrian Greengrass who informed them about what the agenda held. Both Lucas and Sirius were horrified that Lord Flint was going to propose a bill to have all Werewolves rounded up and killed. Sirius quickly thought of a different proposal and asked Adrian and Lucas what they thought of it. Both older men were impressed and quickly helped Sirius tweak his proposal before promising that they would support him. Sirius sought out Amelia Bones and Augusta Longbottom and quickly informed the two Witches about his counter proposal. Both of them were surprised and pleased with his proposal and agreed that it was a good and sound idea that would keep everyone safe.

When they were called into the chamber, everyone soon took their seats, to which many were surprised to see Sirius sit between Lucas and Augusta. Minister Fudge, a rather small and portly man wearing a lime green bowler hat, began the meeting with a few new proposals. Lucas was surprised when the Minister proposed a budget cut to the Auror department, to which he looked at Amelia a few seats away an saw the thunderous look on her face. Of course Amelia spoke against the budget cuts, to which Sirius quickly backed her. When Fudge called for a vote on the proposal, the man was noticeably flustered when more members voted against the budget cuts than for them. Sirius glanced around and noticed that Lucius Malfoy and a few other Death Eaters who had been ‘forced’ to join Voldemort looked angered at this. All of them listened to various reports and discussed how things could be changed in order to improve certain things for an hour before Fudge finally proposed the Werewolf bill.

Again, Sirius looked around and saw the shock and slight horror at the idea of executing fellow Witches and Wizards and it gave him hope that his counter proposal might have a chance to pass. Before Fudge could call for a vote, Sirius lifted his wand; making the portly man look at him in shock before he swallowed nervously.

“Yes, Lord Black?” Fudge asked, spotting Lord Flint glaring at the other lord out of the corner of his eye.
“I have a counter proposal, Minister. May I?” Sirius asked, making the Minister swallow and nod curtly.

Sirius stood and walked down to the main floor in front of the stands before turning and facing his fellow peers. He could practically feel the reporters leaning forward in their seats to hear his every word.

“Honored Wizengamot members, we should not prosecute our fellow Witches and Wizards just because of an ailment that affects them once a month. Those who suffer from the disease known as Lycanthropy should be treated as victims, not monsters and murderers. How many family members or good friends have you lost to the disease? How many are now classified as ‘Dark Creatures’ because they are unable to control themselves? We all know there is Wolfsbane which allows a Werewolf to keep their mind instead of turning into raving bloodthirsty animals.

“What I am proposing is a way to help them. Every Werewolf registers with the Ministry and on every full moon they apparate or portkey to a specific location where specially trained Healers administer the Wolfsbane potion. They then go into a warded nature preserve where they transform safely and are able to run around without posing a risk to others. Once morning comes the healers retrieve those afflicted with the disease, administer any care that is needed, allow them to get dressed and rest before they are sent home. We should be helping these people, not blaming them for something that they cannot control. We should treat them just like any other citizen of our society. They should be able to have an education, a job and encouraged to be allowed to have a family and loved ones.

“I know from studies made in other countries that it is impossible to pass on the Lycanthropy gene through reproduction. Currently, we are the only country that has classified Werewolves as Dark Creatures. Other countries treat Werewolves like any other citizen though they just have a genetic abnormality. If we begin executing Werewolves, who knows who is next. Merfolk? House Elves? Centaurs? Goblins? Our own people?” Sirius asked, watching as everyone shifted and looked at each other.

“By making the registration mandatory, those attending the afflicted know who is missing every full moon and Aurors or specially trained personal can go and get those who are missing and bring them to the facility. I know that Werewolves such as Fenrir Greyback make such precautions necessary. Werewolves who have committed crimes such as him should be placed on trial and, if found guilty by this esteemed body, be sentenced to death or Azkaban, as per our laws.” He finished.

Fudge blinked a few times before he managed to collect himself. Clearing his throat, he stood as Sirius walked back up the stairs to retake his seat.

“Is anyone willing to second Lord Black’s proposal?” Fudge asked, glancing nervously towards Flint who looked murderous.

“I second his proposal.” Lucas called, standing as he raised his wand.

“I too second his proposal.” Augusta said, standing as well as everyone muttered in surprise.

“Very well. We shall take a short recess before returning and casting a vote.” Fudge said, Albus nodding as he agreed with the Minister.

Sirius was rather surprised by how many people stopped him and asked him about his proposal. He answered them truthfully and expressed his concern on how isolated their society was. Others expressed the same worry and agreed with him. Even Albus approached Sirius and expressed his surprise and pride in such a counter proposal; stating that such a bill would help their society move
forward in a direction that would improve life for everyone instead of just Purebloods. Sirius wisely stayed with Lucas, Amelia and Adrian; knowing that Malfoy, Flint and others would love to get the chance to threaten him and try to ‘convince’ him to pull back his counter proposal.

When they reconvened, Albus cast the vote for those in favor of Flint’s proposal. Sirius was shocked to see that only those who had been listed as Death Eaters raised their wands in favor of the bill. When calling for those in favor of Sirius’ counter proposal, more than half of the members lifted their wands in favor of the bill. When the bill was passed, Fudge looked green around the edges while Flint looked as if he were about to begin flinging curses. The meeting finished soon after and Sirius remained behind with Albus and Minister Fudge along with the Wizengamot scribe to fully write out the new law. Both men noticed that Cornelius looked like he had swallowed several lemons during the entire process, in which the scribe actually asked the Minister if he was alright. When Minister Fudge grit out a ‘yes’ to the question Sirius and Albus shared knowing look while Sirius struggled to keep a smirk off his face.

Once the law was written and signed, Sirius and the Minister left while Albus personally took it to the department that held records of their society’s laws. In the atrium, Sirius was accosted by two reporters. The man and woman had been there in the Wizengamot chamber and Sirius was more than gracious in confirming that he’d be willing to answer their questions.

“Lord Black, reporter for the Daily Prophet, was your counter proposal due to your reported friendship with the lesser known Werewolf Remus Lupin?” The woman asked, her Dicta-Quill poised over a sheet of parchment.

“My friendship with Remus Lupin did play a rather large part of my counter proposal, yes. I’ve known Remus since we were in our First Year of Hogwarts. He is the most honest, compassionate and brave man I know besides my late friend James Potter. Remus suffered because of his condition and continues to suffer still because Wolfsbane isn’t readily available.” Sirius answered, the woman nodding as she looked down to her parchment.

“Lord Black, reporter for International Sorcery, what do you hope comes from this new law?” The man asked, making Sirius raise an eyebrow.

“I hope that the public is able to see that people who are afflicted with the Lycanthropy gene are not evil or bloodthirsty. There are many who are suffering without a job, a home or support. My friends, Remus, has told me repeatedly that other Werewolves he knew had been forced to retreat to the Muggle World because they couldn’t find jobs or get an education here in the Magical World. These people should be accepted, not shunned. They should be helped instead of hunted. Many Witches and Wizards will boast that we are superior to Muggles and yet…Muggles are more accepting than us it seems. They have laws that are developing equality for everyone, including those who have mental and physical handicaps. And yet, here we are: shunning people because of an affliction they have no control over.” Sirius explained, not realizing that he had gotten the attention of other Ministry employees and even the public who had business in the Ministry.

“All I want is for our world to become something so much greater than what it currently is. The Muggle World is constantly advancing and so should we. This is just one small step but it is a much needed step in the right direction. I hope that my fellow Wizengamot members and Minister Fudge will help me and others of like mind to help us guide our society away from the war and into a bright future: one that those who were lost in the war would be proud of.” He finished, blinking in surprise when many of those listening called their agreement to his small speech.

The reporters thanked Sirius for his time before departing. Sirius found a few other Wizengamot members in the crowd and they quickly asked to speak with him in private about his thoughts on a
few proposals they had. Sirius was surprised to say the least, but he smiled and accepted, knowing that he might have just given people a spark of inspiration that was needed to make their world great once more and perhaps help to push it into the twenty-first century.

-I can only hope- He thought, turning his attention to the Witch beside him as she began quietly talking.

November 30th.

Sirius looked around the Leaky Cauldron anxiously. He had finally gotten word from Remus and his friend was finally returning to Britain after having been traveling in America. When he had sent the copy of the Daily Prophet with the last letter he had sent to Remus, he didn’t know what his friend’s reaction would be. The day after Sirius’ Werewolf Protection Law had passed, the Daily Prophet had screamed the headlines: Law Protects Society and Werewolves!. There, of course, had been mixed reactions to the news but many had been in agreement of the registration and the solution for Werewolves to have a safe and protected area to run around on the night of the full moon. Many claimed that they could rest easier knowing the Werewolves were safely medicated and running around while being watched by trained Healers and Aurors. Others, however, complained that the Ministry was wasting good resources on ‘beasts’ who don’t deserve the care. However, those people were in the minority thankfully.

The new law did have a snowball effect, though. Amelia claimed that she didn’t have the money to properly train and equip the personal needed to staff the wildlife preserve. Malfoy, Nott and Flint pounced on that and demanded that the law be abolished but Madame Longbottom, instead, proposed an increase in the budget for the D.M.L.E. Minister Fudge had tried to bluster though had been thoroughly ‘defanged’ when Madame Marchbanks and two others quickly supported Madame Longbottom’s proposal. To them, it was a small price to pay in order to keep the society safe and all of them agreed that the Auror’s should be better trained and equipped; going so far as to even suggest Dragon hide vests, arm guards and leg guards as a mandatory part of the uniform.

Sirius had later sat down with Lucas in the man’s study. Lucas had been more than willing to show him the stocks and such James and Lily had invested in before their deaths; having told Sirius that he would be better off knowing since he is Harry’s godfather. Sirius was shocked when he learned on how wealthy the Potter’s truly were, especially when he learned how much James and his ancestors had loaned to various families. If Lucas ordered it, he could cause at least a dozen families to go bankrupt; including Fudge. Not only that, but James’ grandfather had taken out war bonds and bonds on various forms of currency. As it stood, the Ministry as a whole owed the Potters well over two million galleons. Lucas was seriously considering in calling in the debts which belonged to know Death Eaters such as Malfoy, Flint, Nott, Parkinson, Fleetwood, Crabbe, Goyal, Goodwill and Smyth. Sirius knew it would cripple many of the families if not ruin them completely. He and Lucas talked for a long time before they agreed that they would wait until Harry could make that decision for himself since it was matters pertaining to his House.

“Padfoot, I swear, if that newspaper was a hoax.”

Sirius was abruptly brought out of his thoughts by the sound of his friend’s voice. Remus John Lupin was the same age as him, though looking at him one would swear that he was a few years older.

Tawny colored hair hung down past the man’s ears as amber colored eyes glimmered with a weariness that only came from a life of hardships. Three scars crossed Remus’ face diagonally; starting at the corner of his right eye and ending just below the corner of his lips. The man was dressed in shabby, patched robes that look as if they were holding on by thread and he carried a case
which looked even more worn and battered than his robes. Sirius felt his heart ache at the sight of his best friend and he quickly stood to greet his longtime friend.

“No hoax, Moony. I may be an arse and a prankster, but I’d never lie about something like this. The law was passed on the tenth. There’s so much I’ve wanted to tell you.” Sirius said, swallowing thickly as Remus set his bag down on the table near Sirius.

“Well, you’d better start talking. I’m not going anywhere.” Remus said, emotion shining in his eyes as Sirius chuckled softly.

Sirius quickly pulled Remus into a tight embrace, ignoring the people who were looking at them with curiosity. Remus hugged him just as tightly, his hands gripping onto the robe Sirius wore as he breathed in the familiar scent of leather, spice and something that smelled like home. Inside his mind, his inner wolf, Moony, howled at the scent of his pack member; finally content that he was back where he belonged. Pulling back, both of them blinked away the tears that threatened to fall before Sirius led his childhood friend to a private room he had rented from Tom. Closing the door behind them, Sirius locked the door and threw up privacy wards before scanning himself and Remus for any listening charms. Thankfully he found none and finally took his seat while Remus looked at him with interest.

“Alright, what’s going on?” Remus asked, blinking when Sirius pulled out various copies of the Daily Prophet which dated back to the beginning of the month.

“You remember Lily’s secret, right?” Sirius asked, watching as Remus raised an eyebrow and nodded.

“Of course. I remember she told all of us when James proposed to her the summer before Seventh Year. She was crying as she told us and James was so bloody worried that she was going to say no. We never expected to learn that she had once been an Assassin.” Remus said.

“Lord and Lady Othello followed leads and found out that Albus was going to leave Harry with Petunia and-”

“What?! That bloody-”

“Moony calm down! Damn…and you call me short tempered.” Sirius said, shaking his head at his friend as Remus frowned.

“You know Harry is mine and Moony’s cub. It pained me when we all had to go into hiding and I couldn’t see him.” Remus muttered, Sirius nodding as he smiled gently at his friend.

“They took Harry only a few minutes after Albus left him on the doorstep. They also sent three other Assassins to find me. I…I chased after Pettigrew when I saw James’ body. I know I was in the wrong, especially when I didn’t demand that Hagrid give me Harry. When I was brought to the estate, I learned that Harry had a piece of Voldemort’s soul underneath the scar on his forehead. Of course they removed the bloody thing. They also blood adopted Harry, making him their legal son. I was shocked, but in doing so they offered another layer of protection for Harry.” Sirius began.

Remus was shocked to learn that Lucas and Delilah had already discovered that Harry had the capabilities to be an Assassin. More so, he was surprised that Sirius had been willing to allow his godson to be trained when he was older. Of course, when Sirius told Remus about the prophecy talking about Harry and Voldemort, which had been discovered by a few Assassins who worked in the Department of Mysteries, Remus was angered that his cub’s destiny was tied with the Dark Lord’s. He was horrified in learning that Voldemort had created more than one Horcrux, though he
was also relieved that the Goblin’s were allied with the Assassins and were trying to develop a way to track down the horrible abominations. Remus was grateful for everything that was being done and agreed that Lucas and Delilah had pulled a great move in protecting Harry by blood adopting him.

Sirius also told Remus about his mother and how he’s now Lord Black. Remus was surprised but happy for his friend as he knew that Sirius would and was doing a lot of good using his Lordship and political power. However, everything his friend was telling him made him wonder why Sirius had asked him to come back. What good could he do?

“Padfoot...why am I here?” Remus asked, blinking when Sirius snorted.

“Harry’s been asking for you, Remus. He almost always asks me where his ‘unca Moony’ is. Lucas and Delilah want you in Harry’s life as well. They are constantly asking me if I’ve heard from you and how you’re doing. Besides, I have an idea for a new business that I need your help with.” Sirius said, grinning when Remus raised an eyebrow at him.

“Oh?”

“Mhm! Though, you’ll have to stay here in Britain from now on, of course. Delilah will likely want to take you shopping when she meets you and will practically demand that you stay at the estate… though I was kinda hoping you’d move in with me at Grimmauld Place. It’s much too big for just me now that the renovations have been finished. Though you’d have to get used to seeing different people pass through at odd times.” Sirius said, Remus’ eyes wide as he looked at his friends.

“Sirius, if you’re-“

“Merlin, Moony, believe me for once! We all want you here and Harry will need your guidance as well. Right now I get Harry every weekend. He has his own bedroom in Grimmauld Place and so do you. I’ve also brought Andie back into the family and ensured that she, Ted and their daughter Nymphadora have rooms in Grimmauld as well. We want you here, Remus. I need you here. I can’t lose another friend because of this damned war.” Sirius said, his voice softening and filled with emotion.

Remus instantly knew that his friend was dead serious about everything. Ever since he had been bitten by Greyback as a young child, his life had been on the sour end. His parents had invested all of the family fortune into a silver lined room in the basement of his childhood home for his transformations. Not only that, but he had constantly been called a beast, freak or a dark creature. When he had gotten his Hogwarts letter he had cried when Albus personally delivered it and assured him and his parents that he’d be able to attend the school. James and Sirius’ friendship had been priceless; same with Lily’s, Severus’ and even Peter’s. He had thought they would all run or hate him when they discovered his horrible ailment, but they had accepted him with open arms and had done what they could to help him. He still had fond memories of running through the Forbidden Forest with Prongs, Padfoot and Wormtail before Lily joined them in their Seventh Year as Tigress. His most treasured possession was his Prefect Badge that Minerva had given him in the letter that had come for his Fifth Year. The woman had believed and encouraged him even though she knew his condition.

Ever since they had split up and went into hiding, his life had taken a turn for the worse. He had hidden in the Muggle world and when he learned of James and Lily’s deaths he fled to America in grief. Hearing from Sirius had brought back painful memories and that pain had increased when he learned that it had been Peter who had betrayed James and Lily. He hadn’t wanted to set foot back in England; having found a faint hope in America where they accepted Werewolves as normal people. Of course it had been hard to find a job. But he had worked as a bouncer, bodyguard and a couple other occupations that weren’t too hard to find in abundance. All of that changed, however, when
Sirius had begun writing him. He had been shocked when the dark haired man had sent him the first letter apologizing for ever suspecting him. Admittedly, he had been cautious when writing back to Sirius and had nearly told his friend that he didn’t want to return. However, now that Werewolves were being treated better and had the same rights as normal Witches and Wizards, he was actually beginning to see potential in coming back and staying.

“Can I see Harry?” Remus asked, watching as Sirius smiled.

“Of course. C’mon.” Sirius said, standing up as he pulled down the wards.

Remus stood and, after shrinking his bag and pocketing it, followed Sirius out of the private room. They headed to the main room where Sirius told him to wait a few minutes so Lucas could add him—Remus—to the ward book. Remus paid attention to the destination and password Sirius gave after he threw in floo powder into the fireplace. He figured that others couldn’t hear the destination given the nature of where they were going. Remus waited a few minutes before taking a pinch of floo powder and tossing it into the fireplace. Stepping into the emerald flames, he called out the destination and password before closing his eyes shut as the world spun around him. Only when he began slowing down did he open his eyes and stick his leg out as if taking a step forward.

The fireplace he walked out of opened up to a rather beautifully decorated lounge. Sirius was grinning at him while a short, but stunningly beautiful woman with golden blonde hair and ice blue eyes walked forward. She took one look at him and pulled him into a warm embrace. Remus was stunned at the strength the small woman possessed, though he hugged her back and kissed her cheek.

“It’s wonderful to finally meet you, Remus. I’m Delilah Othello. My husband was called away for the moment but he should be here sometime soon. Lily and Sirius had told us much about you and I have to say, it’s about time we’re finally able to meet the man they spoke so fondly about.” The woman said, smiling as Remus flushed but smiled.

“I hope it’s all been good things. You never know with Sirius.” He said, grinning as Delilah giggled while Sirius laughed and patted him on the back.

“All good things, Remus, all good things.” Delilah said, smiling as she took Remus’ arm and tucked her hand in the crease of his elbow.

Remus was in awe over the elegance of the manor as Delilah showed him around while Sirius walked on his other side. He was slightly alarmed to see people walking around dressed in different colored coats which were all of the same style and material. Of course he knew that these people were Assassins; after all Lily had shown them her own coat which had been in a darker shade of red than her hair. All of them bowed towards Delilah and Sirius though looked at him curiously even though they never said anything about his appearance. Sirius had warned him that Delilah and Lucas were Master Assassins and the current leaders of the Magical Brotherhood here in Britain. However, seeing it for himself was drastically different than hearing about it from his friend.

Delilah led him outside where Remus smiled at the sight of his cub playing in a sandbox while being watching by a middle aged woman with silver hair. Harry spotted them first, his eyes widening in happiness.

“Unca Moony! Unca Pa’foo!” Harry cried, getting to his feet and running over as fast as his little legs could carry him.

“Harry.” Remus sighed, releasing Delilah’s hand and crouching down as the one year-old bundle of energy crashed into him.
“So, Moony?” Sirius asked, smiling as his friend lifted Harry in his arms and looked at him.

“What am I staying?”

Time passed relatively peacefully for Sirius, Remus and the Othello family. Remus moved into Grimmauld Place with Sirius and registered with the Ministry as a Werewolf. Many Werewolves came out of the woodwork and were beyond relieved when they were offered healthcare, education and housing. Lucas, Sirius and Adrian worked together to build a homeless shelter to house everyone who had suffered not only from being a Werewolf but from the war as a whole. The homeless shelter was a massive building spanning four floors with the first floor consisting of a large kitchen, dining room, common rooms, library, gym and living rooms. The three upper floors had flats ranging from one bedroom to four bedrooms for families of different sizes. The Ministry was soon flooded with people who were seeking jobs and the Minister actually created an unemployment department to help people find jobs. Psychologists also offered their services for people who had come from abusive homes and had suffered from great loss or had survived an attack.

Sirius and Augusta created an orphanage that accepted children from all walks of life and all different races. The only known magical based orphanage was overcrowded due to the war and was suffering because of that and lack of funding. Lucas, with permission from Sirius and Remus, created the Potter foundation and charity which was designated to help the orphanages. This proved to be a rather popular move with the Purebloods and Halfbloods and it wasn’t long before donations were coming in. Lucas purchased a shop in Diagon Alley for people who wanted to drop off children or wanted to tour the orphanage to potentially adopt a child. The orphanage was much like the homeless shelter in that there were multiple stories with the main floor being for all of the children to enjoy. The upper floors were divided by age groups and the staff mostly lived in houses on the ground.

Lucas and Delilah also encouraged some of the members of the Brotherhood who specialized in Technomancy to set up a shop in Diagon Alley in order to bring technology to the Magical World. This generated a few mixed reactions, though Muggleborns and Muggle raised Witches and Wizards were eager to see the new store and finally be able to get televisions, phones, computers and more without their magic interfering and ruining the devices. Of course the Muggleborns and those who were raised knowing about the Muggle world were quick to teach those who didn’t which increased business for the new shops. It wasn’t long before Purebloods were making an effort to learn more about the Muggle world and how to better blend in. Amelia compounded on this by pointing out to the Minister that Muggle technology was advancing quickly and it made it harder for Witches and Wizards to blend in; especially with the use of security cameras. Fudge wanted to deny it, but Amelia used her connections with a secret branch of Scotland Yard to prove her point which had shocked the timid and portly man.

Of course the Brotherhood was kept busy. Missions were pouring in as more and more Templars and Death Eaters started to get restless. Of the Death Eaters Andrew Fleetwood was the first one who was killed. He had been supporting Muggle drug lords and even had some potion masters mix different potions with different types of drugs which made them more potent and yet more lethal as well. The Assassins who were assigned to his case managed to find the location of the warehouse which was where the drugs were being modified and tipped off the secret branch of Scotland Yard and the Aurors. It also wasn’t too hard for Andrew to meet his end due to...drug overdose. They also stopped shipments of weapons that were being magically modified and on their way to potential gangs and such. Yes, there were some close calls in which the Assassin’s covers were blown and they had to make a hasty escape.
Delilah and Lucas were also dealing with all of the fan mail their son was getting. All of the gifts that were appropriate for him were given to Harry though some were donated to the orphanages and families who were struggling to make ends meet. Gifts that weren’t appropriate for his age were placed in a new vault for him to go over once he was older. Sadly there were some people who attempted to slip portkeys and harmful substances into the letters. Every time this happened the House Elves who dealt with the mail disarmed the portkeys and ensured the spells that would activate whatever trap was on the letter were disarmed as well. These were sent off to the D.M.L.E. where the senders were warned and had to pay a rather heavy fine or even served a few days or a week in Azkaban depending on the severity of their offense. Each letter was read and Lucas or Delilah would write a letter back thanking the person for their card and/or their gift. They didn’t want people to think they and their son were ungrateful and it only helped push them into a better light with others.

December came and was a lively affair for everyone. Sirius and Remus spent it at Othello Estate and saw firsthand how well liked Delilah and Lucas were by the Assassins. The couple received many gifts from those in the Brotherhood; most of which were things they needed or wanted and all of them meaningful. Of course Harry was spoiled rotten by everyone, though many gifts were educational and some were even useful for when he finally began his training. All of them paid a visit to James and Lily’s graves, in which even Harry was quiet as his new parents and uncles told James and Lily everything that had happened so far in their world. While they didn’t expect Harry to fully understand why his parents weren’t around anymore, they wanted him to be a part of this.

It was a few days after Christmas when Sirius was visiting Andie and noticed something extraordinary about her seven year-old daughter.

“Andie…did her eyes just flash gold?” Sirius asked, looking down at the young girl as she stumbled upstairs.

“Yes, though you know it’s because of her powers, Sirius. She’s the first—“

“Metamorphmagus in over fifty years, I know. But…that was different from simply changing her eye color.” Sirius said, making his cousin frown and look at him.

“What do you mean?” She asked, brushing a lock of brown hair away from her face.

“When Nymph uses her powers you can see the colors bleed together before solidifying into one color. This was instantaneous and only last for a few seconds. Have you or Ted noticed or seen anything else?” Sirius asked, making Andie blink before she frowned in thought.

“Well…she refuses to go near certain people…almost as if she knows their intentions. She also has very good eyesight, more than normal.” She admitted, watching as surprise and some understanding blossomed across her cousin’s face.

“Andie, you know that Lucas and Delilah are Assassins. I think that…well I think Nymph might be one as well.” Sirius said, Andromeda’s eyes widening in shock.

“What?!”

“Now, I’m not sure but if it’s okay with you, I’d like to take you two to the estate. If she has the potential to become an Assassin she can be trained and helped.” Sirius said, watching as Andromeda looked at him.

“Sirius, I don’t want my daughter to become a killer at such a young age.” She said, watching as Sirius smiled gently.
“Andie, she wouldn’t be trained to kill until she’s much older. I had the same worries about Harry when they told me he has the potential to become an Assassin. She’ll be taught how to use her gifts, build her agility and stamina along with being taught parkour and free running. I bet you anything they’ll be able to help her find her natural grace too.” Sirius said, watching as Andromeda looked thoughtful.

“…Give me some time to think it over. I want to talk to Ted about this too. This should be a family decision.” Andromeda said, Sirius nodding in agreement as he smiled.

It wasn’t until after the New Year when Andromeda got in contact with Sirius and agreed to let her daughter get the training she needed. Delilah’s bodyguard, a fellow Master Assassin by the name of Amanda Lock, went with Sirius to the Tonks’ house. Ted and Andie greeted them with some trepidation though allowed them inside. Nymphadora was slightly confused and nervous when Amanda asked her if she could view her memories and perform a simple spell on her. However, looking over at her parents and getting smiles in return made her nod in consent. Amanda gently used Legilimency to view Nymphadora’s memories and found various signs that the young girl had the abilities needed to become an Assassin. Pulling out of the girl’s mind, she casted a spell that had been created by one of the first magical Assassins which let them know for sure if someone had the potential to become an Assassin. As a white glow surrounded Nymphadora’s body, Amanda nodded her head with a smile.

“She has the makings of an Assassin.” She said, standing up and turning to the other adults.

“What happens now?” Ted asked, his blue eyes sharp as he looked at the woman.

“With your permission our trainers will spend a few days getting to know your daughter. This is so they can design a training program specifically for her and her needs and powers. The training will also help her gain control over her abilities as a Metamorphmagus. To have such an ability is an honor and she’ll be a great asset to the Brotherhood when she passes her training and we begin to send her out into the field.” Amanda explained, Nymphadora looking at her with interest.

“What am I training for?” She asked, innocence in her voice as Amanda looked down at her smiled.

“We’ll be training you to help you get control over your abilities. Not only that but you’ll learn how to beat up bad guys.” She said, smiling as Nymphadora’s eyes lit up.

“Really??”

“Really, really. Not only that but we’ll be teaching you history, languages and many other things.” She said, watching as the seven year-old’s hair cycled through different colors in her excitement.

“When can I start?” She asked, making the adults laugh.

“Well, first a few people have to talk to you and learn what will be best for you in way of your training. After that your parents and your teachers will set up a schedule for your lessons.” Amanda explained, looking to Andromeda and Ted who nodded in approval.

Sure enough, over the next few days the Tonks family flooed and portkeyed over to Othello Estate where Nymphadora spoke with a few of the Master Assassins who trained the youngsters. Meanwhile, Andromeda and Ted were shown what their daughter would be learning. Not all of it was physical training either. She’d be learning the history of Assassin’s and Templar’s and how the two groups have helped to shape the world and society. She’d learn how to speak at least two different languages, horseback riding, hacking, politics and a rather wide array of other subjects. The pair were surprised on how much went into training that wasn’t based on weapons or killing. When
their guide saw their reactions, he smiled understandingly and explained that it happened often with parents who were new to the whole ‘Assassin thing’. They were also surprised when they were offered the chance of moving into one of the houses on the grounds of the estate. Of course they didn’t have to, though they wouldn’t have to worry about getting their daughter up and over to the estate on time for her training. Ted and Andromeda were rather hesitant, but they got the chance to talk to a few families who had their own children in training and yet they weren’t Assassin’s in any way.

It was the conversation they had with a single mother who has two children in the program that helped them make their decision.

“Personally, I think it was a wise choice when we decided to come here. We’re Muggles, you see so we wouldn’t have had any protection until my sons goes to school.” Marie Cook said, smiling as she walked alongside Andromeda and Ted through the grounds.

“It’s a community here. We all look out for each other and personally, this place has more protections than any other place besides Gringotts. While you may be wondering what you can do to help these people, you’d be doing them a great service. I work in a Muggle company near the top of the ladder so to speak. I also keep an eye out for any suspicious activity and report it. While nothing might come of it I know I’ve prevented a few things.” She explained, looking at the couple as they looked at her in surprise.

“How do you get to work?” Ted asked.

“I drive of course. I’m taken to a dummy house which is listed as my actual residence. My sons are taken there in the morning so they can catch the bus and go to school before I drive off to work. The house is constantly swept and monitored and so far nothing’s happened. Like I said, we all look out for each other, no matter your bloodline.” Marie answered, watching as Ted and Andromeda looked at each other.

When Andromeda and Ted took Nymphadora home that evening, their daughter was gushing about the different things she would be learning. They knew that she struggled when making friends with other children her age because of her abilities and she would continue to struggle because of how rare it was for someone to be a Metamorphagaus. Both of them knew that Nymphadora would also struggle to find a future boyfriend or girlfriend, should their daughter swing that way, because of her ability to shift and change her body. Many would date her simply because she could change her appearance to become their ‘dream’ lover. The idea of their daughter being accepted by a small community and actually find friends who were going through similar training was appealing, even more so if they lived at the estate. They would know who she hung out with and potentially dated as well. Not only that but they’d be able to spend time with parents who were going through similar experiences and not feel so alone or isolated.

They talked about it over the course of a week. With Andromeda’s job as a rather well-known lawyer and with Ted working as a mechanic in a shop he owned, it would be fairly easy to help the Brotherhood. Not only that, but according to Marie they would still be able to live a somewhat normal life. Ted also liked the sound of how secure the estate was as it meant that he wouldn’t have to worry about being targeted at night simply because of their bloodline or their daughter’s abilities. At the end of the week, they all agreed to move to the estate and got to tour four new houses that had just been built on the property. In the end, they chose a four bedroom ranch style home a few yards away from Marie and her two sons Alec and Demetrius. Quite a few people helped them move their furniture into their new house after painting it and changing a few things to make it feel more like theirs. Of course Andromeda and Ted used spells to duplicate their furniture so it would still look like they live at their old residence in case people looked around or they had visitors who don’t know
about the Brotherhood. It was all about covering their tracks and adding layers of security for not only themselves, but for the people they were now living among.

“That was the last box.” Ted said, smiling as he and his wife looked around their new kitchen.

“You know…I thought I would be having second thoughts about all this.” Andromeda said, leaning against her husband’s side as he wrapped an arm around her waist.

“Oh?”

“Mhm. We’re living on the massive grounds of an estate which belongs to the leaders of the British Brotherhood of Magical Assassins. Our daughter is an Assassin and is currently beginning her training right as we speak. How crazy does that sound?” She asked, looking up at Ted as he smiled at her.

“Ah, but that’s the thing. When I asked you to be my girlfriend you told me something. You said: ‘You have got to be insane to ask me out.’ Do you remember that?” He asked, watching as his wife blushed and nodded sheepishly.

“And do you remember what I said in response?” He asked, grinning as understanding lit his wife’s eyes.

“‘Andie, I’m a Wizard: I don’t do sane.’”

-XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX-
Childhood

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Harry Potter and co. don’t belong to me. Assassin’s Creed and co. don’t belong to me. I’m just taking some credit for the plot and original characters. In no way, shape or form am I making money from this.

Main Story Warnings: A.U.-severe-, characters are OOC, canon is only a minor guideline, crossover, swearing, violence, gore, character death, Grey!Harry, Assassin!Harry, modern technology, OC’s abound, Ron!Molly!Ginny!Bashing, Dumbledore!Bashing

Beta: Inuyasha-loves-Hanyou-Kagome

Edited On: 8/21/17

Pairings: James/Lily, Sirius/OFC, Remus/OFC, Harry/Luna, Neville/Hermione, Dean/Millicent

Author’s Note: So, I know the last chapter didn’t really feature much of Harry. However, that’s because I was setting up the world a little bit for you all. This chapter will detail most of Harry’s childhood and how his life is different now that he’s training to be an Assassin. I have to say, I’m still up in the air about Dumbledore. Should I make him this manipulative, controlling bastard or simply an old man who simply was misguided and thought he knew best? Don’t worry, I have no intention of having Harry and the Assassins be call chummy with Albus or Riddle obviously. Also, thank you all so much for your support and kind words! I was so happy seeing on how well received the first chapter was!

Another Note: So, in this you learn what Sirius and Remus are doing as careers. I will warn you that I’m taking a lot of what Jo had the twins invent and had Remus and Sirius invent them. I honestly think that Remus and Sirius’ would’ve thought of the same items is they had followed the career in opening a joke shop. Of course they won’t have thought of everything that the twins did, but there’s still plenty that I’ve taken and altered. Again, it’s fan fiction which means us authors are allowed to alter things to suit our needs.

Shout out: Thank you DZ2 for the mention in your story Rise of the Telumancer! I squealed when I saw it!

Challenge: DZ2’s Way of the Warrior challenge. For more information look to the first chapter or DZ2’s forums.

[Parlertongue]

Emphasis on words/Spells

Text
Chapter Two: Childhood

August 13th, 1985

The small boy swiftly moved through the long hallway of the manor’s East wing. Bare feet padded softly along the carpet as he darted around a corner before slipping into an open room. Looking around, emerald green eyes locked on the sight of the closet door before they flicked to the bathroom door. The boy hesitated slightly before he scurried over to the closet and opened the door. However, instead of slipping inside, the boy rustled a few of the clothes and pulled a few off of the hangers, before piling them up in a corner of the closet near the back. He carefully slid the door closed until it was open just a small crack. Padding over to the bathroom, he slipped inside and moved over to the shower where he rustled the curtain and stretched it out slightly. Only after doing that did he move over to the vanity and silently opened the cupboard doors. Getting to his hands and knees, he crawled inside the cupboard and closed the door behind him. Shifting inside the small space, he positioned himself so he was ready to propel himself out of the confined space if necessary; which would more than likely happen.

Focusing on his senses, the boy listened closely to his surroundings. He could hear the water flowing through the pipes inches away; could sense his mother and father in the West wing. A House Elf was in one of the guest rooms dusting and going about its duties cleaning the room. His breathing nearly stopped when someone stepped into the bedroom; their footfalls nearly silent as they closed the door behind them with a faint click. The boy swallowed softly, resisting the urge to stretch out as his muscles began protesting because of the confined space. In the bedroom, the person, a middle aged woman with black hair and sharp dark brown eyes, looked around before spotting the closet door. Raising an delicate eyebrow, she walked over to it and silently slid it open. Peering inside, she snorted softly when she saw the pile of clothes before she reached over and moved them aside. Instead of uncovering her target, she was rather impressed when all that was revealed was an empty corner. Nodding in approval, she walked over to the bed and crouched down before peering underneath.

Standing upright once she confirmed no one was underneath the bed, she walked to the windows and peered at them, a frown on her lips when she saw they were locked. Walking to the bathroom, she peered behind the open door before spotting the shower. Raising an eyebrow once more, she walked over and pulled the curtain back, frowning when she saw that no one was behind it. Inside the cupboard, the boy shifted silently, pressing his feet against the back of the cupboard after making sure he was in the perfect position to jettison himself out of there. Sure enough, the cupboard doors opened and the woman smirked when she saw him.

“You’re getting better, Harrison. You’ve left hints that you were in other rooms which forced me to go through them to ensure you weren’t there. However, as a child it’s rather obvious that you’re able to fit into small spaces. You also didn’t leave yourself an escape route.” She said, rising as Harry frowned at her.

“Come on out. We’ll take this outside now.” She added, blinking when her pupil didn’t move but rather smirked at her.

“Who says I didn’t give myself an escape route?” Harrison asked, taking his tutor by surprise when he shot out of the cupboard.

“You always said that training doesn’t end until I’m caught!” He cried, sprinting out of the room
with the woman scrambling to catch up.

Harrison, or better known as Harry Potter-Othello, slid underneath the bed and stood up. He grinned as he spun around and face his tutor who stood on the other side. The woman had a grin on her face as well; proud that her pupil hadn’t given up just yet. They stared each other down, each waiting for the other to move. Harry shifted, his body tense as his mind whirled with possibilities on how he could escape from the room. Yes, there was the window to his left but it would take a few precious seconds to unlock it and open it; seconds that his tutor could use to cross the bed and grab him. On the other hand, he could run across the bed and use the curtains hanging from the railing to temporary blind his tutor which would allow him to knock over the plant near the door so he could get out of the room and into the hallway. Making his choice, he leaped onto the bed and darted towards his tutor as she readied herself. Snagging the curtain, he pulled it off of the railing and flung it at the woman, taking her by surprise.

Jumping off the bed, he scrambled towards the door, reaching out and pulling the fake plant nearby to the floor along with a heavy armchair. Wrenching the door open, he sprinted down the hallway towards the main hall which led to the staircases. Behind him, the woman swore as she ripped the curtain off and nimbly leapt over the plant and the chair. However, she had to admit that her pupil was learning. While the House Elves might complain, Harrison was learning vital skills that could save his and other’s lives in the future. Making her way to the hallway, she looked around before she caught sight of the boy turning the corner at the far end of the hall. Sprinting after him, she turned sharply and sped up, dodging others as they hurried to flatten themselves against the walls as she and Harry ran past.

Harry panted as he reached the stairs, his eyes wide when he saw a few people heading up and sending him knowing looks. He could hear his tutor gaining ground behind him so he made a rather hasty decision. Jumping onto the banister, he slid down to the first floor and jumped off near the end, wincing as he hit the floor awkwardly. Behind him, the woman leapt over the end of the railing, landing on the floor below in a crouch before sprinting after her pupil. Her longer legs and heightened stamina which came from years of training and going on missions allowed her to reach Harry just as he stretched out a hand to push open the front doors. Harry yelped as a strong arm wrapped around his waist and pulled him up against his tutor’s body, her other hand holding him just below his neck. He struggled against her iron-like hold, though she quickly pinned him against the wall so he couldn’t use his arms or legs to get free.

“Very good, Harrison.” She panted, smiling as the boy grinned even though he struggled for breath.

“Twenty minutes. You’re getting better, son.”

The woman released Harry and the pair turned before bowing towards Lucas as he walked towards them. Harry wasn’t too surprised that his father had managed to watch his training; his parents often watched him to see how he was progressing.

“He’s progressing nicely, Master Lucas. He’s using his surroundings, age and youth to his advantage. He’s thinking outside the box which is what he had trouble with in the beginning.” The woman said, Lucas nodding as he smiled at his son.

“Thank you, Saitō Sensei.” Harry said.

The woman, Kano Saitō, bowed slightly towards Harry who bowed deeper towards her before she headed out the door to do...whatever it was that many Assassins did in their free time. Harry turned and followed his dad when the man beckoned him. Heading down one of the hallways, Harry was surprised when he realized that his dad was taking him in the direction of his private study, a place where Harry had been forbidden to be in. The five year-old was slightly worried and yet excitement
bubbled up inside him of him at the idea of getting to be inside the room. His parents had told him many times that he would be allowed inside of his dad’s study when they felt he was old enough to begin learning what he needed to know about the other part of his heritage. Oh, he understood enough to know that he’ll need to learn various things in order to mix in with others. He also knew that the training he was going through needed to be kept a secret from others that aren’t a part of the Brotherhood. While he didn’t fully understand why, he knew that his parents would tell him as he got older.

Lucas waved his hand over the door of his study, unlocking it. Opening the door, he gestured for his son to go inside. Harry slowly walked through the doorway, his eyes wide as he looked around. The walls were a light colored wood and three wide windows let in plenty of natural light. A large desk stood to the left with various papers and parchments strewn over it in organized piles along with fountain pens, quills and ink wells. Bookshelves stood behind the desk against the wall; filled with books of various sizes along with scrolls which looked rather old. To the right was a very small seating area in front of a fireplace; the two armchairs looked well used and had a small table between them for drinks or a tray to be set on it. Harry looked behind him as his dad closed the door and he felt the wards settle around the room. His dad guided him over to the two chairs and sat down in one of them, leaving his son to sit down in the other. Harry shifted, wanting nothing more than to run over to the bookshelves and look at the different books.

“I’ve gotten a review from your tutors today, Harry.” Lucas said, watching as Harry looked at him before fidgeting.

“O-Oh?” Harry asked, looking up at his dad as Lucas nodded.

“Mhm. They’re rather impressed by your dedication to your studies. Apparently they’re thinking of moving you to advanced classes.” Lucas said, smiling as Harry blinked and smiled back.

“Really?!”

“Yes, really. However, your mother and I are worried that you might be doing too much. You’re only five, Harry. We want you to be a kid. Yes, you’re going through training but we want to make sure you’re having fun and spending time with children your own age.” Lucas said, watching as his son tilted his head to the side and looked at him curiously.

“But isn’t that why Uncle Sirius and Uncle Remus come over? They always make sure I’m having fun and goofing off. That’s why Miss Pinegrew gets cross at me.” Harry said, frowning as he remembered his last governess.

“Yes, but there aren’t very many children your age here at the estate. We were thinking of sending you to primary school in the Fall.” Lucas explained, watching as Harry’s frown deepened.

“But what about my training? You and Mum said that my training’s important.” He said, Lucas nodding as he smiled.

“And it is. Harry…your birth mother wanted you to have the best of both worlds: Magical and Non-Magical. She and your father had planned for you to attend Non-Magical school when you turned five. Of course when you get your Hogwarts letter you would get to choose if you wanted to continue your Non-Magical education or not. If you want to go to Primary school, you’ll be working on your training during the weekends and school breaks. We were thinking of having you train on Saturdays while on Sundays you can spend with your uncles or friends.” Lucas explained, watching as Harry looked at the fireplace thoughtfully.

“I…I am kinda lonely. Nummy is busy with her training and she’ll be in her last year of Primary
school when school starts. After this year she’ll be heading to Hogwarts. Uncle Sirius and Remus are also busy with their shop.” Harry said.

“After school I’ll also be starting your etiquette training. You’re a Potter and an Othello and that means you’ll be the Lord of both families one day.” Lucas said, chuckling when his son pulled a face.

“Ugh! Do I really have’ta learn all that fancy stuff?” Harry asked, frowning when his dad nodded.

“Yes, Harry, you do. It’s important that you learn all that ‘fancy’ stuff. People will expect you to learn it, especially since it’s well known that we adopted you.” Lucas said, watching as Harry sighed and slouched in his seat.

“But, your Uncle Sirius will also be helping you in those lessons. He’s a Lord as well and was taught all of the things I’ll be teaching you when he was the same age.” He added, chuckling when Harry perked up.

Harry loved it whenever Sirius joined in on his lessons. His godfather always made things fun and often helped him pull pranks on his tutors and the others who lived on the estate. Lucas blinked when someone knocked on the door before it unlocked; revealing his wife who had a fond smile on her face.

“Harrison, Eliza wants to play.” She said, watching as the boy blinked before smiling and darting out of the room.

Lucas chuckled as he watched his son, shaking his head fondly. Three years ago they had been blessed with a beautiful baby girl with dark blonde hair and golden eyes. Harry had instantly fallen in love with his little sister and took his duties as a big brother seriously. When she had just been a tiny infant Harry had constantly hovered nearby, helping his parents get things that Eliza needed or soothing her when she started crying. Now that she’s three, Eliza often took to toddling after Harry, calling for her big brother and asking him to slow down or just asking him different questions about the world around her.

“You know he has a few weeks before he has to choose.” Delilah said, walking over and sitting down on the armchair of Lucas’ chair.

“I know, dear. I just… I want to let him have a rich and full life. When he gets older he’ll begin to see the uglier side of the world and humanity. I want to preserve his innocence while we can.” He said, resting his head on his wife’s side as she ran her fingers through his hair.

“We are, love. His training is child’s play right now. He thinks of it as a type of game and Sirius and Remus are constantly coming around and helping him get into trouble around the estate.” Delilah said, smiling brightly as Lucas laughed.

“Remember when they pranked Hector? Merlin, I thought the man would explode.” He laughed, his wife’s delicate laughter joining his.

“Ah, but he surprised us all by suddenly laughing as well. Then there was the time he released all the horses from the stables.” Delilah giggled, smiling as she remembered that prank.

“Yes and he was riding Gallant at the head, bareback and without reigns. It took hours for all the horses to be rounded up.” Lucas said, laughing even harder as tears of mirth ran down his wife’s cheeks.

They calmed down after a few minutes and just sat there, thinking about their son and all of the
things he’d gotten up to. Of course both of them knew James’ pension for troublemaking, but they also knew that it would give their son a sense of freedom and fun that he might not always have. Sirius and Remus were determined to make their godson and cub into a Marauder to continue their legacies. Their son already had a real talent for getting into trouble, but now that he had begun his training in stealth and evasion he’s gotten better at running away and covering his tracks. Both of them knew their son was behind the great cookie disappearance last Christmas though no one could prove it. Even though all the children on the estate acted like they were upset, Delilah had caught them all smiling and hugging their son whenever they thought no one was looking. Not only that but one of the House Elves had found cookie crumbs in Harry’s bedsheets the day after all the cookies disappeared.

Delilah left her husband to work on paperwork and headed off to her private parlor to work on her paintings. Lucas glanced up from his work an hour later and smiled when he saw his son and daughter playing on the playground near the back of the house. Even though Harry seemed to be busy doing his own thing, he kept a careful eye on his little sister as she climbed the structure and stumbled towards the big slide. Lucas shook his head and chuckled softly, proud that his son was so dedicated to his little sister already. He and Delilah had been worried that Harry wouldn’t be happy or accepting of having a younger sibling. Hell, he and Delilah hadn’t been sure if Delilah could even get pregnant because of the various accidents and trouble she’s been in due to being an assassin. However, when they learned that Delilah was with child and told Harry, his eyes had gotten big and he had been so excited about the idea of being a big brother. Seeing him interact with Eliza never failed to make them smile and many times the others would praise Harry for helping his little sister whenever she struggled or was in need of help.

It was during dinner when Harry finally had his answer to his father’s suggestion of attending primary school. Harry waited until the food was served and there was a lull in the conversation before speaking up.

“Dad, Mum, I...I would like to go to primary school.” Harry said, looking up as Delilah and Lucas paused and looked at him in surprise.

“Really?” Delilah asked, surprise in her voice as Harry nodded.

“Yeah. I want to make friends and learn more about the Non-Magical world. Besides, I might find kids like me.” Harry said, smiling as his parents nodded.

“Alright then, tomorrow we’ll look at different schools.” Lucas said, smiling as his son nodded happily.

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Salfords Primary School

September 2nd, 1985

Harry nervously adjusted his schoolbag as his mum pulled up to Salfords Primary school. Both his parents and his sister had been excited that he had decided to go, and so had he. Cousin Nymmy had gone here for her schooling and his Cousin Andie had recommended it for them. Of course now that they’re parked alongside the curb doubts started popping up in his mind. What if he couldn’t make any friends? What if he couldn’t keep his temper and accidentally hurt someone? Shifting in his seat, Harry looked up at his mum as she turned to look back at him. A gentle smile crossed Delilah’s face when she saw the nervousness in her son’s eyes. This would be the first time he’d away from the estate without one of them nearby. Of course there were a few guards stationed around the outside of the school even though no one outside the estate knew that their son was attending a Non-Magical
school.

“Okay there, sweetie?” She asked, watching as Harry nervously tugged on the collar of his white polo.

“Yeah…” Harry muttered, glancing out at the door as more and more children his age and older walked up to the school.

“Don’t worry, sweetie. You’ll do fine!” Delilah said, reaching back and gently touching her son’s cheek.

“But…what if I can’t make any friends or keep up in class.” Harry asked, fear in his voice as Delilah smiled in understanding.

“Harry, you’re a very smart boy. You’re tutors have always praised your desire to learn and push yourself. I have no doubt you’ll be able to keep up in class. Not only that, but you’re a very likable young man. I’m sure you’ll make friends easily.” Delilah said, smiling as Harry relaxed and nodded.

“Now, go out there and have fun! Remember to be respectful to your teachers and be polite.” She said, her son smiling brightly as he nodded.

Harry quickly unbuckled and climbed out of the backseat. Waving back at his mum as he closed the car door, he followed the group of children up the main walkway. It was rather easy to find the teacher who was meant for his year group and he was glad to see that there were plenty of children his own age. They were soon led into a rather large theater room where a good number of teachers stood and introduced themselves once the children were seated. The Headmistress spoke with them about what was expected of them as students and encouraged them to ask questions and go to their teachers or her if they had any problems. One by one, the students were divided into groups by the teachers. Harry was rather pleased to see that there was a close, even number of boys and girls in each class. Looking at his classmates, he smiled at a nearby girl with brown hair and blue eyes. She blinked and smiled shyly back, waving her fingers at him.

“Alright class, if you’ll follow me we’ll head to our classroom and begin the day.” Missus Walden said, smiling as the group looked at her and nodded.

Upon reaching the classroom, Missus Walden showed them where the nearest bathroom was before she explained the rules of her classroom. Once that was done she had the student introduce themselves as well as tell something about themselves to the class. Missus Walden then assigned the students their seats before beginning the lesson. Harry quickly discovered that he already knew what was being taught. However, instead of just sitting around and lazing about, he noticed that a boy sitting next to him, named Dean Thomas, seemed to be struggling slightly. Harry smiled and introduced himself to the boy, making Dean blink before he grinned and shook Harry’s hand while introducing himself as well. Missus Walden looked up when she heard the soft sounds of conversation. Preparing herself to scold one of her new students for chatting, she paused when she saw Mister Potter-Othello helping Mister Thomas with his worksheet.

She smiled at the sight before she rose from her desk and walked around the room. She helped further explain things to a few students and helped a few others grasp some of the new concepts. Reaching Harrison’s desk, she was surprised to see that the boy had already completed his worksheet and that all the answers, at first glance, were correct. Now, she’d had some advanced students come through her class before but it normally took them a little bit to settle and grasp things. However, with Harrison it seemed as if he already knew what she’s teaching. She made a mental not to keep an eye on the boy; make sure that he wasn’t too bored in her class. It wouldn’t do for his mind and talents to go to waste, which was exactly what the school didn’t want to happen to gifted students.
It didn’t seem to take long before Missus Walden led her class outside to the playground where another two classes were already playing. Harry grinned when he saw the large playground and instantly headed towards the metal jungle gym. Climbing up the dome structure, he soon reached the top and hooked his legs over the bar before hanging upside down. He laughed when he saw a few girls looking at him with wide eyes. Other children were climbing over the metal structure, though Harry turned his attention to a rather small, nervous looking girl and began coaxing her to climb up a few rungs. He never noticed two older and bigger boys making their way up the rungs towards him; however, Dean did. Dean frowned and moved quickly, blocking Harry from the boys and narrowing his eyes at them.

“Hey, runt, move.” One of the boys said, making Dean frown as Harry turned his attention to the group.

“Why should we?” Harry asked, frowning as the two boys looked at him and sneered.

“This place is for older students. Not itty-bitty first years.”

“This structure is for everyone.” Dean said, watching as the boys scoffed.

“Looks like they need to learn their place, Sean.”

Harry shifted uneasily as he watched the two boys. He knew his mum and dad wouldn’t like it if he got into a fight on his first day of school, especially since he had promised to do his best. However, he also didn’t like the thought of simply giving up and walking away from these two bullies. The idea of snitching wasn’t too pleasant either. However, if there was one thing he knew it was when to choose your battles. Nudging Dean, he glanced pointedly at the spaces between the bars below them. Dean frowned at first before understanding filled his eyes. They watched as the two boys climbed closer and, when they made to grab them, Dean and Harry slipped between the bars and hung on a few feet above the ground. Harry dropped down first, grunting as his legs absorbed the impact. Dean dropped down next, stumbling slightly before he and Harry looked up. Both of the older boys were scowling at them and their eyes promised that this issue wasn’t over. Harry snorted and pulled Dean away from the structure and over to another area which wasn’t as populated.

“Hey, Dean, how did you know those boys were trouble?” He asked, sitting down at one of the benches as his new friend blinked.

“Well they didn’t look too nice and…it was a gut feeling as my mum would say. I always get these feelings that let me know when I’m in danger. I’m the eldest of five so I count on them a lot.” Dean said, shrugging as Harry looked at him.

“I get those feelings too. It’s like I’m able to sense the intentions of others.” Harry said.

“Exactly! Once, my mum brought her last boyfriend over and…there was just something…off ‘bout him. My mum had to run out to get pizza and her boyfriend was upstairs sleeping. I went up there to check on him and caught him going through my mum’s stuff. He was trying to steal from us. I ran and hid my siblings in the basement and called the cops. My mum was so upset and yet she was so happy that I was there and trusted my gut.” Dean explained, Harry listening intently as his thoughts ran wild.

Before Harry could say anything, Missus Walden called them back inside. Heading back to the classroom, they were once more going through lessons. The rest of the day passed by without much excitement as Harry and Dean getting to know more about each other. Dean was fascinated in learning that his new friend was apparently rather wealthy even though Harry and his family didn’t flaunt it unlike others. Harry learned that Dean had three younger sisters and a younger brother who
was the baby of the family. According to Dean, his dad passed away to cancer a year ago while his mum was pregnant with his baby brother. His mum was working overtime at a local hospital in order to make ends meet while his aunt or uncle watched him and his siblings. Harry also learned that Dean was a lover of football, to which they got into a rather heated discussion about their favorite teams and different games.

At the end of the day, they happily exchanged phone numbers and promised to call and chat sometime soon. They split up and Harry happily ran over to his dad’s car and slid into the backseat. Lucas grinned when he saw his son and pulled away from the curb as the boy began chatting away about his day once he was buckled in. Lucas was rather interested in hearing about Dean Thomas and how the other lad prevented a possible fight. Of course he was slightly concerned when Harry told him about the older boys attempting to dominate the playground and made a note to keep an eye on what his son said about any future problems. Though what surprised him was when Harry told him about Dean’s ‘gut-feelings’ and how it reminded his son about the senses many Assassins had.

“Dad, is it possible that Dean’s like us?” Harry asked, looking up at the side of his dad’s face as Lucas glanced back at him.

“It’s possible, son. However, your mum and I will need to meet him first.” Lucas said, Harry nodding in agreement even though he frowned lightly.

“I kinda feel bad for him though. His dad passed away and his mum works hard to care for Dean and his siblings. His aunt and uncle watch them but apparently they badmouth his mum.” Harry said, anger in his voice as Lucas frowned.

“Has Dean told his mum?”

“No. He doesn’t want to make things harder on his mum. They aren’t close to any of the neighbors nearby and it would cost too much to hire a sitter.” Harry explained.

“Is there anything we could do?” Harry asked a few minutes later, his voice soft as Lucas sighed.

“I’m not sure, son. You’ve just made friends with Dean so it could take a while before it would be considered appropriate to suggest things to his mother. I know you want to look out for your new friend Harry, but we have to take things slowly or we’ll tip our hand.” Lucas said, Harry listening intently and nodding even though he doesn’t look too happy about it.

Reaching the estate, Harry headed off to the library to work on what few assignments he’d been given. Lucas, instead of trying to find his wife, headed to his study and silently casted the Patronus charm. A golden Eagle shot out of the man’s hand, soaring around the study before gliding back to the man as he pulled it over. The majestic bird hovered in front of him, staring him in the eyes.

“Message to Silver Serpent: I need you to do research into the Thomas family. The eldest child is Dean Thomas and he is the eldest of five children. His mother works for a local hospital and his father passed due to cancer. Young Hawk suspects Dean might be a potential assassin. Stay out of sight and report back when possible.” He said, the Eagle nodding before it flew through one of the walls.

Casting another patronus, he called it back once more for another message.

“Message to Goldenpaw: I need you to see if a Dean Thomas is set to attend Hogwarts within the next six years. Young Hawk has a feeling about a new friend he has made and we wish to know if this friend is a Non-Magical or Magical. If his name is in the register, could you check if any of his younger siblings are as well? Take your time.”
The second patronus soon disappeared and Lucas settled down to work on more paperwork and go over information that he’s received from those on missions. He was alarmed at the number of warehouses that were popping up which were modifying guns and non-magical drugs with potions. Sighing in frustration, he knew that it wasn’t all due to Templars, but these people still needed to be stopped. Creating copies of the research and information, he ensured that nothing held any magical trace and didn’t contain any names or codenames that might lead back to him or his assassins. Once he was satisfied, he called in one of the higher ranked assassins and handed her a non-descript manila folder.

“Sneak into the Auror department and leave this on Madame Bones’ desk. When you return call several others and come here for a mission.” He said, watching as the woman nodded curtly before she swept out of the office.

Before he could return to his work, a silvery golden form of a Scottish Terrier ran through the wall and jumped onto his desk before sitting down.

“A Mister Dean Thomas who lives in the Tandridge region is set to come to Hogwarts in the same year as Young Hawk. All of Mister Thomas’ siblings are also listed as possible Hogwarts students. I shall be teaming up with Silver Serpent on his mission.” A woman’s voice said, Lucas nodding his head thoughtfully as the patronus disappeared.

“Harry told me about his new friend.” Delilah said, breaking her husband out of his thoughts as he turned to look at her.

“Oh?” He asked, smiling as the woman nodded and walked over.

“He’s really excited about having a new friend though he’s wishing to help Dean out. He has a good heart.” Delilah said.

“That he does. I have Severus and Minerva on missions to learn more about Dean Thomas and his family. Minerva has already discovered that Dean and his siblings are set to attend Hogwarts in the future. Someone in his family had magic.” Lucas explained, his wife listening with interest.

“What do you think?” Delilah asked, sitting on the edge of her husband’s desk as he sighed deeply.

“I think our son has a knack of finding other Magicals and Assassins. What Dean was describing sounded very similar to our Eagle vision. He can sense the intentions of others and is highly aware of his surroundings. However, Harry has just met the lad so it’s still up in the air.” Lucas admitted, his wife nodding slightly.

“And if Dean is an assassin?”

“Then we’ll have to explain things to his mother and hope for the best. It would be best if we had Andromeda and Ted speak with Missus Thomas. Andromeda and Ted would be able to better explain things so she might be more accepting. Not only that but she would benefit in living here in the complex. We’re expanding our boarders and have plans with the Goblins to build more houses. She wouldn’t have to worry about a sitter and we could use another employee in the Golden Heart Clinic.” Lucas said, his wife smiling in approval.

“Sounds like a pretty good plan. The clinic is already accepting more and more people. Parents are singing our praise in helping their children and other family members with our ‘natural’ medicines.” She said, making Lucas chuckle softly as he shook his head.

“It’s amazing on how simple it is getting around the Statute of Secrecy. We’re insuring the clinic has
guards around the clock and the wards remain steady. It poses a very tempting target for our enemies.” He said, his wife humming and nodding in agreement.

“Well, I’ll go and watch Harrison’s training. Good luck with the paperwork.” She said, standing and laughing as her husband groaned and dropped his head onto his desk with a dull ‘thunk’.

-CASSIDY-XXX

June 30th, 1986

Cassie Thomas looked down at the paper in her hands as a sense of wonder, confusion and hysteria filled her. How could things have gotten crazy so quickly?! All because of a new friend her son made in school! At the beginning of the school year, she had been happy when Dean had told her about his new friend Harry. Yes, she had been surprised when he informed her that Harry apparently came from a wealthy family and yet was completely normal. In her experience children tended to boast about things such as money and wealth, though it also depended on the child’s parents. Now, she knew her eldest boy. Dean wasn’t one to make friends easily because of the life he’s been dealt. Dean was the most cautious of all her children and was always careful about the people he wanted to bring around them.

It pained her, in a way. Since her beloved husband’s death Dean had really stepped up in his role as the eldest son even though he’s still very young. He made sure his siblings were awake, fed and dressed before he went to school. He also sure the chores got done and lunches were made along with baths having been taken and was always the one who made sure she had something to eat when she came home; even if it was something as simple as a sandwich. He had grown up quickly and sometimes she forgot that he was only five years-old. He acted like a teen already and it broke her heart and made her proud at the same time. Sometimes she wondered if she was doing the right thing in not seeking out assistance from others. Sadly her own pride was something she didn’t want to lose after having lost so much in such a short amount of time. Thankfully things hadn’t gotten bad enough that they were on the brink of losing the house or the car. She did know her own limits and when she’d have to buckle down and swallow her pride.

When she agreed that this Harry could come over during the weekend after the first week of school, she had honestly expected to see a posh and slightly snobby boy that would look down on their small but well cared for home. Instead she met a well-mannered, modest and kind boy who happily hugged her instead of shaking her hand. Her daughters had fallen in love with Harry instantly and fawned over him; especially when he agreed to play dolls with them. She had never seen her eldest son so happy with another boy his age besides Damien Best who had moved away when her son was four. Harry had quickly won her children’s and her own heart. It was impossible not to love the boy, really. He was so willing to help her and Dean out and had happily helped her daughters find joy in learning. She was glad that Dean had found a good friend in Harry and had been more than happy to let the boy come over nearly every weekend during the school year. Dean had been over to Harry’s house, to which the boy had apparently been in awe over the manor Harry lived in.

She had been slightly worried in learning that Harry lived in a manor on a large estate, but Dean hadn’t shown any jealousy. Her beloved son had taken it in stride and had told her that, while the place had been welcoming, he liked their cozy little home much better. Now that the school year has ended, however, she had gotten the odd request if she could speak with Harry’s parents. Lucas and Delilah were very kind people, just like their son, and their daughter was adorable and had gotten along with her own girls instantly. All of that, though, had been wiped from her mind as soon as Lucas and Delilah asked to speak with her in private and handed her a piece of paper.

Now, she’s seen pictures of her grandparents and of her great-grandparents. However, she had
never, never seen a moving picture of her great-grandmother standing in a set of old fashioned robes with some kind of medal pinned to her breast. Tearing her eyes away from the photo, she looked down at the headline of the apparent newspaper below the picture.

*Athena Woods awarded Order of Merlin Second Class!*

The article below stated that her great-grandmother had gotten this…award for creating a spell—spells!-that would help Healers properly figure out anything and everything that might be wrong with someone. While she had a hard time wrapping her mind around the fact that magic, Witches and Wizards are apparently real, a wild thought randomly popped into her head. -Apparently being a healer runs in the family!-

“Missus Thomas, I understand that this is quite a shock…” Lucas said, watching as Cassie held up her hand.

If she was honest with herself, Cassie had always suspected that something was different about her family. Her grandfather had always talked about the impossible. He would talk about a castle in Scotland where people were taught magic and ramble about amazing fantasy creatures as if they had been real. Of course her parents and her grandmother had thought the man insane, but he had always been adamantly that it was all real. His father had never been in the picture and according to what she could remember her great-grandfather had left his wife not long after she had gotten pregnant. Armed with the knowledge that her grandfather hadn’t been insane, things that she had noticed about Dean and her girls were beginning to make sense. Dean, whenever he had been focused on something, actually made things move by themselves. Her girls, whenever angry, caused things to break and had even caused the entire house to shake once!

“So…my children are…Witches and Wizards?” She asked, her voice shaky as the couple in front of her nodded.

“We wanted to be sure of a few things before approaching you about this. One of our associates works for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in Scotland. Whenever a magical child is born, their name appears in a book in the Ministry of Magic, our government, and in the school. When the child turns eleven, a letter of invitation is sent to the child and their parents stating that the child has been accepted to attend the school if you should accept.” Delilah explained, Cassie listening closely and nodding lightly.

“So…what am I if my children are Witches and Wizards?” She asked, curiosity in her voice as Lucas smiled softly.

“You are what are known as a Squib. You have a magical core but are unable to use it because there’s not enough magic inside your core to ‘push’ with. You cannot use a wand which is what deems you a Squib.” He answered, though he looked to his wife as she leaned forward.

“Now, our society is still dominated by blood. There are Witches and Wizards who come from long lines of magic users. They are called Purebloods. My husband and I are Purebloods and so is our daughter. Then there are Halfbloods. They have one parent who is a Pureblood and one parent who is a Muggleborn. Our son Harrison is a Halfblood. A Muggleborn is a child who is born to two people who don’t have magic. Now, it’s thought that Muggleborns come from people who had once had magic in their family line but it ‘Squibbed’ out so to say. Purebloods and some Halfbloods look down at Muggleborns and Squibs. Squibs are normally banished from their families because their family members thing that they are a disgrace.

“Muggleborns are seen as inferior to Halfbloods and Purebloods because they haven’t had magic as
long as others. However, history has proven that this isn’t true. Harrison’s biological mother was the smartest Witch of her age and, if she had lived, she would’ve gone far in our world. There are some Purebloods, like us, who don’t buy into the blood supremacy tosh that others brag about. Your children would be considered Halfbloods because you actually come from a Pureblood line. The Woods line still has roots dating all the way back to the founders of Hogwarts. Dean, as the eldest son, can inherit the bloodline and the fortune that has sat in Gringotts waiting for the next magical in your family.” Delilah explained.

“So…if Dean accepts his place as…Lord Woods, then we’ll be rich?” Cassie asked, staring in disbelief as the pair nodded.

“As his mother you will take control of the fortune and family assets until he comes of age at the age of seventeen.” Delilah answered, watching as Cassie nodded weakly.

“Now, there’s another thing about Dean that we need to explain.” Lucas said, making Cassie focus on him.

“In the world there are two groups: Assassins and Templars. Since…Merlin; since the dawn of humanity it seems, these two groups have been fighting each other. Assassins stand for the freedom of everyone while Templars stand for control and domination. Now, us magics have our own branches of these groups; just add in the word Magical to the title. My wife, our son, daughter and myself are Assassins. We’re actually Master Assassins and are in charge of the Britain Magical Assassins Brotherhood. We try to keep Templars from taking over and also help protect the Non-Magical world from magical influences that are harmful and dangerous. We don’t kill for fun; we have a code that we live and swear by.” Lucas explained, having seen horror in Cassie’s eyes though that quickly vanished.

“Our son saw some traits that are common in assassins. Since our arrival here, I casted a simple charm that showed me if he does have some abilities that us Assassins carry and he does. Your son has what is called Eagle sight. It allows him to see enemies, allies, informants and normal civilians in different colors once the sight has been activated. He also seems to have the other ability that comes from the sight: the ability to sense the intentions of others around him.” He added, Cassie nodding faintly as she remembered a few times when her son refused to speak with someone or demanded that they leave or move to a different area.

“We would like to begin Dean’s training, with your permission of course. He would learn parkour, stealth, spying and free running for now until he turns seven when we would begin training him in hand-to-hand combat and self-defense which would gradually move onto him learning how to use different weapons once he’s a teen. Any missions he would go on would be spying missions where he wouldn’t be expected or even told to engage in combat. We would also like you and your family to move to our estate. You would be living in your own house on the grounds which have been turned into more of a complex with how many other Assassins and their families have moved there. Of course you and your children will live normal lives besides the training. As you know Harrison attends a normal primary school and many of our members and their families have jobs outside of the estate.” Delilah said, watching as Cassie frowned lightly.

“So, my son has the abilities to become this…Assassin?” She asked, concern in her voice as the couple nodded.

“Yes, but like we said, he won’t be learning how to kill until he’s much older. Even then it’s up to you and him if he even wants to go through with this training. We’re not going to push you or Dean into anything you don’t want. What we’re offering is that Dean goes through magical training and also Assassin training. We’re also offering you a new job. Some of our Assassins own a clinic called
Golden Heart where we treat diseases and illnesses that are thought to be incurable to Non-Magicals but Witches and Wizards have the cures readily available. Now, the Ministry would be all over us for breaching the Statute of Secrecy but we advertise these cures as completely natural and we sedate those we’re treating so they don’t know about magic. We could use a woman of your talents, compassion and dedication in our clinics. You’d be making more than you are now with two days off a week and holidays are off or you’re given double the pay.” Delilah explained, smiling gently as Cassie looked at her with wide eyes.

“C-Could I have some time to think things over?” She asked, her voice weak and her thoughts muddled slightly.

“Of course. We wouldn’t accept your answer right now anyway. We want you to give this serious thought and consideration.” Lucas said, his wife nodding in agreement as they all stood.

Cassie walked her guests to the front door, in which Dean and her girls said their goodbyes to Harry. Harry smiled and thanked her for letting him come over before he and his parents headed outside and to their car. Dean closed the door and watched as his mum walked back into the dining room and sat down heavily at the table. His sisters looked at him in concern, making him smile reassuringly at them before he walked into the kitchen and made his mum a cup of tea. Cassie blinked when a mug appeared on the table in front of her, a faint smile forming on her lips as she reached over and lightly ruffled Dean’s hair.

“Mum, Harry told me and the others that we’re able to do magic.” Dean said, his voice soft as Cassie took a deep drink of tea.

“His parents told me the same thing. Apparently you have quite the fortune waiting for you.” She said, watching as Dean hummed thoughtfully.

“Do you think there’s enough to send all of us to Hogwarts and get new clothes? Sammy is wearing out his clothes and Meg is got another few inches taller.” Dean said, worry in his voice as Cassie turned and looked at her son.

“You’re so good to us, Dean.” She said, picking her son up and settling him on her lap where she hugged him tightly.

“Well, I know you’re busy and I’m determined to help. I wouldn’t be helping if I didn’t know what the others need.” He said, making Cassie chuckle weakly.

“What do you think about getting special training? Harry’s parents told me that you’re even more special than other Wizards. You’d be getting special training alongside Harry that will help you have the skills needed to help others when you’re older.” She said, knowing that her son wouldn’t fully understand the goal of Assassins just yet.

“Harry told me about some of his training. It sounds really fun.” Dean said, smiling as Cassie nodded.

“His parents have also offered us a new place to live and a new job for me. I’d be able to spend more time with you lot and I’d be getting more money. I don’t want us to completely rely on the fortune.” Cassie said, watching as Dean’s eyes lit up in excitement.

“Where would we be moving?”

“It would be into a house on the grounds of the Othello estate. There will be plenty of people to watch you and your siblings and from what I garnered it’s a very safe place. ”She answered, Dean
nodding as he looked at her thoughtfully.

“So…we wouldn’t have to have Aunt Miranda or Uncle Bret watch us…right?” He asked, hopefulness in his voice as Cassie frowned at him.

“Dean, what’s wrong with having your aunt and uncle watch you?” She asked, watching as he shifted and looked down uncomfortably.

“Uncle Bret complains about us all the time; about having to waste his time watching us and that you should just put us in an orphanage if you can’t watch us yourself. Aunt Miranda constantly talks bad about you too. She’s always making fun of your job, clothes and puts Megan, Sasha and Jessica down all the time. I’ve told her to stop but she just laughs at me and says that there’s nothing I can do about it unless I want to be taken away from you.” Dean said, his voice hardly above a whisper as Cassie looked at him with shock and growing anger.

“Dean…have they ever struck you or your sisters?” She asked, her voice filled with growing anger as Dean worried his bottom lip.

“…Aunt Miranda slapped Jessica when she tried telling her how to change Sammy’s diaper. Called her a rude name as too.” Dean said, blinking when his mum hugged him tightly.

“Let’s go talk things over with the girls and see what they think about moving. I can tell you now; your aunt and uncle will never come over here again; even if we don’t move.” Cassie said, finishing the last of her tea as Dean blinked and smiled.

Talking with her girls, Cassie discovered that all three of them were more than eager about the idea of moving and never having to deal with their uncle and aunt again. All of them admitted that they severely disliked their aunt and uncle because of the way they made fun of their clothes, house and toys along with how they talked bad about her in front of them. However, they hadn’t said anything because they hadn’t wanted to worry her and have her fret about finding someone else to watch them while she worked. It was heartbreaking, honestly, in learning that her children were willing to deal with bullies because they understood how strapped they were for money and time. Gathering her children in her arms, Cassie held them close as she fought down her tears. Her mind was already made up though, if this new job, new house and new friends would allow her children to be around people who would be kind and respect them then there was no need to think about it any further. Her son would learn how to become an Assassin and all of her children would learn how to control their magic.

All she had ever wanted was for her children to find people who would accept them for who they were and encourage them to learn and prosper. It seemed as if the Othello family was trying to help her achieve those goals, even if their ways were slightly…abnormal. Releasing her children, Cassie smiled at them and ushered them off to go and play. Dean took one last look at her before joining his siblings. Once she was alone, Cassie sighed and pulled out the slip of paper containing a phone number to an Andromeda Tonks. Delilah had explained that Andromeda and her husband were Magicals and their daughter was an Assassin in training. They would be able to better help explain things to her. Getting up, Cassie walked over to the phone and dialed the number. She only had to wait a few moments before someone picked up on the other end.

“Hello you’ve reached the Tonks residence.”

“Hi, this is Cassie Thomas. I was told that I could talk to Andromeda?”

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“Dad... why do I have to go to this boring party?” Harry asked, frowning as Lucas straightened his dress tux.

“Because as my son you are expected to be there. This is a party for the entire Brotherhood, Harrison. Even though you are still in training, the children are expected to be there. It’s why your mother is helping Dean prepare.” Lucas explained.

Stepping back, Lucas smiled down at his son. Dressed in a black tux with an emerald green vest and pocket filler, Harry looked very handsome. The annual Christmas Ball was one of the few times that the entire Brotherhood came together without having to work together on missions. It was mostly a meeting of the heads of the different factions though other members often came with their heads. Hector and Amanda were going given their status as Lucas and Delilah’s bodyguards. Harry and Eliza were attending because they’re Lucas’ and Delilah’s children though Dean was attending as Harry’s friend and bodyguard in training.

Since the Thomas family had moved to the estate during the summer, things have been coming together. Dean went to Gringotts and the Goblins performed an inheritance test to see if he actually is the heir to the Woods family. When it confirmed that he was, Cassie chose Sirius as Dean’s magical guardian. She nearly broke down crying when Hookfang, the Woods account manager, told her how much was in their vaults. The money would be more than enough for all of her children to live comfortably and allowed her to take time off without worrying about not having enough money. Of course her younger brother and his wife had been shocked and more than a little skeptical when she informed them that they were suddenly moving, but when they arrived while they were packing up boxes her brother started asking how she was paying for the move and where they were going to be moving. She had quickly put an end to the questions by stating that she didn’t need to answer the questions of a man and woman who thought it was okay to bully her children.

Dean loved his training, even though it had taken some getting used to. His mother loved the fact that everyone in the estate watched over the children as a group and that the place was so well protected. All of them were learning magic of some kind, though it was mostly focusing on shielding their minds from potential attacks and learning how to fully merge with their magical cores which would allow them to access their magic easier, heighten their senses, endurance, strength and speed. Their magic was a part of them and many Witches and Wizards were limited because they never got into full contact with their cores. Harry easily remembered when Nymphadora had accessed her magical core and gained full control of her abilities and no longer had any problems with her balance or grace. She had practically cried when that happened as her First Year in Hogwarts had been horrible because so many people made fun of her abilities or demanded her to change her features simply because she could.

“Ready?”

Harry blinked and looked over at the door to his room, grinning when he saw Dean, his mum and Eliza standing there. Dean was dressed exactly like him though with a deep red vest and pocket filler. Eliza wore a white, knee length dress with a red sash and light green trim while Delilah wore a beautiful silver and gold colored strapless dress that hugged her upper body before flaring out at the hips. Lucas nodded and they all headed downstairs and to the main hall. Hector and Amanda were waiting for them and held out a length of rope. Grabbing onto the rope, the sensation of being hooked around the naval washed over them and the world around them dissolved in a swirl of colors. Harry closed his eyes and gritted his teeth; having always hated traveling by portkey. However, it was one of the faster ways of traveling besides floo. Bending his knees slightly, he grunted as he touched down onto the ground; stumbling slightly though he didn’t fall. Hector steadied Dean as the
boy stumbled, making Dean smile gratefully at him.

Looking around, Harry, Dean and Eliza were in awe over the marble entrance hall they had arrived in. White and gold colored marble floors shone in the light casted by the crystal chandlers that hung from the high, vaulted ceiling. Garland was wrapped around the banisters of the sweeping staircases leading up to the second floor while two white Christmas trees frame a double door which was positioned between the staircases. All of them could hear music and conversation coming from beyond the double doors which told them that they’re not the first to arrive.

“Ah, Monsieur Othello. ‘Et is an honor.”

Looking at the stairs, the group watched as tall, lithe man with pale blonde hair and deep blue eyes, dressed in a silver tux walked down the stairs. On his arm was a stunningly beautiful woman with silver/blonde hair and green eyes. She was dressed in a stunning ice blue dress which hugged her frame. Lucas stepped forward with his wife, bowing deeply to the couple as they reached the bottom step.

“Monsieur Émile, thank you for inviting us.” He said, smiling warmly as the blonde man bowed as well.

“Lucas, ‘et is good to see you.” The woman said, smiling as Lucas gently took her hand and kissed her knuckles.

“Madame Brigitte, you look ravishing as always.” He said, making the woman laugh softly as she smiled.

Delilah smiled as Émile kissed the back of her hand before she kissed Brigitte’s cheeks. Both blondes nodded as Hector and Amanda introduced themselves as Lucas and Delilah’s bodyguards; thankfully taking no offense to their presence. However, they looked at the children with interest.

“Allow to introduce my son: Harrison, our young daughter Eliza and their bodyguard and friend Dean Thomas.” Lucas said, smiling as the boys bowed while Eliza curtsied.

“Père.” A soft voice called, making everyone turn and look to the top of the stairs.

A rather young but beautiful girl with silvery blonde hair and blue eyes stood at the top of the stairs dressed in a gold colored dress. Beside her was an even younger girl, around Eliza’s age, with the same colored hair and eyes.

“Ah, my daughters: Fleur and Gabrielle.” Emile said smiling warmly as the two girls walked down the stairs.

Introductions were made and Brigitte informed them that almost everyone had already arrived. Harry offered his arm to Fleur, much to her surprise, but she accepted his offer while Dean made the same gesture to Gabrielle. Eliza giggled as she took Dean’s other arm and they walked to the ballroom. The ballroom was massive with circular tables stationed around the room. Several buffet tables were against one wall; fairly groaning underneath the weight of all the food. Against the far wall was a raised stage where members of a band were playing a light and gentle song. In front of the stage was an area which has been designated as the dancefloor judging by the few couples that are already twirling around to the music. Harry, Dean and Eliza were in awe over the diverse and color outfits the different people were wearing. However, they was rather impressed as well. The brotherhood was strong and seeing how many people there only showed their strength.

Looking up at Fleur, Harry was surprised to see that she was looking at him with interest. He could
“Miss Delacour, would you honor me with a dance?” He asked, his voice gentle as Fleur raised an eyebrow.

“Very well, Mister Othello. Though I should warn you, I do not react kindly to ‘aving my toes stepped on.” She said, allowing Harry to lead her to the dancefloor much to the other’s surprise.

“As you shouldn’t. A beautiful girl like you shouldn’t have to deal with clumsy men.” Harry said, turning so he was facing her once they reached the dancefloor.

He placed a hand on her waist as one of her hands went to his shoulder before taking her other hand. As a waltz began playing, they gracefully moved across the floor; taking others by surprise. Dean looked down at little Gabrielle and offered her his hand, to which she blushed and giggled, though nodded in acceptance. Emile smiled as his youngest daughter was taken to the dancefloor, shaking his head fondly.

“Your son is quite the charmer, Lucas.” He said, his friend chuckling fondly.

“That he is. Dean’s sisters love the lad. Fleur is becoming quite the young lady.” He said, Emile nodding in agreement with a pleased smile.

“Qui. She is eager to attend Beauxbatons in two years.” Brigitte said, smiling gently as Delilah and Lucas smiled while watching Fleur and Harry dance

“Has she gained control over the allure?” Delilah asked, looking at the Veela as Brigitte sighed.

“For the most part. She struggles whenever she’s experiencing strong emotions or during…well you know.” Brigitte said, Delilah nodding in complete understanding.

“How is little Gabby coming along? Does she have the ability?” Delilah asked, watching as Emile sighed.

“Sadly, we ‘ave not found any sign of the skills we possess. We were worried that she would be upset but she’s handling it well for someone her age. We’re mostly worried about keeping them safe. Fleur has already been attacked at a friend’s house.” Emile said, Lucas and Delilah looking at him in alarm.

“As Minister my family is already at risk. Templars ’ad discovered where Fleur was staying and attacked when she was outside running. She fought them off and three of her guards managed to capture the man who attacked her.” He explained, the others nodding with relief though they still looked troubled.

“How did he find out where she was?” Lucas asked, concern in his voice as Brigitte shifted.

“We guessed that they might have been scop ing out the area and saw her.” She explained.

Meanwhile on the dancefloor, Fleur found herself impressed by Harry as he expertly twirled her around the floor. She spotted her sister dancing with Dean and the dark skinned boy was always close by. While she expected that this would make her feel stifled, it was reassuring in a way, even though she knew that she had more experience than both boys.

“You’ve taken me by surprise, ‘eir Othello. I didn’t expect someone your age to dance so well.” She said, looking down at her dance partner.
“Well, my parents were determined to teach me how to dance. I don’t want to embarrass any potential partner I may have.” Harry said, a cheeky grin on his face as Fleur laughed.

“Oh you will be trouble when you’re older.” She laughed, making Harry chuckle.

“Well, I do have a reputation to uphold. My father was one of the biggest pranksters in Hogwarts and so were my godfather and honorary uncle.” Harry said, Fleur looking at him with interest.

Fleur listened as Harry told her about the Marauders and the pranks they had played in school. She was surprised in finding out that Harry was actually Harry Potter aka the Boy-Who-Lived. When she had heard about him, she had always thought that the celebrity would be…well a brat. That he would be like many celebrities around the world who were too full of themselves and thought everyone should worship the ground they walked on. Instead, here was a kind, funny and thoughtful boy that would go far in the world. She knew that he would inherit not only the immense Potter fortune but would also inherit the Othello fortune and likely become the head of the B.M.A. Any woman would be lucky to catch his attention and would likely have their hands full. As the eldest daughter of the French Minister and of the leader of the French Magical Assassin Brotherhood, she knew of the weight that rested on his shoulders as the same weight was on her own.

Their dance was suddenly interrupted by the lights flickering and going out. Everyone froze; their eyes wide as they looked around. The subtle shaking of the manor seemed to kick people into gear. Balls of light appeared and floated in the as people began calling orders. Dean was beside Harry and Fleur in a flash, little Gabby in his arms and on his hip as she clung to him. Harry looked around the rush of bodies before he caught sight of Amanda looking for them. Taking Fleur and Dean’s hands, he pulled in them in Amanda’s direction, letting the Master Assassin pull them over to one of the walls.

“What’s going on?” Harry asked, watching as people rushed around the ballroom.

“We’re under attack. It’s suspected to be a group from the Magical Templars. Your father has ordered all the children, pregnant, elderly and non-Assassins to get to the safe room.” Amanda explained, watching as Hector hurried over with Eliza.

“I can get them there. There’s a hidden passage here in the ballroom that leads through the manor and down to the safe room.” Fleur said, her sister nodding even though she looked terrified.

“Père made sure we knew the route.” Gabby confirmed, watching as Hector and Amanda looked at each other.

“Go to mum and dad. Dean and I can get there on our own. We’ll keep each other safe.” Harry urged, watching as the pair faltered.

“Go!” He ordered, making the pair nod before sprinting off through the crowds.

“Come.” Fleur said, ensuring that they were all holding onto each other before she led the way to a corner of the ballroom.

Harry and Dean called out to young children and those who were pregnant, elderly and non-Assassins. They soon had a decent group and, surprisingly, a few assassins who deemed the group too large for four young Assassins to guard on their own. Fleur pressed her hand against a section of wall and pushed with her magic, causing the panel to flash before it seemed to dissolve. The adults soon had their wands lit to provide light as they hurried into the passage as the manor shook once more.
“Ze wards must be falling.” Fleur said, her accent thickening due to her increasing fear.

“Don’t worry. The Templars made a mistake in attacking a manor full of Assassins.” Harry said, conviction in his voice as the blonde looked back at him.

“I ‘ope you are right.” Fleur said.

-HARRY-

“Hector?! Amanda?! Where are the children?” Delilah asked, shucking off her dress and hurriedly pulling on her armor that one of the Othello House Elves brought.

“Fleur, Dean and Harry are getting to the safe room through a hidden passage here in the ballroom. Eliza and Gabrielle are with them and they’ve called out to others to follow. I know a few assassins followed to help.” Hector said, Amanda nodding as she took one of the swords and strapped it to her side.

“Young Hawk ordered us to come to you and Lucas.” She added, watching as Delilah looked torn between being angry and being grateful.

“Emile and Brigitte are in the ward stone room. They’re trying to keep the wards up long enough for us to be ready for the attackers. House Elves have reported that at least two dozen armed Templars have surrounded the place. House Elves are also popping in with armor and weapons. Emile has opened the armory to us as well. He’s also sent for reinforcements from the brotherhood here.” Delilah explained, hurriedly pulling on her cloak after attaching her hidden blades to her wrists.

“Madame, the last of the unarmed are out of the ballroom.” An Assassin said, skidding to a stop beside Delilah.

“Good. Empty the main hall and have ambush sights on the upper floors. Use tables as shields in both the dining room and in here. Spread the plan to the other leaders.” She ordered, watching as the Assassin nodded before sprinting off.

It didn’t take long before the Assassins were ready. Half of the group disappeared to the dining room and upturned the massive, solid oak dining table while conjuring marble slabs to reinforce the sides. Smaller groups were dispatched to the upper floors to ambush any Templars that came their way while the final group was held up in the ballroom. They, like in those in the kitchen, created a barrier using the tables and marble slabs. Emile and Bridgette received word that everyone was ready and so they pulled back from the ward stone and apparated to the ballroom. It was only seconds later when a cracking sound filled the air as the wards fell. Outside, two teams of people dressed in white and grey robes advanced on the manor. A red cross was on the breast of their robes while swords were strapped to their sides. The two leaders nodded and split up, one group rushing through the grounds and heading towards the back door while the first group made their way to the front. Pulling out their wands, the groups blasted the doors open and waited until the dust settled before carefully advancing into the manor. Some drew their swords or knives, though they never released their hold on their wands.

Meanwhile, down in the basement inside of a hidden room, Fleur and Harry paced back and forth. The four senior Assassins, one of which was a master, moved among the group; checking to ensure everyone was alright and hadn’t been hurt in the chaos of getting down to the room. The tension in the air was thick as everyone hoped and prayed that the Assassins won against the Templars though the House Elves were preparing to pop them out of the manor if the battle took a turn for the worse. Gabrielle and Eliza were holding onto each other, trying to not to let their fears grab ahold of them too tightly. They may be very young, but they knew that their parents are battling for their lives and
their way of life and the freedom of others. Dean kept a careful watch on the two girls, though he kept glancing at his friend. Oh, he knew that Harry wished to be up there fighting alongside his parents. However, his friend was also smart enough to know that he didn’t stand much of a chance against the Templars. They had years of experience where as he hadn’t even fully begun his weapons training.

“I wish there was something we could do.” Harry groaned, running a hand through his hair in agitation.

“All we can do is wait. We’re not ready for this, ‘Ry.” Dean said, making his friend huff but nod.

The ceiling above them shook, making a few of the children cry out in alarm before they were quickly hushed. Time inside the safe room seemed to crawl by as people huddled together. No one dared to talk; each one of them too frightened and worried about their family and friends above them who were fighting. A few of the House Elves dared to pop out of the safe room and check on what was going on in the rest of the manor, only to return telling them that the fight was continuing or had moved to another area of the manor. Thankfully, none of the Assassins had been killed so far and a few of the Templars had. Dead bodies were quickly placed outside under a glamor by the elves. The House Elves also delivered the news that reinforcements had arrived in the form of groups of Assassins coming from the different surrounding countries. It was a relief, especially to those in the safe room since they knew that their families and loved ones would be a lot safer with more people on their side.

It seemed like an eternity later before one of the House Elves popped into the room and said that Emile gave the all clear. Fleur gladly unlocked the door to the safe room, though she blinked when one of the older Assassins held her back. He looked at her sharply before stepping out. She frowned but followed behind, only to cry out in alarm when a flash of steel entered her vision. Harry saw it all happening in seemingly slow motion. The Assassin in front of Fleur fell to the ground, a dagger sticking out of his neck and his eyes already glazed with death. The sword was headed towards Fleur’s chest, intent of piercing her heart. Harry lunged forward and pulled Fleur back, his own hand extending past the older girl’s body. Magic surrounded his hand, allowing him to grab the blade of stunned Templar. Fleur fell onto her back on the ground, a cry of alarm and fear leaving her when she saw Harry swiftly move into the guard of the Templar. The other three Assassins had already begun moving when Harry thrust his free hand forward, activating the hidden mechanism on the hidden blade he had swiped from a table before they had entered the safe room.

The blade slid through the armor of the Templar and straight into the man’s heart. He looked down at the small boy in shock and horror, meeting steely emerald orbs. Harry flung the sword back as soon as he saw the life leave the Templar’s eyes before pulling his hand free. The other three Assassins stood beside him before one checked on their fallen comrade. One of the Assassins, a female, gently touched Harry’s shoulder and watched as the boy shook. The hidden blade retracted back into its sheath and only then did the woman tighten her grip on his shoulder.

“You did well, Young Hawk. You saved Miss Delacour.” She said, her voice soft as Harry looked at her with wide eyes before he turned and looked at Fleur.

Fleur looked at Harry with wide eyes, taking in the blood on the cuff of his sleeve which had the hidden blade. Swallowing thickly, she stood before darting forward and throwing herself at the younger boy. Harry stumbled but caught himself and wrapped an arm around Fleur, somehow keeping the blood off of her dress. One of the Assassins hurried to the upper levels of the manor and returned a minute later with Delilah and Emile. Delilah swept her son into her arms while Emile held Fleur and Gabrielle close. When Delilah released her son, she cleaned the blood from his sleeve, smiling gently as Harry looked down at her with wide eyes. However, he blinked when Emile knelt
down in front of him; looking the young boy in the eyes.

“Heir Potter-Othello, you selflessly risked your life for the safety of my eldest daughter. The House Delacour owes you a life debt.” He said, bowing his head as Gabrielle and Fleur bowed as well.

“Lord Delacour, there can be no debts between friends. I was only doing what Fleur would’ve done for me if our positions had been reversed.” Harry said, making Emile smile as Fleur and Gabrielle looked at him in surprise and happiness.

Harry went to roll up his sleeve and remove the hidden blade, but Emile stopped him with a gentle hand on top of his.

“You’ve earned the right to wear that, Harrison. May it serve you well in your life.” He said, Harry looking at him with surprise before he nodded and rolled his sleeve back down.

“Come, it’s safe now. The wounded are being tended to in the dining room and everyone else is in the ballroom.” Delilah said, the others in the safe room nodding in relief before they began filing out of the room.

The fallen Assassin was carried on a conjured stretcher after a black shroud was laid over his body. Reaching the main floor of the manor, the evidence of a titanic battle was all around. The doors were being repaired by a few House Elves while others were gathering the weapons on the floor and adding them to a pile. Blood pools and sprays were being cleaned off the floor and walls. Broken furniture and torn paintings and tapestries were being repaired or taken away so they could be replaced or repaired at a later date. Heading to the ballroom, people were soon rushing to their loved ones and families, checking them over or were asking about the people who were being healed. Only a few had been seriously injured and the Assassins had only lost two people while the Templars had been decimated. Those who had been knocked out and bound were being transported to the nearest complex to be interrogated.

Word quickly spread about what had happened outside of the safe room and people were soon looking at Harry with shock, wonder and approval. Lucas was surprised but proud of his son, especially when Emile told him about Harry’s statement when confronted with the life debt. Fleur was hard pressed to leave Harry’s side and she and Gabrielle were constantly thanking him and hugging him much to his embarrassment. Brigitte hugged Harry tightly when she learned that he saved her daughter and told him that he would always be welcome in their home. Harry was bright red throughout it all, though he held himself tall with pride as many Assassins walked over and congratulated him on his quick actions and swift response to the threat of a young female and the death of a fellow Assassin. All of the heads of the different factions met in Emile’s study for a quick meeting, something had to be done about this attack; especially since it likely meant that they had a spy in one of their ranks as this was a private party.

Fleur managed to lead Harry away from the ballroom after receiving an okay from her mother. She led Harry to the women’s parlor, which made the young boy blush something fierce. Men were never, never allowed inside of the women’s parlor unless invited in by the Lady of the manor. However, since Brigitte had given Fleur the okay he guessed the woman knew what her eldest daughter was up to.

’Arry, you saved my life this evening.” Fleur said, turning and looking down at the boy as he blinked.

“Fleur, you would’ve done the same thing.” He said, shifting as Fleur gently cupped his cheek.

“Still, that was a very brave and a very stupid thing to do. You could’ve gotten hurt or killed by that
monster.” She said, watching as Harry huffed.

“I just…I just did what I had heard of what my dad had done once. I knew that it was possible to use your magic to form a barrier between an object. I figured it would stop—”

Harry’s eyes widened when Fleur bent down and kissed him; his body stiffening. Now, as a young boy at the tender age of six, Harry still thought of girls as ‘icky’ and found any romantic act rather revolting. He had already begun shying away whenever his mum tried to kiss his cheek or forehead and don’t even get him started on whenever Eliza wanted to kiss him. Before he could really react, Fleur pulled away with a faint blush dusting her cheeks.

“W-What was that for?” Harry asked, using his sleeve to wipe his lips as Fleur smiled.

“To thank you, of course. I can already tell that you will become a very noble and powerful man, Harry. Besides, how many boys can say they’ve been kissed by a half-Veela and the Minister’s daughter?” She asked cheekily, making Harry grimace.

“Still…” He muttered making the older girl giggle behind her hand.

Harry huffed and stalked out of the room, still wiping at his mouth as he made his way back to the ballroom. Lucas raised an eyebrow when he saw his son. He walked over and smirked at the frowning boy, his amusement increasing when Harry told him what had happened. Lucas laughed at the affronted tone his son had, though his laughter increased when Fleur walked into the ballroom and Harry hurried away as if she would suddenly decide to kiss him again. People milled around until everyone was healed enough to leave and the wards had recharged and stabilized. For safety and since the family doubted they could fall asleep until they had the wards strengthened, the Delacours headed to the main complex where most of the French Assassins lived. After leaving Delacour manor, Harry headed up to his room where he pulled his coat and vest off before rolling up his sleeves.

The hidden blade was rather clunky; having been designed for an adult rather than a child, but the charms that had been built into the weapon had resized it as soon as he had put it on. He had heard of some Assassins who got their hidden blades from previous family members and the weapons could be refitted to their exact measurements. An Assassin earned their hidden blades after they complete their training which was normally after the age of sixteen or seventeen. Looking at the blade, he certainly didn’t feel like he earned it, even though Emile told him otherwise.

“Your parents told me what happened.”

Harry spun around, his eyes widening when he saw an older man with greying black hair and sharp green eyes. Bowing, Harry closed his eyes and listened as man walked further into the room. He only opened his eyes when calloused fingers grabbed his wrist lightly and brought up the hidden blade for inspection.

“A decent blade though nicked and slightly rusted from age and disuse.” He mused, Harry’s eyes widening slightly as he looked at the man.

“This will need to be repaired and customized once you’ve completed your training, of course. Though, I want to know why you grabbed this in the first place.” The man said, looking sharply at Harry who swallowed thickly.

“I…forgive me Master Gallagher. I would’ve never grabbed it but something in the pit of my stomach demanded that I have a weapon. Everyone had always told me to trust my gut and that’s what I did.” Harry said, his voice rushed as the man raised an eyebrow.
“Well it’s a good thing you listened to your instincts, boy. You saved the life of a young girl and possibly everyone else inside that safe room. Just don’t let it go to yer head, lad. You still have much to go until yer ready to use this.” The man said, Harry nodding in understanding.

Richard Gallagher was one of the weapons specialists whom trained Novice Assassins how to handle and use different weapons. He also ran the blacksmith shop on the estate which was set up near his cabin. He was just as gruff as his appearance and wasn’t known to sugar coat anything. However, he was a master blacksmith and a highly skilled Assassin. Richard was built like a draft horse with broad shoulders, thick muscular arms, a wide chest, thick muscular legs and was rather tall which only added to his intimidation factor. Another ‘quirk’ of his was that the man was highly proud of his Scottish heritage so it wasn’t all that strange seeing him wearing a kilt whereas all the rest of the assassins commonly wear pants…though Kano was known to wear kimonos during her ‘lazy’ days.

Harry accepted the hidden blade back and promised not to let his ego get the best of him. Bowing his head, he watched as the blacksmith left the room. Looking down at the hidden blade, Harry swallowed thickly. He carefully cleaned the weapon before calling a House Elf. The small creature brought him back a piece of silk which he used to wrap the weapon before storing it safely in the top drawer of his bedside table. Once that was done, he headed to his bathroom while stripping down, intent on showering and heading to bed after such a trying day.

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August 10th, 1987

Diagon Alley

Diagon Alley bustled with Witches and Wizards of all walks of life and every age. Many parents were already taking their children shopping for the new school year. Young children were running around their parents and families, laughing, squealing and begging to go inside certain stores while their parents/guardians tried to keep everything under control. However, the largest and most rambunctious group had to be the Weasley family. Molly Weasley was the ringleader of her brood. She was the shortest besides her youngest two children and was a…pleasantly plump woman with curly bright red hair, freckles and deep blue eyes. Her eldest son, William ‘Bill’ Weasley was headed into his Sixth Year of Hogwarts while the second oldest: Charlie was heading into his Fourth. Finally, the third oldest: Percival ‘Percy’, was finally beginning his Hogwarts education. Molly sighed as the twins, Fred and George, instantly headed towards M&P Jokes and Games. It was their favorite store in the whole alley except for Gambol and Japes. Honestly, if she was being honest with herself she preferred M&P since they had puzzles and other games instead of just prank items.

When Sirius Black and Remus Lupin had opened the shop she had been shocked. Molly knew both young men from their time serving in the Order of the Phoenix. Sirius had been an Auror alongside James Potter but after You-Know-Who was destroyed by young Harry, Sirius had quit the Auror department and started up the shop. She easily remembered the advertisement that had been in the Daily Prophet for people looking for work when he and Remus had opened up their manufacturing plant. Their logo was a stag, grim and a werewolf and it was on all of their products so people knew it was a genuine product since Gambol and Japes had begun trying to sell the same things as M&P. If one were to ask Molly for her opinion on the store she personally thought that Lord Black could’ve done something better with his time than a game and joke shop.

“Mum, we’re gonna head to M&P!” Fred said, making Molly frown at them and narrow her eyes.

“Fred, George, we’re here to do school shopping.” She said, sighing when the twins instantly started begging for her to let them go.
“I’ll take them, Mum.” Bill said, smiling indulgently at the twins as Molly looked up at him.

“But Bill-“

“I already have my robes and books. It’ll only take a few minutes to replenish my potions supply. I know you need to get Perc his trunk and bag.” Bill said, watching as his mum sighed before nodding.

“Allright. Just make sure they don’t get up to anything.” Molly said, frowning as the twins whooped and grabbed Bill’s hands to drag him off in the direction of the large shop.

Fred and George eagerly pushed open the double doors to the shop; their bright brown eyes alight with wonder and excitement. The right of the store was dedicated to pranks with items such as Dungbombs, whoopee cushions, hand buzzers, portable swamps, Skiving Snackboxes and a whole line of other pranks. The left side of the store was purely dedicated to games, puzzles and other activities that families and friends could play together. Bill gave the twins a warning; informing them that they can each have one item from both sides of the store so long as they behaved before he headed towards the left side of the store. Looking through the different puzzles, Bill smiled when he saw a few really nice ones and made a note to get them for his mum and Ginny for Christmas. He and Charlie had been working at some of the shops here in the alley during the summers to help their parents out with bills and such even though their mum and dad were hard pressed to take their wages from them.

Their dad had earned a small raise recently though things were still rough for them. Thankfully Bill had managed to gain a rather nice position in Gringotts and his boss: Raggedtooth, had expressed an interest in his grades at Hogwarts. Bill had admitted his interest in becoming a Curse Breaker and Raggedtooth had given him books to study from in his off time and told him what they were looking for in potential employees. He’d have to study his arse off in his last two years and get N.E.W.T.s in Potions, Defense, Ancient Runes, Charms and Transfiguration, but he had a good feeling about this. His O.W.L. scores had been high and he’d always done rather well in his classes. He knew that Charlie was already dead set on working in the Dragon Reserve in Romania. They had gone there earlier this summer as a family vacation and Charlie had been down at the reserve everyday asking questions about the Dragons and asking what he’d need to do to become a Dragon Tamer.

Of course their mum wasn’t too happy about their dream careers. She wanted them close to home and in respectable positions in the Ministry like their dad. So far, only Percy had shown a vague interest in the Ministry. He was constantly asking their dad about the different departments and what their functions were. Fred and George were interested in working for Lord Black and Remus Lupin and possibly opening their own joke shop in the future. Of course their mum would be completely against that, but their dad was always encouraging them to do what they loved and not let anyone hold them back. Ron…well Bill was worried about his youngest brother. Ron had zero ambition unless it revolved around chess, Quidditch and food. He was rather slow in their lessons and Bill knew that their parents have struggled in getting Ron to actually pay attention. Their mum taught all of them reading, writing, basic math and other skills they’d need before Hogwarts. However, with Ron it took him longer to learn how to read and write than any of the others; including little Ginny.

“Excuse us!”

Bill jumped back as two young boys ran past and out the door. Raising an eyebrow, he chuckled and shook his head. He knew that Lord Black and Mister Lupin hired children between seven and ten to run errands for them in the alley such as delivering packages and the catalogs. He knew that the twins were interested in getting jobs as errand boys, but their parents were unsure about them having jobs at such a young age. Turning back to the shelves, Bill spotted a few things that Ron would like
along with a few that even Percy might enjoy. That boy was much to...stuffy in Bill’s opinion, but there wasn’t much that could be done to get Percy away from his books and outside besides chores. Shaking his head, Bill wandered over to the Muggle section, grinning when he saw a number of things that’d interest their dad.

Meanwhile, Harry and Dean laughed as they hurried down the alley. They skillfully dodged people and other children, apologizing for near misses. Harry nodded to Dean and they split up, Harry headed down Merlin Street while Dean headed down Morgana Street. Harry ducked underneath a pair of workers carrying a few things and ducked into Masters Trunks and Bags. According to what Uncle Remus said, Lady Woodall would be in there. Taking in a few deep breaths, he looked around and smiled when he saw a young woman with white hair and rather fetching deep green eyes.

“Lady Woodall?” He asked, making the woman turn and look at him.

“Yes?” She asked, watching as Harry walked over and bowed.

“Your package from M&P.” He said, pulling out a shrunken, wrapped package.

“Oh! Thank you.” She said, accepting the package from the boy with a bright smile.

“Three puzzles, one game of Life, one game of Non-Magical Scrabble and one game of limited edition of Monopoly.” Harry recited, smiling as the woman nodded happily.

“Here’s a tip for you, Harry. That was a lot faster than I expected. Keep up the good work.” She said, reaching into her coin purse and pulling out some money.

“Thank you, Lady Woodall. We hope you shop at Moony and Padfoot’s again!” Harry said, happily accepting the tip before darting outside once more.

“Such a polite boy.” Lady Woodall cooed, the owner of the shop chuckling.

“He and that friend of his are always running around. It’s the perfect job for them.” He said, going back to ringing up the woman’s purchases as she giggled.

Unbeknownst to them, Molly and the remaining children of her brood had witnessed the entire interaction. Molly hadn’t thought twice of the young boy who had run inside the shop; figuring that he was looking for his parents or was just wanting to escape the crowds of the streets. Hearing that the lad was actually the Harry Potter shocked her. In her mind, Harry had black hair which was messy and stuck up at odd angles just as his father’s while he had Lily’s bright emerald eyes. However, this Harry had shaggy black hair streaked with blonde and shockingly bright emerald green eyes. Not only that, but the lad had been wearing rather high-end clothing that had obviously been tailored to fit him. She had been trying to get a meeting with Lord and/or Lady Othello to speak with them about a possible betrothal between her Ginny and the lad. Albus had told her that the two would be perfect for each other and she agreed. Even though her young Ginny has bright brown eyes instead of green, she was still a little spitfire like Lily Potter had been and had the same red mane of hair...though Lily’s had been a shade or two darker.

Of course...there was the fact that Harry stood to inherit the titles to two of the wealthiest families in their world. Now, don’t get her wrong, she loved Arthur and supported him and his job. However, her husband was content in his department and wasn’t actively seeking out a higher paying position. Yes, she made due with what they have in way of money, but she couldn’t deny that she was used to a certain degree of...finery. Being so poor that she had to make her children and herself clothing or purchase clothes from the secondhand shop had been a hard pill for the once proud young woman to swallow. If Ginny were to marry Harry then she would have access to Harry’s wealth and Ginny
would ensure her husband helped them out and she wouldn’t have to suffer through the indignity of having to deal with secondhand things any longer.

-I’ll have to plan a few things.- Molly thought, guiding her brood over to the secondhand trunks so they could get Percy a trunk and bag for school.

Ron would need to become the lad’s best friend; a brother figure even. That would give them a small setup with the lad and Ron would be able to invite Harry over for the holidays. Heck, Ron might even be invited to Othello Estate if everything went well! Molly knew of her youngest son’s jealousy and his desire to no longer be hard for money; the boy had taken after her in that aspect. Ron would also be able to keep all the other potential leeches away from Harry that might try to gain the boy’s favor before they could. Not only that, but he could keep any potential girlfriends away before Ginny attended Hogwarts. Her darling daughter already knew about the lad’s fame and fortune. Arthur had found a few banned Harry Potter books and had brought them home to read to Ginny and the young girl was completely enthralled with the hero.

-There’s plenty of work that still needs to be done. But there is still time for that to get done.- She thought, sighing as Percy looked over the small selection before grudgingly choosing a slightly battered trunk.

“Mummy, was that boy really Harry Potter?” Ginny asked, drawing her mother’s attention.

“Yes, sweetie, that was.” She said, smiling as Ginny looked towards the front door with wide eyes as a faint blush dusted her cheeks.

“But…he didn’t look anything like the books said he did? He doesn’t have glasses or wild hair.” She said, frowning in confusion.

“Well, sweetheart, you know that books can get some things wrong at times. He was still rather handsome though.” Molly said, smiling warmly as Ginny blushed deeply and nodded.

Ron scowled as he thought of the other boy. He had seen the clothing Harry wore and it was obviously made of finer material than anything he’d ever worn. Not only that, but Harry was getting money! Of course that stuck out to him more than anything else and, surprisingly, an idea formed in his mind.

“Hey, Mum, could I get a job working with Harry?” He asked, making his mother, brothers and sister look at him in surprise.

“You want to be an errand boy, Ron?” Percy asked, frowning as Ron looked at him.

Molly, however, was already thinking of the possibilities. Ron would meet Harry through the job and they might even become friends faster than she had planned! While the idea of having her son work for a…a Werewolf wasn’t too comforting, she knew that with the new laws in place her son would be safe from any harm. Besides, Remus had always been a kind, if not quiet young man. He was certainly more responsible than Sirius when they were younger.

“We’ll stop by the store when we’ve finished our shopping.” Molly said, Ron nodding as Ginny beamed in happiness and excitement.

After purchasing Percy’s trunk and schoolbag, they headed out and continued with their shopping. Thankfully, with Arthur’s raise, they were able to purchase all of their children new wands instead of having to hand down old wands. Both she and Arthur knew how important it was for a Wizard or Witch to have their own wand, even if another wand was compatible. Bill and the twins rejoined
them, to which Molly raised an eyebrow when she saw that the twins each had a shopping bag. She scolded Bill for spoiling them, though he simply shrugged and passed out an item to his other siblings. Ginny gushed when she saw the puzzle Bill had gotten her while Ron was in awe over the new Wizards Chess set Bill had gotten. Charlie grinned when he saw the miniature Dragon Bill had gotten him. The model was charmed to act exactly like a real life Dragon, though the flames it breathed were harmless. Percy received a crossword book, which he was surprised and pleased with; even more so when he read the back and learned that once the puzzles were completed they erased themselves and became more and more complex.

It took an hour longer before they finished their shopping, in which Molly also purchased a few outfits for herself, Arthur, Ron and Ginny. Once that was completed and their purchases were shrunken down, Molly led the way to M&P, to which Charlie hurriedly told Bill and the twins that Ron wanted to be an errand boy. This shocked Bill and the twins, even more so since all of them knew how lazy their youngest brother was. Being an errand boy required one to run around the alley and associate with anyone and everyone, including people like the Malfoys and Parkinsons. Inside the store, Molly quickly located Sirius on the floor setting up a few new displays. Calling his name, she watched as Sirius blinked and turned.

“Hello, Lady Weasley.” Sirius said, inclining his head towards the woman.

“Lord Black, I was wondering if my youngest son might be able to be one of your errand boys for the store.” Molly said, making Sirius raise an eyebrow on how blunt she was.

Looking at Ronald, Sirius mentally cringed. He could see the greed in the lad’s eyes as Ron looked around the store and also took in the slight baby fat that still clung to Ron’s gangly frame. Lucas and Delilah had also told him and Remus about Molly’s persistence of trying to set up ‘play dates’ between Harry and Ronald. He was under no illusion as to what Molly was really after. She was already looking for a way to get her youngest son involved in his godson’s life. However, he was glad that he could turn her down and actually mean it instead of lying to the woman.

“I’m sorry, Lady Weasley. We already have five errand boys and girls. We don’t have an opening right now.” He said, watching as Molly frowned lightly while Ron looked at him and scowled.

“Surely there’s an opening for Ronald.” She tried, making Sirius mentally roll his eyes while he shook his head.

“I’m sorry, but there’s not. We’re reaching the end of our peak season and we’ll actually be cutting back the hours of our errand boys and girls. We simply don’t have an opening and won’t for some time.” He said, struggling not to sneer as Molly huffed softly.

“Very well.” She said, turning and leading the group away from the young man while Ron scowled and glared at the floor.

Sirius sighed in relief as the doors to the store closed behind the woman. He’d pass on a word of warning to his godson about Molly. No doubt she saw Harry running around the alley or had overheard a conversation which led her here. He knew that Molly normally detested the idea of any of her children working for a place that wasn’t ‘respectable’ and a joke shop would qualify for that. However, if she was willing to make an exception for her youngest son because Harry worked there then there was no telling what else the woman would do to gain Harry’s favor. Of course he doesn’t really have to worry too much about his godson. Harry’s been busy with training, his lessons and school. He’s also, thankfully, made friends outside the Brotherhood so he’s also been busy hanging out with them.

-I have a feeling Molly and Ronald might be trouble in the future- He mused, turning his attention
back to the displays.

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Childhood Part 2

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Harry Potter and co. don’t belong to me. Assassin’s Creed and co. don’t belong to me. I’m just taking some credit for the plot and original characters. In no way, shape or form am I making money from this.

Main Story Warnings: A.U.-severe-, characters are OOC, canon is only a minor guideline, crossover, swearing, violence, gore, character death, Grey!Harry, Assassin!Harry, modern technology, OC’s abound, Ron!Molly!Ginny!Bashing, Dumbledore!Bashing

Beta: Inuyasha-loves-Hanyou-Kagome

Edited On: 9/29/17

Pairings: James/Lily, Sirius/OFC, Remus/Tonks, Harry/Luna, Neville/Hermione, Dean/Millicent

Author’s Note: Alright, so many of you who had read one of my very first stories called Vampire’s Kiss will remember that Harry’s familiar had been a Fire Lizard. Well, I’ve decided to bring them back but drastically altered them. They’ll still be called Fire Lizards but will hold different abilities than what they had in that story and will play a rather interesting and important role with the assassins. I hope you all enjoy what I’ve been doing and what I still plan on do. Again, I’m still up in the air about Dumbledore for the most part. Any other suggestions about him are welcome though again, keep in mind that Harry won’t be allies with him. Now, this should be the last chapter detailing Harry and Dean’s lives before Hogwarts. Next chapter will see the boys off to school and how people react to this version of their hero.

Challenge: DZ2’s Way of the Warrior challenge. For more information look to the first chapter or DZ2’s forums.

[Parseltongue]

Emphasis on words/Spells

Text

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October 1st, 1987
Stepping outside and onto the porch of their house, Cassie looked around the grounds of the Othello Estate. People of every age and ethnicity wandered around; some dressed in their ‘Assassin’ garb while others were dressed in casual clothing. Many children, her girls included, were laughing and running around or playing on the nearby playground. Seeing her girls having fun brought a small smile to Cassie’s face, though that smile was slightly strained. Looking to the right, she caught sight of Dean, Harry and a few other children who were around their age at a large climbing wall. An older man stood near the climbing wall, his eyes following a young girl as she slowly scaled the wall without any kind of harness. The sight made Cassie tense up, her eyes seeking out her eldest and watching as he called encouragement to the girl as he stood next in line to climb the wall.

The day that the Othello’s visited her and told her about her children’s talents had changed her life. She suddenly found herself thrown into a completely different world where almost everything she had known growing up was picked up and tossed into the rubbish bin. Was she glad that there was nothing wrong with her children? Of course. Any parent would be overjoyed in learning that the strange happenings that seemed to happen to their children were completely normal and expected in a certain ‘circle’. However the idea of Dean being an Assassin had actually been rather hard for her to wrap her mind around. Yes, she had acted like it hadn’t been anything to worry about, but that was the actual reason why it had taken her two weeks before she accepted the Othello’s offer. She had been visited by the Tonks’, Sirius Black and his friend Remus Lupin, along with two other couples who had children who were Assassins in training.

It had been alarming when she learned that Templars would know what to look out for in an Assassin. Learning that her son could be targeted by the Templars and that they could even try to convince her son to join them was rather terrifying; especially when she learned more about the whole Assassin/Templar battle. Even though she had been reassured that Dean would be safe in his training and by all of them moving onto Othello Estate, a part of her still wondered if she made the right choice. She would be letting her son take lessons that would eventually give him the skills to kill people without being caught. That was something she still struggled to cope with. She had always imagined Dean becoming a doctor, artist, engineer or something equally as normal as any other person. The introduction of magic just added to that list as she did some further research into the various occupations that the Magical world offered its citizens. Now, her son would be expected to take…missions and travel in order to get information for the Brotherhood or even stop the advancement of the Templars and their movements.

“Alright, Thomas-Woods, you’re up.”

Cassie blinked and watched as Dean stepped up to the climbing wall. Her heart began pounding in her chest as she watched her son dust his hands before beginning his climb. Yes, the trainers had assured her that there were charms in place on all of the training equipment that’ll prevent harm, but that didn’t seem to settle her nerves. As she watched Dean climb, she flinched when her son’s foot slipped and he hurriedly found another foothold. She doubted that she would ever be completely okay with her son’s training, even years from now.

-I wish you were here, Evan.- Cassie thought, her eyes closed as she thought of her departed husband.

Evan had been her rock through all the insanity of having three children. He had the most accepting of Dean’s accidental magic when it had begun showing. He was the one who showed her that the best way to go through life was to have an open mind and to try and see every possibility through the eyes of others. When Evan had been diagnosed with cancer it had devastated all of them. However Evan had faced his illness bravely and with a smile on his face; even on his lowest days when he didn’t feel like getting out of bed in the morning. His loss had struck them hard and Dean had stepped up in an attempt to fill his father’s shoes despite his young age. It made her wonder if he had
been so willing to begin his training so he could learn more skills to protect her and his siblings.

Shaking herself, Cassie looked over at her son, her eyes widening when she saw Dean near the top of the climbing wall. The other children cheered and chanted Dean’s name as he climbed the last few feet before smacking his hand on the top of the wall. She noticed that quite a few adults were watching as well; their eyes locked on Dean as he slowly climbed back down the wall.

“He shows a lot of promise.”

“I’ve only seen Harrison reach the top and that was just recently.”

“Perhaps they found another prodigy?”

“It’ll be interesting watching him as he grows older. Perhaps Harrison will have some true competition for the title as the leader of the Brotherhood.”

Cassie blinked at hearing that, her eyes wide as she looked at the Assassin who had spoken. She was still learning more about Assassins and the Brotherhood but some things she had already learned. Andromeda had been a fountain of information and she had found a good friend in the woman. Andromeda had explained that the leader of the Brotherhood was chosen by way of a competition. The competition was actually a mission where each possible candidate went on a mission with two other Assassins. While the mission was overseen by Master Assassins anything could happen on that mission. She had heard stories of Assassins who had been killed on those missions and on everyday missions that were supposed to be simple information gathering. She feared that she’d one day learn that Dean had been gravely injured or even killed on a mission should he become an Assassin. The only thing that allowed her to relax is the fact that every trainee Assassin was given the option of furthering their training and becoming an actual Assassin or having a kind of special charm placed on them so it was impossible for them to speak of their training and the memories of that training would disappear if someone attempted to enter their minds without permission.

A small part of her doubted that Dean would back down from becoming an Assassin, but there was always a possibility. Lucas and Delilah had told her that some trainee and novice Assassins had decided to cease their training and lived their lives free of missions and most danger. However, those people were still carefully guarded by other Assassins because there was always a chance that a Templar might attempt to kidnap them and try to learn some of the things that they knew from their time as an Assassin. She could see the dangers of both sides of the coin and she honestly didn’t know which she preferred. It was already bad enough that her daughters had protections placed in their minds already because they lived on the Estate.

Looking back at her son and the other trainees, she watched as Harry quickly scaled the climbing wall. That’s not to say he was reckless; just that he was actually reaching up above and beyond the foot and handholds that he should’ve been able to reach. She cringed when Harry actually jumped towards a handhold; her eyes widening as he caught it and pulled himself up. Oh, she knew that the trainees would be learning how to scale anything that could potentially be climbed. She’d seen other Assassins actually climbing up the church that was stationed at the very back of the property. She had been alarmed when she had seen them climbing it, but Father Hendrik had smiled and calmly explained that it was normal for them to practice their climbing on the ‘public’ buildings or their own houses. She was just glad that none have climbed her own house though she had heard the telltale soft thudding of people running across the roof at random times throughout the day and evening.

Cassie sighed and shook her head before moving over to the porch swing and sitting down. Yes, the pros of having moved and accepted what her children and, more specifically, what her son was, heavily outweighed the cons; but those cons were still there. Her new job at the clinic run by a few magical supporters of the Brotherhood was wonderful. She had been worried that she wouldn’t fit in
since due to being a Squib, but she discovered rather quickly that she could still brew potions and could help the Healers with their work. They had trained her rather quickly on how to work the new medical equipment and which potions and salves were used for what ailments. Seeing how quickly the spells, potions and salves worked had amazed her and it drove home how much good the clinic did for people.

Not only that but her hours were solid and constant instead of having her guessing when she’d have to go in next. Yes, she did work on the weekends at times, but she’d always home a few hours after noon. She was able to spend more and more time with her children and she also had more time to dedicate to herself and her own hobbies. Also, she knew nearly all of the people who lived on the estate and she was comfortable in leaving her children in their care. Andromeda, Robin and David were just three of the people who were always willing to take care of Sam. Her daughters loved their new friends, though she had begun seeing some jealousy whenever Dean headed off to his training. Her daughters were still young enough where they didn’t fully understand Dean’s training but at the same time they saw it as him getting special treatment. Thankfully she was able to tell them that they’d be going through their own special training when they got a little bit older.

“Morning, Cassie.” Andromeda said, smiling as the dark skinned woman looked up at her.

“Oh! Morning, Andie. How are you?” Cassie asked, smiling gently as Andromeda walked over and sat down next to her.

“I’m good. Ted’s at work and I have the day off. I just got a letter from Nymphadora.” Andromeda said, smiling as she thought of her daughter while Cassie smiled warmly.

“Oh? How is she doing?”

“She’s doing well. She’s happy with her classes and her training. She’s taking Ancient Runes, Arithmancy and Healing. It’s her second year with the extra classes and she loves them.” Andromeda said, chuckling as Cassie smiled.

“Is she still set on becoming an Auror?” Cassie asked, watching as Andromeda nodded.

“Yes, she is. Not just because of the Brotherhood either. She’s always had a strong sense of justice and it’s only increased since she’s begun her training.”

“I have no doubt that she’ll do well as an Auror.” Cassie said.

“Her balance and grace has improved greatly since we’ve come here. Nymphadora used to be very clumsy unless she was really focused on something. It’s thanks to the few Metamorphmagi that are here. They’ve helped her so much in teaching her how to control her abilities and improving her grace. I never would’ve imagined that her lack of grace was because of the constant transformations that were happening in her body.” Andromeda said, shaking her head as Cassie listened with great interest.

“Ted is talking about perhaps letting her be a clerk for the Ministry when she turns fifteen. It would be a good idea, really. Nymphadora is getting combat training that’ll be vital for her time as an Auror. There are two Assassins in the Auror department so they’re always looking out for more who want to join that department or even the Department of Mysteries.” She added.

Cassie looked over at her son thoughtfully, watching as the other trainee Assassins scaled the wall. A few stumbled and fell, though they were caught well before they hit the ground. Everyone was given encouragement and were cheered on by their fellow trainees. She watched as the group was dismissed by their trainer once they all had two turns climbing the wall and many of the children split
off to go do whatever they wanted to do. Harry and Dean, however, laughed and joked around as they headed towards the stables. She had been pleased when her son began learning different skills and lessons besides ones that were solely about parkour, stealth and evading. He was learning how to speak French and there was also the intent to offer him the chance to learn a second language. She was happy that they were letting her son choose some of his lessons, though they made things like horseback riding and history mandatory.

Dean had always enjoyed learning and seeing her son soak up his lessons like a sponge made her happy. He was in an environment that encouraged him to learn and expand his understanding of the world around him. All of the children were encouraged to wander around and explore the forest on their own. However, that didn’t mean that they were in danger. Older Assassins were constantly patrolling the grounds and every child knew where the ward lines were. Shaking her head, Cassie sighed softly as Andromeda looked at her.

“Let me guess, you’re still having second thoughts?” She asked, understanding in her voice as the other woman winced lightly and nodded sheepishly.

“I know it’s…horrible for me to think badly about these people. They’re some of the kindest, most loyal and thoughtful people I’ve ever known. However—”

“However you also know that they’re trained killers. You’re having trouble associating the people you know with what you’ve always thought Assassins would be. Ted and I still struggle, Cassie. It’s…difficult knowing that our daughter will one day learn how to kill people. It goes against what we’ve been taught all our lives. However, the threat of the Templars is too great to ignore and we needed the protection provided by the Brotherhood. It has taken time but we’re getting used to it. We’re getting used to Nymphadora’s training and the fact she’s an Assassin.” Andromeda explained, Cassie listening closely as she nodded softly.

“I guess…everything’s been building up. I’ve never thought that magic could possibly be real. I mean…it’s something in fairytales and something that’s joked about and turned into fantasy. Suddenly, I learn that magic is real! It’s an actual thing and my family is connected to this…completely different world. Not only that, but all four of my children have the ability to use magic.” Cassie said, her voice strained as Andromeda listened.

“Then, in the same day, I learn that my eldest son has the abilities to become an Assassin. It’s…it’s so hard to wrap my mind around everything, even now. My children love it here and all of them are flourishing thanks to their lessons and new friends. However…I almost feel like an…an intruder.” Cassie lamented, looking over at her friend as Andromeda wrapped an arm around her shoulders.

“Cassie…have you ever seen a counselor? Especially after your husband’s death?” Andromeda asked gently, making Cassie frown lightly as she shook her head.

“N-No. I used to go to counseling sessions with my husband when he was going through chemotherapy. The kids went through grief counseling but…I had a hard enough time paying for that and the bills after Evan’s death.” Cassie muttered, her voice strained as Andromeda held her close.

“Cassie, I know it’s hard. You’re a single mother of four wonderful children. I…I can’t imagine what it’s like being in your position and I’m in awe over how you’ve held yourself together for so long. Though I do think it would be a good thing if you spoke to a counselor about all of this. Just having someone to talk to and unburden yourself to. There are three counselors here, one of which is a Muggleborn so they have a pretty good understanding of what you’re going through. There’s also a counselor who’s a Muggle so she knows exactly what you’re going through.” Andromeda said, watching as her friend shifted.
“You really think it’ll do me good?”

“I do, Cassie. You need someone who understands what you’re going through. It’ll help you cope with this and gradually accept it.” Andromeda explained, making Cassie exhale slowly and nod.

“Oh, alright…I-I think it’ll help.”

November 28th, 1987

Harry and Dean looked around Fudge Manor with little interest. Lucas and Delilah had been invited and thus had brought Harry which meant Dean came along as well. Dean took his role as Harry’s bodyguard seriously and the boy even had a few inches on Harry and was beginning to fill out nicely despite the fact he was so young; much to Harry’s annoyance since he hadn’t had a growth spurt in some time. While his parents aren’t very supportive of Minister Fudge, Harry knew that his parents had accepted the invitation to his charity ball because they honestly needed money for the charities they had started. The invitation had also included Harry’s name, meaning that he had practically been forced to attend. Of course Fudge wanted to officially meet the Boy-Who-Lived even though Harry had been in the paper a few times. Shopkeepers and owners hadn’t been very happy when Harry’s lawyer, Nickolas Wilde, had informed them that they weren’t allowed to use Harry’s name or image to promote their goods unless Harry signed a contract with them stating that they could. Of course this stopped many in their tracks and they were forced to change their sale pitch less they find themselves in deep legal trouble.

“Harrison?” Delilah called, watching as Harry turned and looked at her with a raised eyebrow.

“Yeah, Mum?”

“Susan’s over there with her friend Hannah.” Delilah said, nodding over towards a small circular table as Harry’s eyes lit up.

Harry looked over at the table and smiled when he saw a rather shy, auburn haired girl. He knew Susan pretty well thanks to the times when his parents had let him go to Bones Manor. Of course he and Susan hadn’t been alone whenever he visited; it wasn’t proper for a young lady to be alone with a young man. Thankfully, here they wouldn’t be watched too closely given on how populated the ballroom was. Harry headed off towards Susan and her friend with Dean hurrying along behind him. Susan caught sight of them a few feet away, in which her hazel eyes brightened up and she eagerly stood from her seat. Beside her was a rather pretty brown haired girl with dark blue eyes. Harry could only assume that the other girl was Susan’s best friend Hannah Abbott.

“Harry! Dean! It’s good to see you.” Susan gushed, smiling as Harry took her hand and kissed the back of it.

“It’s good to see you again, too, Sue.” Harry said, smiling as she hugged him and then Dean.

“Harry, Dean, this is my best friend Hannah Abbott: heiress of the Ancient and Noble House of Abbott. Hannah, these are my friends: Harrison Potter-Othello of the Most Ancient and Noble Houses of both Potter and Othello and Dean Thomas-Woods of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Woods.” Susan said, smiling brightly as Hannah stood and curtsied towards the two boys.

“It’s an honor to meet you both.” She said, blushing prettily as Harry and Dean kissed the back of her hand.

“And you as well Heiress Abbott.” Dean said, a charming smile on his face as Hannah blushed.
deeply and looked down at the floor.

“How’s your aunt, Sue?” Harry asked.

“Auntie’s good. She’s happy with the number of recruits in the Auror corps. They’re showing more and more promise.” Susan said, smiling proudly as Harry grinned.

“What do your parents do, Heiress Abbott?” Dean asked, making Hannah blink and look up at him.

“Oh, please, call me Hannah or Han. My father’s the head of the Department of Education and my mother is a potions mistress. My dad has been trying to get Lord Dumbledore to fire the History Professor at Hogwarts. The course is currently being taught by a ghost. Not only that, but he’s been trying to convince others that those raised in the Magical world should have Muggle Studies while those raised in the Muggle world should have to take a new course called Wizarding Customs. They would take the courses for the first three years and then they wouldn’t have to take them anymore unless they want to take a refresher course.” Hannah answered, some awe in her voice when she noticed the genuine interest in the boys’ eyes.

“I’ve always wondered why Muggleborns and those raised in the Muggle world weren’t taught our customs. So many people have complained about Muggleborns not knowing our traditions and laws.” Harry said, frowning as Susan nodded.

“Auntie explained it to me when I asked her. She said that Hogwarts used to offer a Wizarding Customs course before the Board of Governors got rid of it. Apparently they couldn’t see the benefit of the course even though it was doing a world of good for those new to the Wizarding world.” Susan answered, watching as Harry shook his head while Dean frowned.

“I think we should tell my dad. There’s no doubt he’ll support that legislation. He’s also allies with Madame Longbottom and she’s head of the board.” Harry said, Dean nodding in his head as Hannah beamed.

“Oh boy, Lady Weasley’s here.” Dean muttered, making everyone look towards the entrance to the ballroom.

“I’m surprised she and Lord Weasley are here. It’s mostly heads of departments and those of the Wizengamot here tonight. Lord Weasley is the assistant head of his department.” Hannah said, frowning lightly as Lord and Lady Weasley headed over to the Minister to speak with him.

“Oh, but Lord Thorten isn’t here tonight. I think Lord Weasley might be here in his boss’ stead.” Harry said, watching as Dean and the girls looked around and saw that he was correct.

They continued to talk quietly about some of the people they saw, in which they softly made fun of some of the outfits of the guests. Of course they fell onto safer topics when Madame Amelia Bones walked over to their table. She was a stern looking woman with silver streaked blonde hair and light blue eyes. Dressed in her formal robes and her ever present monocle which was actually enchanted to see through any disguise; she cut a rather intimidating figure. Harry and Dean stood and bowed to her, which made the woman bow her head towards them. It was common knowledge that Amelia was taking care of the affairs of the House of Bones until Susan could take her rightful place as Lady Bones when she turned seventeen. While the Bones family had once been rather wealthy, the former Lord Bones hadn’t made wise decisions in way of stocks and, unfortunately, the family had lost much of its fortune. However, Amelia has been taking advice from her friends and allies and was making some good investments to increase the Bones fortune once more.

Amelia spoke with her niece and Hannah for a minute a little ways away from the table. Harry and
Dean watched as Susan and Hannah looked at each other before both girls nodded and Susan hugged her aunt tightly. When the girls returned, they saw the slight disappointment in Susan’s eyes and became worried.

“What’s wrong?” Dean asked, concern in her voice as Susan sighed.

“Auntie was called away due to an emergency. I’m to head to Hannah’s when they’re finished here.” Susan said, her voice soft as Harry and Dean looked at her with sympathy.

Hannah pointed out her parents to Harry and Dean and actually pulled the two boys over to them for introductions. Lord Abbott smiled warmly at the boys and gladly shook their hands while Lady Abbott smiled softly and curtsied. Harry and Dean told Lord Abbott that Hannah had told them of his ideas for the curriculum of Hogwarts and agreed that they were excellent ideas. Lord Abbott was surprised that Harry and Dean liked his ideas and he eagerly told the boys about a few more he had in mind. This, of course, drew the attention of a few other people standing nearby and they soon had a small group around them. Madame Longbottom, a silver streaked brown haired woman with sharp blue eyes, listened with great interest to the ideas and was all too happy to agree with many of them.

Hannah was smiling brightly at Harry as her dad and Madame Longbottom stepped away from the crowd to speak about the ideas and how things could be changed for the betterment of Hogwarts. However, her smile slipped and she suddenly reverted back to her shy, withdrawn self as soon as she spotted the familiar head of platinum blonde hair that belonged to Lord Malfoy. Harry and Dean turned to face the man, their features becoming calm and emotionless as the blonde haired, silver eyed Lord looked down at them.

“Mister Potter.” Lucius Malfoy drawled, his voice silky as Harry looked up at the blonde and met his gaze unflinchingly.

“Lord Malfoy. You should know it’s Heir Potter-Othello. This is my friend, Heir Dean Thomas-Woods.” Harry said, nodding to Dean who bowed his head towards the older man.

“I see. Forgive me for my slight, Heir Potter-Othello. This is the first time I’ve seen you in the public eye besides in glimpses in the alley.” Lucius said, arching a fine eyebrow as Harry nodded slightly.

“No harm done.”

“I’m also rather surprised that you and Heir Thomas-Woods are here; along with Heiress Bones and Abbott. I would think that a ball like this would be boring to children.” Lucius added, making the children shift as they glanced at each other.

“Well my name was on my family’s invitation so I was, naturally, required to come. Dean is here as my guest.” Harry explained, watching as Lucius nodded slightly.

“Same with the invitation my Aunt received.” Susan added, nearly cowering as Lucius’ silver eyes turned at each other.

“My parents brought me along as they knew Susan would be here.” Hannah said, glancing down so she didn’t have to meet Lucius’ eyes.

“I see. Well, I do hope you have a good evening.” He said, his voice smooth as he turned and walked away.

“Merlin he gives me the creeps.” Dean hissed, shuddering as Lord Malfoy disappeared into the crowds.
“I would be careful around him, Dean. He’s one of Minister Fudge’s ‘yes men’.” Susan said, frowning as the others looked at her.

“My dad told me that Lord Malfoy made a...generous donation to Minister Fudge’s campaign when he was running for Minister.” Harry said, barely keeping the disgust out of his voice as Susan nodded.

“Let’s talk about something else. There’s no telling who might be listening.” Hannah suggested.

Harry and Dean happily told Susan and Hannah about their time in primary school. Hannah, being a Halfblood herself, explained that she’s been getting private tutors to keep up with her Muggle schooling. Susan was simply being taught by her aunt and by a few tutors about what she needed to know before attending Hogwarts. Their parents dropped by the table to check on them and a few other Lords and Ladies stopped by to meet Harry and exchange polite pleasantries with the other three. When the band that had been hired began playing, Harry asked Susan to dance while Dean did the same with Hannah. The girls blushed and giggled but happily agreed and allowed the boys to lead them out to the dancefloor. Many people watched the foursome dance, in which some were impressed with their dancing skills while others were far more interested in the ‘pairings’. Of course there were some who were already gossiping about the idea of Harry being betrothed to Susan, though Delilah and Lucas were quick to put that rumor to rest as soon as they heard it.

Susan and Hannah switched partners after the first dance, in which they were impressed that both boys were such good dancers. Of course Delilah made her son dance with her, which made him blush rather heavily as he waltzed with his mum while the others laughed and grinned at him. Hannah and Susan were soon collected by Hannah’s parents after they all partook in the buffet and they had danced a little longer. Lucas and Delilah eventually collected the money and checks they had gotten for their charities and said their goodbyes. Harry and Dean were extremely grateful that they would have to get used to it since they would be attending such balls once they become adults and heads of their families.

Arriving back at the estate, Dean headed off to his house while Harry was pounced on by Eliza. She demanded to know about the party and he happily indulged his little sister as she rapid-fired questions at him. Lucas and Delilah were rather interested in hearing about what Lord Malfoy had to say and both were proud of how their son had corrected the blonde ponce. Eliza was soon sent up to bed, which allowed Harry to learn what his parents had been up to during the ball.

“We were scouting out possible runners to go against Fudge in the upcoming elections.” Lucas explained, his son raising an eyebrow at him.

“Really?! I thought he has his ‘yes men’ in every corner of the Ministry.” Harry said, frowning lightly as his dad sighed.

“It’s mostly the Dark families that are supporting Fudge. The Grey families such as the Greengrasses, Davises and Abbotts are on the fence about him. Yes, many good laws have been passed but he’s also passed a few that benefit only a select number of people. I’ve been suggesting to Amelia that she should go up against him in the elections but she likes her position as head of the D.M.L.E.” Lucas said, sighing as he sat down on a chair.

“Then there’s Guy Matthews. He’s a Halfblood raised in the Muggle world but, from what we learned through a few spies, he educated himself on the workings of the Magical world. He’s a highly respected lawyer in our world and has made a name for himself of being completely fair and unbiased. However, we know that without getting something on Fudge, he’ll win the elections. He has too many supporters who are willing to throw gold at him since his ‘reputation’ is clean so far.”
Delilah explained, watching as Harry frowned.

“I think Kay, Roberts, Summers and Williams would be good for a mission like this.” He said, making his parents blink before they leaned forward in interest.

“Oh?” Lucas asked.

“Yes. All four of them have low positions in the Ministry but they’re in key departments. Kay is in the Department of Mysteries, Roberts is in the department of Finance, Summers is in the department of Records and Williams is in the D.M.L.E. Working together, they could uncover all of Fudge’s dirty little secrets and all of the bribes he’s taken. Of course it’s against the law for any department head, let alone the Minister of Magic, to accept bribes from anyone. If you give that information to Madame Bones she’ll have him pulled out of his position because of corruption and he’ll be sent to prison. His under-sectary is known to bribe and push people with blackmail which is more than enough to get her sent to prison as well so she won’t be acting Minister until the elections are over.” Harry explained, his parents looking at him with shock and growing pride.

“It’s…it’s a sound plan. Of course they won’t be able to gather enough evidence to have Fudge kicked out this year. But, by next year’s elections there’ll be enough to have him arrested.” Delilah said, her husband nodding as Harry grinned.

“I’ll call them in tomorrow. Harry, since this was your idea, you can present it to them.” Lucas said, watching as Harry’s eyes widened in shock.

“W-What?!”

-The next morning.-

Harry nervously shifted in his seat. He had woken up earlier than he normally did in order to prepare himself for the mission he was about to give. Now, he’d been getting training on how to become a leader from his father for a year now but learning and doing were two completely different things. When he had suggested the mission to his parents he had never imagined that they would make him give it out! However, last night his father had explained that he would need to get used to being in charge of others and being a leader. His mother had agreed completely, which hadn’t really help his nerves. He had stayed up late last night typing out what the mission was about in full detail and what each person should look out for and how long they would have to complete the mission. Yes, the Assassins did respect him because he’s the son of their leader, but he still didn’t want to seem like he was already trying to order them around.

Now, here he was, in the meeting room and waiting for the four Assassins to arrive. His father was seated to his right while his mother was to his left, both of them offering their silent support. Lucas had already assured his son that the others wouldn’t think he was attempting to order them around without reason. His son’s plan is a very good one and would give them time to ensure that the evidence that they will collect wouldn’t simply disappear. It would also allow them to make sure any evidence was sound and would hold up to any scrutiny. All of them looked up when the door opened and three women and one man walked into the meeting room. All four Assassins were dressed in their uniforms, though there was no hiding they surprise on their faces when they saw Harry sitting at the head. However, instead of asking questions, they sat down and waited for someone to speak.

Harry swallowed heavily before standing and lightly clearing his throat; feeling the weight of everyone’s gazes land on him.
“Last night after returning from the Minister’s charity ball, my parents informed me that they were looking for potential people to go against Cornelius Oswald Fudge in the upcoming elections. However, there’s the problem of Cornelius having his yes men in nearly every corner of the Ministry.” Harry began, handing out files to the four Assassins using a simple spell.

“While Madame Amelia Bones is one of our main choices as potential Minister, she’s content in her current position in the Ministry and there’s no doubt she does a world of good as the head of the D.M.L.E. The next person of interest who shows a high potential as a good and just Minister is Guy Alexander Matthews. He’s a well-respected lawyer even though he is a Muggle raised Halfblood. We know he is mostly ‘Grey’ though leans heavily towards the ‘Light’ in most of his ideals and actions.

“However, because of Cornelius’ support, it will be near impossible to get him out of his position as Minister. Old, ‘Dark’ Pureblood families are tossing their gold at him to ensure their laws get passed and it’s harming our society. However, should someone uncover the dealings Cornelius has been involved in and hand such evidence to Madame Bones, she would have no choice but to take action. Once Cornelius’ supporters find out that Madame Bones knows of the bribes he’s taken they’ll drop him hotter than Dragon dung in order to cover their own tracks and ensure they’ll only get a slap on the wrist.” Harry explained.

“What about his under-sectary, Delores Umbridge? She’s a cruel and vindictive bitch.” Lucille Kay asked, peering at the young boy with shrewd eyes.

“We need to take her down too. Madame Bones isn’t known for giving up. She’s also known for not backing down no matter her opponent. Umbridge is used to people panicking because she’s managed to find dirt on them. She blackmails them to do her bidding and is one of the many who kissed Cornelius’ arse in order to get what she wants and into her position. Should we take Cornelius down she’ll quickly replace him and will be even worse. Cornelius is a weak minded man who is only interested in being in the public eye and revered. Umbridge, on the other hand, has an agenda of her own and will do untold damage to our world should she be elected.” Harry answered, the others nodding gravely in understanding.

“This mission will take the course of a year. Cornelius is set to be re-elected as Minister this year but the year after is an unknown. Your mission is to carefully and slowly collect evidence of Cornelius and Umbridge’s dealings. We want this evidence to stick and not suddenly ‘disappear’. The evidence needs to be airtight and fool proof. Likely, we’ll be poking other people in the eye with the evidence such as Lords Malfoy, Parkinson and many others. Former Minister Bagnold had taken bribes from the Death Eaters and Bartemius Crouch couldn’t handle the fact that his only son had fallen into darkness thus, he turned a blind eye to many trials.

“We all know that Thomas Riddle isn’t dead. He’s wandering the world as a shade with his familiar Nagini. He is waiting for one of his followers to find him and help him regain a body and thus return to power. However, none of his followers who are outside of Azkaban are… ambitious enough to do so. Lord Malfoy and the others are simply sitting on their gold and using it to ensure they get their way. However, they’re making sure they’re free and have the money to support Riddle once he returns. He’ll need a fortune in order to fund his war again and they will gladly give their money to him. This cannot be allowed to happen. With a new Minister who takes action and refuses to let those who supported Riddle to have power, our society will only get better and better and will actually stand a chance when Riddle returns to power.” Harry explained, relaxing slightly as the others nodded in agreement.

“So, you wish us to use our positions in the Ministry to find what we can on Cornelius and Delores. We’re to move slowly and tread carefully so we’ll remain under the radar. By the time the next
elections come, we should have enough evidence to give to Madame Bones to arrest Cornelius and Delores while making others aware of those who have bribed them.” Diana Williams said, her voice soft as Harry nodded.

“Yes. Each of you are in departments that should hold some of the information you’ll be looking for. I have no doubt that you’ll be able to complete the mission within a year.” Harry said, watching as the group nodded.

“It’s a good, sound plan. We’ll be able to feed off each other and help each other. The timeframe is rather nice and allows us to take our time and not make mistakes.” Dylan Summers said, glancing through the file with interest.

“We’ll get started on our mission as soon as we leave the room.” Michelle Roberts said, smiling as the other three agreed.

“Thank you. Hand your reports to my father and mother. If, at any time you feel that things have become compromised, then stop and step back for a little while. The last thing we need is for others to become aware of what you’re doing and our intentions.” Harry said, the foursome nodding before they headed out.

As soon as the door closed, Harry sighed and flopped down into his seat. Lucas and Delilah smiled as the tension slowly bled out of Harry’s body and he was soon nearly boneless in the chair.

“You did very well, Harrison.” Delilah praised, Lucas nodding his head.

“While they were surprised that you were giving them information on the mission, they still listened to you. You were firm and well informed about what needed to be done and the reasoning behind the mission. Many have just thrown a mission at others without explaining the reasoning behind it or answering questions. You listened to them and explained things while answering any concerns that they had. You have the makings for a strong and true leader.” Lucas said, smiling as his son blushed and rubbed the back of his head.

“I was simply going off of what I’ve seen you do during meetings.” He muttered, making his parents chuckle and smile.

“And that is exactly why you’ll become a great leader when your time comes.” Lucas said, Delilah nodding in agreement.

“Now, go and get ready for your lessons.” Delilah said, watching as Harry nodding and jumped to his feet before hurrying out of the room.

Harry headed to his room and changed into a dark green tunic, dark brown, form fitting pants and brown knee high boots. He pulled his hair back into a low ponytail, though made a note to talk to his mum about getting it cut. Before leaving his room, he pulled on black, fingerless gloves before he rushed down the halls and downstairs out the back door. Running across the property, he headed towards the forest where Dean and two other children his age were already gathered. All of them wore a similar outfit and Dean and a girl their age with light blonde hair and hazel eyes smiled at him as he approached. However, the other boy scowled when he saw Harry. Elliot Masters was an Assassin in training like Harry and Dean. However, his family had always been at odds with the Othello family ever since Lucas had become the new leader.

You see, Elliot’s father: Brandon, had been in line to inherit the role as the leader of the Brotherhood. However, he failed the test and had actually caused the death of several other Assassins due to his mistake in the last mission he had been given. His great-grandfather, who had been leader at the time,
chose Lucas to become leader instead because Lucas had not only passed the test and the mission, but he had rescued Brandon at great risk to himself. Brandon was still an Assassin, though he mostly worked solo missions because the others were slightly wary of him and his ability to watch their backs. When Lucas had been chosen, it had caused a rift between the two families that had continued with their sons. Elliot had thought that he would become the leader because Harry, to him and his father, was an outsider and the son of a traitor since Lily had left the Brotherhood. Elliot had constantly tried to outperform Harry, but hadn’t managed to do so yet. It frustrated him beyond belief and he had already been warned several times by their tutors to stop attempting to sabotage Harry’s tests and training. He had only stopped, slightly, after his father punished him and threatened to pull him out of training.

“The prince has finally decided to grace us with his presence.” Elliot drawled, making Dean and the girl, Ashely Morgan, frown as Harry rolled his eyes.

“I was busy.” Harry said.

“Doing what? Fixing your makeup?” Elliot asked, smirking as Dean narrowed his eyes at the smaller boy.

“What Young Hawk was doing isn’t any of your business, Masters. However, if you must know, he was training for his role as the potential future leader of the Brotherhood.” Christian Rossi said, walking up to the group as they spun and looked at him.

Elliot scowled and fought down the urge to snap say something back. However, his father’s threat to remove him from training ran in his head. He had no doubt that his father would keep his promise and if that happened then all of his memories of his training would be erased. He hadn’t even begun any kind of training to potentially become the future leader of the Brotherhood and he knew that there was a very real chance he would even start because of his dad’s mistakes. Yes, he knew that everyone who reached the ranking of Master Assassin had a chance to perform the test and mission to see if they could become the leader of the Brotherhood, but no one had managed to pass the test besides Lucas Othello. Hearing that Harry was beginning his ‘special’ training really irked him but there was nothing he can do about it.

“Now, you’ve been advancing well in your free-running. Today, I want all of you to enter the forest. You are to be off of the ground by the time you pass the yellow markers. Your goal is to not touch the ground as you make your way towards the lake. Cross the lake to the small island in the center of it and you’ll have finished the course. However, every time you touch the ground or the water, you’ll need to restart from the beginning of the course.” Christian instructed, watching as the four children listened intently.

“Head northeast to make it to the lake. Be careful and move swiftly. Use your sense if you lose your way.” He finished, nodding towards the forest.

The four children lined up and waited for the small popping sound of the starting blast. Sprinting to the forest, Harry and Ashley agilely leapt up and onto the nearest thick branch they saw. Dean jumped and ran along a toppled tree, being more conscious of his weight as he stepped onto the branches of another tree. Elliot, however, continued running as he looked up at the trees in an attempt to find one suitable. He found one, just a few inches past the yellow markers. Taking a running leap, he nearly missed the lowest branch but managed to grab it at the last second and pull him himself onto the branch. He grunted as he hurriedly scaled the tree and jumped to the next one. Up ahead, Harry and Ashley moved quickly as they swung and jumped from tree to tree. Dean was only a few feet behind them though he was lower to the ground where all of the thicker and sturdier branches were.
It was about two hundred feet away from their starting point when Harry heard a sharp cracking sound to his right and a little back. Stopping in his tracks, he looked back and gasped. Ashley was gripping onto her tree by a broken branch which was just about ready to fully break off of the trunk of the tree. They were both about fifty feet up from the ground and Ashley had the unfortunate luck of being on a tree which didn’t have any branches below it. Harry didn’t hesitate and turned, sprinting towards Ashely until he was crouched on a sturdy branch level with her. Hooking his legs around the branch, he hung upside down facing her.

“Swing over!” He called, making Ashley look at him with surprise.

“W-What? What about the-“

“It’s training, not a race. I won’t let anyone get hurt just because of something as simple as training.” Harry said, watching as Ashley blinked before nodding.

As she began swinging, the branch she held onto cracked and popped. When she let go of the branch, it fell off completely and hit the ground where it splintered. Harry grunted as he pulled Ashley up so she could climb onto the branch he was on. She moved to the next branch and waited until he had pulled himself up. They both noticed Dean watching them a few trees over and he smiled and nodded at them. All three of them knew that Elliot had likely gone on ahead and would be gloating about making it to the island first if he somehow managed to remain in the lead. They headed forward, picking up speed as they made their way through the forest. On their way, Harry glanced down and watched as two Assassins escorted Elliot back towards the beginning. There were a few leaves and twigs in his hair and his cheek had a minor scratch. With a shake of his head, Harry continued on.

They soon reached the lake and stopped as they looked for potential paths to get across. There were poles sticking out of the water which created a couple paths though the distance between the poles and the tree branches of the trees on the island were pretty far. It was Ashley who decided to take the chance and leap from her tree branch and onto one of the poles. Harry followed while Dean circled around and found fallen logs that crossed the lake. Harry nearly didn’t make it to one of the poles, but Ashley reached out and managed to snag the front of his tunic to pull him over so he was able to grab onto the rungs that stuck out of the poles. All three of them managed to make it to the island, though Dean nearly slipped and fell into the lake as he crossed the logs. As soon as they made it to the island, Christian appeared and called them down to the ground.

“Good job in getting here. You worked together when in trouble and ensured that you were all safe. This shows a willingness to work in teams and the ability to trust each other.” Christian said, a faint note of pride in his voice.

“Not only that, but you paced yourselves and moved swiftly and silently through the trees. The scouts on the ground had a hard time finding you a few times which proves that you’ve all made major improvements. Now, three laps around the island in the trees, after that head back to the main grounds either through the trees or on the ground. Should you choose the ground weights will be added to your ankles and wrists.” He finished, the trio nodding before they took to the trees once more.

Christian watched as the trio disappeared before turning his attention towards the lake once more. He sighed when he saw Elliot nearly fall into the water as the boy attempted to leap from a branch to one of the poles. He was honestly worried about the boy. Brandon Masters had filled his son’s head with thoughts of running the Brotherhood and how they had been the elite of all of them. However, the young boy was proving to have none of the cunning and wit that an Assassin needed. He rushed ahead and had already made an enemy of Harrison and Dean. When he had been escorted back to
the beginning line he had been loudly complaining about how Harry and Ashley were ‘cheating’ because they were helping each other. The boy had shut up when the scouts explained that there wasn’t a rule against helping each other out. Christian shook his head and stood straighter as Elliot finally reached the island and made his way over.

-Time to up his training…his father’s not going to like this.- He thought, watching as the boy looked at him with frustration and some respect.

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April 20th, 1988

Harry grinned as he leaned low over Spirit’s back, the black Clydesdale stallion practically flying over the ground as he ran through the forest. Harry had just gotten home from school not thirty minutes ago before nearly sprinting to the stables after having tossed his backpack into the living room and shucking out of his blazer. Today had been horrible, honestly. He and Dean had been sent to Headmaster’s office after they had gotten into trouble for ‘antagonizing’ two older students. Those students had been bullying the younger girls and boys, taking their money for lunch and destroying their assignments so they failed their classes. Harry and Dean had caught them teasing two girls until they were crying and had teamed up on the boys. Of course the other two had thrown the first punches but Harry and Dean had struck back and those two older boys had ended up on their backs with the wind knocked out of them.

Of course the two bullies had claimed that Harry and Dean had been the ones bullying the girls and they had tried to help them. Harry and Dean told the Headmaster everything, of course, and the Headmaster had called in the two girls. The two girls had backed Harry and Dean up, but they had still been sent home early for fighting. The two other boys had been sent home as well and had been put on probation. The pair had thought they were untouchable because their fathers were apparently important men in the community, thus they could get away with anything. Thankfully, that wasn’t the case and Headmaster Newton didn’t put up with rubbish like that and allow parents to push him around and threaten him. The two boys were to have detention after school for an hour every day and were banned from the school football team. Not only that, but they had to pay back every pound they stolen from other students.

Harry was glad that the two prats had been punished, but he didn’t really want to deal with his mum and dad sitting him down and talking about his temper. He already knew that he had a bad temper and most of the time he had a tight control over it. However, seeing younger students and females at that, being bullied always made him loose his temper quicker than anything else besides seeing his family and friends in danger. While he treated everyone with respect, his parents had made sure to raise him to treat the opposite gender kindly. His mum had often called him a gentlemen and he had overheard many tell his parents that he was rather polite for a boy his age.

Harry blinked when Spirit suddenly slowed down, making him frown as he looked around. Instantly, he realized that Spirit had brought him to one of the newer parts of the forest. His dad had bought more of the forest and surrounding land around the estate as more and more people were recruited to the Brotherhood and they and their families moved to the estate for protection. He hadn’t yet found time to explore the new parts of the forest, so he wasn’t too sure where Spirit has brought him. However, the first thing he heard was the subtle yet enraged hissing of a reptile.

[That beast! How dare it attack us!]

Harry pulled gently on Spirit’s reins, making the large horse slow to a stop. Looking around, the young boy slipped off of his mount’s back and carefully studied the ground for any sign of a snake. The first time he had ever heard a reptile speak, he had thought it was normal English. His parents
had been shocked and they had quickly told him that he was speaking another language. Thankfully his parents and everyone else in the Brotherhood didn’t believe that Parseltongue was the mark of a Dark Wizard/Witch. Many countries actually revered people who could speak to snakes and other reptiles such as India, Egypt and Ireland. They had also done extensive research into Harry’s family history and discovered that there were several Potter’s who had the ability to speak Parseltongue.

[My mate…how will I hunt and protect my eggs?] The voice wailed, making Harry wince at the pain in the voice.

[Oh great mother, where are you? What ails you so?] He called, glancing back at Spirit as the stallion nickered and shifted nervously.

[Speaker?!!]

Harry’s eyes widened when a strikingly beautiful creature flew in front of him. The creature looked like a miniature version of a Dagon; reaching a height of two feet and a length of three and a half feet from snout to tail. The female’s scales were a beautiful golden color with the odd mixture of silver and light blue scattered in as well. Bright, ruby red eyes peered at Harry in surprise, wonder and respect as the creature looked at the boy.

[W-What are you, beautiful one?] Harry breathed, awe in his voice as the creature hovered in the air in front of him.

[I am a Fire Lizard, though my name is Rashia.] She answered, watching as Harry nodded.

[As for what ails me: my mate has been killed by a pack of wolves that lives deeper into the forest. I cannot hunt and keep my nest safe.] Rashia lamented, crystalline tears gathering in her eyes as Harry winced in sympathy.

[I could help you, beautiful one. No one should go through this tragedy alone. I live with many other humans and all of us respect the creatures of this forest. We can help you by giving you food and ensure that your nest is safe.] Harry offered.

[You would really do this, Speaker? I warn you though, I will not hold back if any threaten my eggs.] Rashia said, a growl in her voice as Harry nodded.

[I swear that no harm shall befall you or your young, Rashia. Are you in any need right now?] He asked, watching as the Fire Lizard landed on the ground and began leading him to a small cluster of trees.

[I must eat soon. Hare or other small animals are my prey.] She answered, looking back at Harry as she moved over to her nest.

Harry was, again, in awe when he saw the nest. The actual nest was made of rocks, sand and charred twigs. Six multicolored eggs rested in the center and he watched as Rashia breathed dark red and green flames over the eggs before coiling her body around them. Harry turned and whistled shrilly, knowing that there was bound to be a member of the Brotherhood nearby. After that, he took to the trees and began hunting. Thanks to his Eagle sight, he managed to locate a rabbit’s trail and quickly pounced on the unsuspecting creature. He swiftly broke its neck before hurrying back to Rashia. He arrived just as three Assassins hurried over. Rashia hissed and drew herself more tightly around her eggs, though the Assassins stopped and looked at her in awe.

“A-A Fire Lizard!”

“A nesting mother at that!”
“You’ve seen Fire Lizards before?” Harry asked, turning to Rashia and laying the dead rabbit near her nest so she could eat.

“They are rather common in my country. However, they are rare here in England.” Aya Essa said, her dark eyes watching as Rashia seared the hair off of the rabbit and proceeded to eat it when Harry moved to stand in front of her.

“Her mate was killed by a pack of wolves that live further in the forest. She can’t defend her nest and hunt at the same time. I heard her mourning her mate and cursing the wolves.” Harry explained.

“Fire Lizard eggs need to be kept at a high temperature for the young to fully develop. Normally they are buried in sand so the parents can hunt freely. However, they’ve been adapting as they’ve migrated.” Aya explained, the others listening with rapt attention.

“We could build a fire pit near Richard’s forge, keep an everlasting fire and make sure there’s plenty of sand for the eggs. Myself and two others are trained to handle them.” She added, watching as relief spread across the others faces.

“I’ll go inform Richard and the others so they can prepare everything.” Sean Hawthorn said, hurrying away towards the main estate.

[Rashia, would it be alright with you if a few of my friends help move your nest to a safe location? No harm will come to them or you with us helping to keep predators away. They’ll be beside a constant source of heat so you can hunt and relax.] Harry explained, watching as the female lifted her head to look at him.

[They will be safe?] She asked, her voice hesitant as Harry nodded.

[I swear they will be as safe as can be. You can instruct us on how to build the nest you’ve always wanted so you and your young are comfortable.] Harry promised, watching as Rashia looked at him before nodding in agreement.

Harry relayed the message to Aya and Mark Hotchner. They were pleased to learn Rashia’s name and they located the body of her mate. They were alarmed to see that the Fire Lizard had been killed and hadn’t been eaten. Spreading out, they discovered the dead body of a very large wolf, in which random parts of its fur had been burned off and there were bite marks all around its body and on its neck. Harry asked Rashia if she and her husband had venom, to which she informed him that they do have venom though they could control it so their bites didn’t contain any venom should they so desire. Aya hurriedly explained that some Fire Lizards had venom while others didn’t; it all depended on the species. She sent a patronus to Sean telling him to bring a huge cauldron filled with hot sand. It only took ten minutes before Sean and two others returned carrying a large cauldron filled with steaming sand. Rashia breathed flames over her clutch once more before she walked over to the cauldron and inspected it.

She approved of the cauldron and dug out some of the sand before she relayed instructions to Harry to give Aya and the others in the handling of her eggs and placing them in the sand. Rashia covered each egg after inspecting it which took a while but they soon had all six eggs safely covered in sand. Harry walked with the others while holding onto Spirit’s reins with Rashia wound around his neck and resting on his shoulders like some kind of scarf. He asked her plenty of questions about her race, though Aya pitched in when Harry began asking her questions as well. All of them were surprised when Aya informed them that it was rather common in her country for Fire Lizards to become familiars of Witches and Wizards and even Squibs. The Fire Lizards chose their ‘human’ at birth, normally only a week after hatching. Fire Lizards were capable of teleporting, breathing flames, telepathic communication with their bonded humans and their bonded humans could even see
through their eyes if their bond was strong enough.

Rashia also informed Harry, and thus the others, that many Fire Lizards have unique abilities and many Fire Lizards were able to learn different skills with the help of their bonded. Harry was saddened in learning that Fire Lizards mate for life, which meant that Rashia would never have another clutch of eggs due to her mate’s death. However, he was shocked when she showed him a deep blue/black scale which had belonged to her mate.

[This scale contains enough of Dusk’s magic and life force that it will permit me to have one more clutch. When I am ready to have my next clutch, all I need to do is heat the scale and consume it. My magic and the lingering magic and life force in the scale will do the rest.] Rashia explained, smiling gently as Harry looked at her in awe before he relayed the information back to the others.

“I was wondering how some of the nesting females managed to have another clutch after their mate’s had passed.” Aya mused.

Reaching the main grounds, Harry grinned when he saw his parents, Dean and his family. Everyone was in awe over Rashia and the large cauldron. One of the Assassins hurried forward and took Spirit from Harry, guiding the stallion back to the stables on the far right of the estate. Richard, meanwhile, led them over to the stone building which served as his forge. Near the building was a rather large bonfire which had a sand pit a few inches from it. Rashia flew down from Harry’s shoulders and examined the pit before she flew into the flames of the bonfire and retrieved a number of red-hot stones which she used to line the pit before adding ashes from the bonfire in with the sand.

Using her flames, she heated the sand until it began steaming before she and the others began carefully moving her eggs to their new nest. Lucas, Delilah and Eliza stood near Harry, listening as he spoke with the Fire Lizard before relaying the instructions to the others who were helping Rashia organize her nest to her exact liking. Rashia also informed them of another pair of Fire Lizards that lived in a small cave near the boundary of the property. Harry, Rashia and Aya headed to the cave and met Barroth and his mate Slytha. Both were horrified in learning that Dusk had been killed and it obviously worried them. They were impressed when Harry spoke to them and admitted that they had heard the howls of wolves getting closer and closer to the cave at night recently. It took some coaxing, but after Aya assured them that they could create a cave for the pair, the two Fire Lizards agreed to move to the main grounds of the estate.

Aya was allowed to look into the cave and study how the mated pair had set it up. She exited after studying it for ten minutes before they all headed back to the main grounds. Again, the others were in awe over the beautiful creatures and Aya, Richard and several others hurried to create a cave for Barroth and Slytha. It was near the edge of the main property, away from all of the excitement and chaos that came from having so many people walking around, living there and training. Harry and the two Fire Lizards were watching the progress with Harry adding in a few things that the pair wanted changed and ensuring that everything was to the pairs liking. It took two and a half hours before the cave was completed and Barroth and Slytha entered the cave and began preparing their new nest.

Wards were placed around the cave and around Rashia’s nest to keep away intruders and harmful animals and creatures. There was also a ward to keep young children away and to dampen any noise so the Fire Lizards wouldn’t be disturbed. The regal creatures were grateful for the protections and were soon settled in. Harry, now that the excitement was over, headed back to the Manor where his parents sat him down and asked him why he had left so suddenly after returning home. He explained everything that happened and how he hadn’t felt in control of his emotions when he had come home. He had been intent on just riding through the forest to burn off steam before returning home and facing the music. Lucas and Delilah told their son that they weren’t upset as he had been defending
the two girls and themselves. Of course they warned him to try and avoid getting into fights again, but Harry was relieved and slightly surprised when they didn’t punish him.

Harry retreated to the library and did what little homework he had before heading back outside to run around and work on his archery at the training grounds. He was joined by a few other Assassins and Ashley, in which they made it a small competition. All of them had a lot of fun and they were rather surprised when Ashley beat all of them which caused a lot of cheering and celebration from those who had gathered around to watch the competition. Ashley laughed and blushed as she was lifted onto a few shoulders and carried around the archery range, her eyes bright in happiness. Harry grinned at her from the ground and gave her a thumbs up, making the girl blush but beam happily.

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The next few months passed with a lot of changes and additions. Slytha laid four eggs for her first clutch in early May and it was common to see either her or Barroth flying out of the cave and heading to the forest to hunt. Rashia’s clutch hatched during the first week of June and everyone was in awe over the multicolored hatchlings. All of them were healthy and squalling; keeping their mother busy as she tried to keep up with feeding them. Harry and Aya were the only two who were allowed to help Rashia hunt for her young ones, which was fine with the others since they were more than happy to let the professionals handle it. Aya also received a few books on Fire Lizards and their history from one of her relatives back in Egypt. Harry devoured the books, wanting to know more and more about the creatures he had found in the forest. Of course Lucas informed the Ministry about the findings of the Fire Lizards on his property and assured them that he had someone who was trained in handling and protecting the species.

Of course, throughout the course of the year leading up to where Harry was now, his father and mother had been getting steady reports from Kay, Summers, Roberts and Williams. The evidence condemning Fudge and his toady was building and building and there was no doubt that Madame Bones would have a field day when they presented the evidence to her. There was also more than enough evidence to have Lords Malfoy, Parkinson, Nott, Crabbe, Goyle and a few others tossed into Azkaban. Of course they would have to handle this carefully as throwing the ‘former’ Death Eaters into Azkaban all willy-nilly would create a power gap in the Wizengamot. Of course there was no doubt that the Death Eaters needed to be punished for what they had done, but things had to be handled carefully.

Lucas had also been meeting with Guy Matthews about running for Minister again. Guy had lost the previous election, obviously and was slightly hesitant to run again. However, Lucas managed to convince him to give it another chance when the elections would come around once more. All of the Houses that Lucas and Sirius had an alliance with agreed that Fudge had to be done away with. He had been trying to pass a few laws that would up the price of school supplies for Muggleborns. Those laws would make Muggleborns pay nearly three times the price that Purebloods and Halfbloods pay at the stores and even then Halfbloods would be charged more than Purebloods. Another thing that the foolish man had tried to do is revoke the adoption of Harrison. Of course Lucas, Sirius, Augusta and a few others had been enraged and the motion had been quickly tossed out, especially when Lucas nearly called the Minister out on a duel for daring to attempt to pull Harry away from him. The cowardly man had quickly backed down, even though Lord Parkinson and Malfoy had looked angered.

Another good thing that had happened was a week after the hatching of Rashia’s eggs Harry discovered his familiar. He had been helping some of the new hatchlings fly when he had felt a pull on his magic. It was startling, to say the least, but he had read about a person’s magic directing them to their familiar and even finding their soulmates. Following the pull on his magic led Harry to the training grounds, specifically the stealth arena. There were hale bales, low walls, tall grass, bushes,
cars, stalls and even a few dummy houses and shops. His magic pulled him further in the direction of a stunningly beautiful Fire Lizard. While many Fire Lizards had two toned scales, this young Fire Lizard was pure white and her eyes were a bright amber color that were filled with intelligence.

The Fire Lizard turned and looked at him, her eyes brightening. Harry opened his mouth to speak to the young hatchling, though before he could say anything, she flew to his shoulders and perched there only to use her long tail to wrap around his right hand and bring it up. Harry yelped when she suddenly bit his hand, flinching in pain. However, the pain soon disappeared and a warm glow washed through him as the puncture marks on his hand instantly healed.

[Can you hear me?] A young, girlish voice asked, making Harry startle and look around.

“W-What?!”

[I said, can you hear me? Though judging from your reaction, it’s obvious that you can.] The voice said, making Harry look around before he looked at the Fire Lizard perched on his shoulder.

“A-Are you talking to me?!” He asked, awe in his voice as she nodded her head.

[Of course I am. I created the familiar bond between us. Your magic accepted mine.] She said, letting out a faint rumbling sound as Harry lightly scratched underneath her chin.

“I…I never expected to have a Fire Lizard as my familiar. What’s your name, pretty girl?” He asked, smiling as he headed back towards the manor.

[My mother named me Mira. She told me that your name is Harrison though you go by Harry.] She answered, gently wrapping her tail around his neck to further stabilize herself.

Harry mentally searched through his mind and quickly found the new link that he shared with Mira. It was a pleasant warmth and he could sense Mira’s feelings through the link. She was content, happy and curious about him; wanting to know more about him and his family. He remembered what he had read about the bonds between humans and their familiars and, after a few tries, managed to speak to Mira through thought. She was very pleased with this and asked him many questions about the estate and his training. Harry answered all of her questions as best he could; unaware of the stares he was getting from the others as he walked by. Now, a few Assassins had found their familiars in some of the new hatchlings; though the biggest surprise had been when Rashia had bonded with Richard. She claimed that she hadn’t bonded with him earlier because of her duties as a nesting mother and she had wanted to get a ‘feel’ for the area before acknowledging the bond.

“Harry?” Dean asked, his eyes wide as Harry turned and looked at him.

“Hey, Dean!” He said, grinning as Dean walked over and looked at the Fire Lizard with interest.

“Let me guess, your familiar?” Dean asked, chuckling as Harry nodded happily.

“Yeah. Her name is Mira.” Harry said, watching as the white creature rumbled at Dean in way of greeting.

Dean bowed his head towards the white Fire Lizard, grinning when she nodded towards him in return. Dean asked Harry about some of the homework they had been assigned, in which the slightly shorter boy laughed and nodded.

“You finished Miss Goodwin’s worksheet already?! How?! It’s bloody hard!” Dean cried, only to yelp as a hand connected with the back of his head.
“Dean Thomas-Woods, what have I told you about using such language?” Cassie barked, glaring down at her son as he flushed and rubbed the back of his head.

“Sorry Mum.” He muttered.

“I swear you need to stop hanging out around Nicolette. She’d make a sailor blush.” Cassie muttered, frowning as she thought of the red haired Assassin while walking away from her son.

Dean and Harry shared a look, faint smirks on their face as they thought of Nicolette. Nicolette was one of the Assassins and was a rather…robust woman with dark red hair and bright blue eyes. She was a middle aged and had raised several children, all adopted and all Squibs. Nicolette was rather rough and didn’t take flak from anyone no matter their rank and had even dragged Lucas off by his ear before his temper got ahold of him a few times. Everyone, *everyone*, listened to Nicolette and didn’t dare cross her less they wish to feel her hand smacking them across the back of their head.

However, she was also one of the nicest and warmhearted women that anyone knew and her hospitality was famous in the Brotherhood. She didn’t live on the estate though she visited almost daily and often stayed for eight hours at a time just making sure that everyone was doing alright and remembered to take care of themselves. Her house was a safe house for other Assassins and was well protected by the wards she placed around the property. Her House Elves weren’t afraid to attack intruders who were attempting to get into the house to harm her and anyone who was staying there either.

“Harry?!” Eliza gasped, making her brother blink and look down at her as she hurried over.

“Hey, Liz. Aren’t you supposed to be in your lessons?” He asked, raising an eyebrow when the little girl huffed and stomped her foot.

“I hate my lessons! Why do I have to learn how to sit ‘properly’ and all these stuffy manners?” She asked, pouting as Harry lightly ruffled her hair.

“Because you’re a lady. I’m still in lessons to be a lord.” Harry said, watching in amusement as Eliza huffed again.

“But *you’re* the one who will become Lord Othello and Lord Potter. I won’t be Lady Othello.” She said, blinking when Harry smiled warmly at her.

“I know, but you still need the lessons. You might end up marrying a lord one day when you’re older. Not only that, but you know we’re expected to know certain manners and such. Mum has told you all of this already.” He said, making Eliza pout once more.

“I shouldn’t have to learn these lessons. I want to be an *Assassin* not a *Lady.*” She mumbled, making Harry and Dean laugh.

Eliza soon forgot about her lessons when Mira shifted on Harry’s shoulders. She instantly began asking questions at a rapid-fire rate at her brother about his new familiar. Of course, like all little girls, she wanted one as well. It took some time but Harry managed to calm Eliza down by reminding her that she had plenty of time in order to find her familiar and she might even find one in a future clutch from Rashia or Barroth and Slytha. Thankfully, that seemed to calm her down just in time for Delilah and Lucas to walk over. Delilah frowned at her daughter, making Eliza duck her head and shift.

“There you are, Eliza! You should know better than to run from your tutors.” She scolded, frowning as Eliza ducked her head even more.

“ ’m sorry, Mum. It’s just…it’s *so* boring! Missus Fran is so stuffy and boring and strict.” Eliza
whined, glancing up at her parents before looking down at the ground at their stern looks again.

“Go back to your lessons.” Lucas said, his voice stern but gentle as Eliza huffed and stomped away.

They waited until Eliza disappeared inside the manor before turning their attention back to Harry. Delilah and Lucas smiled at Mira and asked a few questions about the Fire Lizard. Dean grinned as his friend flushed and told his parents about how he and Mira bonded, which worried Delilah slightly when she discovered that Mira had bitten her son. However, she also understood that it was simply how the bond had to be formed. She asked Mira plenty of questions, such as how long it would take for her to become a fully mature Fire Lizard since she was only about ten inches high and twenty inches long. She, Harry and Dean learned that it would take Mira about two human years to be a fully mature Fire Lizard and, as she grew and her bond with Harry deepened, she would learn more and more abilities and gain new powers. As of now, she could fly, breath fire, speak to Harry telepathically and could swim. It would take her awhile to learn to read, see through Harry’s eyes, teleport and carry objects more than a few pounds.

“Harrison, Dean, your instructors have told us that you’re both doing very well in free-running and your climbing skills. We’ve all decided that you’ll begin your weapons training in a month. You’ve both begun learning Krav Maga and apparently you’ve been picking it up quickly. Dean, Hector is especially impressed by your increasing strength and speed. Harrison, Hector is becoming increasingly impressed with your usage of your surroundings and also your creativeness when it comes to finding ways to gain an advantage over your opponents.” Delilah said, pride in her voice as the two boys beamed.

“Hey, Mum, Dad, what’ll happen when we’re in Hogwarts?” Harry asked, making Delilah blink as Lucas looked down at his son.

“You’re training will take place during the weekends with Minerva and Severus. They are the only two Assassins in Hogwarts that will be able to continue your training. Ever since they became Master Assassins, they’ve also been given the task of finding any possible Assassins in the group of students.” Lucas answered.

“Isn’t Professor Flitwick allies with the Brotherhood?” Dean asked, frowning lightly as he tried to remember some of his history lessons.

“He is. While not an Assassin himself, he is a master swordsman and duelist. We’ve often asked for his advice and training throughout the years.” Delilah said, the boys nodding in understanding.

“When you come home for the holidays you’ll resume your Muggle schooling and also during the summer. You’ve already been able to skip a grade because you’re ahead in your studies.” Lucas explained, making Dean and Harry grin and high-five each other.

Heading into the manor, Harry showed Mira around with Dean while his parents headed off to do whatever it is they did. Mira asked plenty of questions about the various rooms and what they were used for. She also took off and flew through the hallways, exploring on her own and startling the House Elves as they weren’t used to seeing a Fire Dragon flying around in the manor. She managed to open doors by wrapping her talons around the knobs and twisting, which made Harry and Dean look at her in awe as they chased her throughout the manor. Mira’s eyes widened when she entered the library and Harry smiled as she flew around the vast, two story room. Following her back out to the main hallways, Harry showed his familiar his room, to which she nodded in agreement with it and promptly settled down on the large pillows at the head of the boy’s bed.

[So, Harry, what do you do for fun?] Mira asked, laying down on the pillows and flexing her wings.
“Dean and I play games, fly, play footie and explore the forest.” Harry said, making Dean focus on his friend.

[How do you fly? You have no wings…or do they appear from your body?] Mira asked, curiosity in her voice as she stood and moved over to the foot of the bed to look up at the boys.

“We have brooms that are specially made and enchanted to fly. My dad can also turn into a mist and fly for a short amount of time like that though it uses a lot of magical power.” Harry explained, Mira nodding her head slowly.

“Let me guess, she asked what we like to do for fun and wondered how we can fly.” Dean said, grinning as Harry nodded and smirked.

“We should all go flying around the estate soon.” He said, Dean and Mira voicing their agreement.

“Harry! Dean! Uncle Sirius is here for your lessons!” Eliza called, making the boys groan and hang their heads.

“Bloody hell…” Dean groaned, making Harry snort softly.

“Don’t let the adults hear you say that.” He said, standing up as Dean huffed.

“Yeah…it’s not fun getting smack upside the head…again.” Dean muttered, glaring as Harry laughed and walked out of his room after Mira landed on his shoulder and settled.

October 1st, 1988

Minster Cornelius Fudge arrested for accepting bribes!

Written by Stephani Wormwood

Yesterday evening Madame Amelia Bones, Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, led a team of three Aurors and arrested Minister Cornelius Oswald Fudge on charges of accepting bribes and forgery. Mister Fudge has officially been stripped of his title as Minister of Magic and has been replaced by Madame Griselda Marchbanks, senior member of the Department of Education, until the Minstrel elections take place in November. He is being held in the Ministry holding cells until a trial can be arranged and is being guarded by two Aurors around the clock.

Madame Bones had this to say about the surprise investigation into the Minister:

“Former Minister Cornelius Fudge has been presenting outlandish and even cruel bills and laws to the Wizengamot. Earlier this year Mister Fudge had even attempted to break the adoption of Heir Harrison James Potter, also known as the Boy-Who-Lived, and remove him from his blood adopted parents. Lord Othello and several others were outraged at such a proposal and Lord Othello threatened to duel Mister Fudge for the slight against his family. Mister Fudge promptly backed down and never mentioned the proposal again, but it raised some red flags. I decided to select a group of three Aurors to investigate the office of Mister Fudge and received permission to do so from Lord Dumbledore in his position as Chief Warlock.

“This investigation took place over the course of nearly a year and we were appalled to find that
our ‘sincere’ Minister has been accepting bribes from known Death Eaters. People were being kept from rising to their proper ranks in the Ministry and others were targeted and put down or even fired for rather foolish reasons. Of course the people involved in this investigation will also be arrested and charged with bribery, blackmail and any other charges that may come to light.”

Mister Fudge was unable to comment due to being in custody. Madame Marchbanks has since officially started her term as the in-term Minister. Mister Fudge’s trial shall be judged by Lord Dumbledore and is rumored to take place in a week from today. Madame Longbottom of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom had this to say about the discovery of the now former Minister’s actions:

“Our society is still recovering from the war against You-Know-Who. We need a strong and just Minister who can lead our society in the right direction to prevent the rise of another Dark Lord/Lady. Instead, Fudge was attempting to implement laws and bills that would further displace members of our society like Muggleborns and even Halfbloods. What many people seem to fail to realize is that our society needs new blood to keep our magic strong. Gringotts has discovered the heirs and heiresses to four Most Ancient and Noble Houses which had thought to have died out because they had actually ‘Squibbed’ out. This only proves that we need to be accepting of others instead of shunning them and attempting to keep things the way they are.”

I was deeply honored to have been permitted to speak with Lord Ragnok Ironfist, the Director of England’s Gringotts bank and King of the Goblin Nation. He gladly confirmed that his employees have discovered the heirs and heiresses.

“All of my employees are instructed to offer all ‘Muggleborns’ who come through our bank the chance to take an inheritance test. Many times these tests do not yield many results but sometimes they do. In the last eight years we have discovered the heirs and heiresses to the Fraser, Campbell, MacKay and Woods families. As many will know, these families were thought to have died out during the first war against Grindelwald and in the case of the MacKay family, even before then. We shall continue to offer Muggleborns an inheritance test in hopes of finding more lost heirs/heiresses and report our findings to the Ministry as per the treaty.”

This reporter is glad that the Goblins have done a great service to our society in finding these lost heirs and heiresses. The idea of Mister Fudge trying to stop the Goblins and even stop the heirs and heiresses from claiming their rightful inheritance or gaining a foothold in our society is appalling. We need a Minister who is willing to help our society advance and change for the better, not the worse.

October 1st, 1988

Under-sectary to the Minister Madame Delores Umbridge arrested for accepting bribes, blackmail and terrorism!

Written by Silvia Boon

This morning Master Auror Alastor ‘Mad Eye’ Moody led a team of three other Aurors to the home of Madame Delores Jane Umbridge who, until that point, had held the position as Under-sectary to the Minister of Magic. Because the arrest of the now former Minister Cornelius Fudge
had been kept a secret, no one knew that the man had been removed from his position. Madame Umbridge has been charged with accepting bribes, bribing known members of the Wizengamot and heads of certain departments of the Ministry, blackmailing numerous people both in and out of the Ministry and even threatening to do harm to the families of those who threatened to report her to the Aurors.

Madame Amelia Bones, Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, had discovered Madame Umbridge’s nefarious acts during the investigation into the Minister’s office. She was horrified to see how deep the corruption ran in the Ministry and had this to say:

“When I discovered that the senior under-secretary to the Minister was even more corrupted than the man she worked for, I was horrified. Madame Umbridge had plans written down to attempt a Muggleborn Registration Act which would force Muggleborns to register with the Ministry where she would decide if they were allowed to keep the magic they had ‘stolen’. She also had every intention of having a ritual performed on ‘selected’ Muggleborns to transfer their magical cores to a ‘worthy’ Pureblood of her’s and the Minister’s choice with herself and Cornelius Fudge at the very top of that list.

“Not only that, but Madame Umbridge also had a list of people she wanted to have her ‘allies’ spy on. These ‘allies’ are people who found themselves blackmailed, threatened and bribed by the woman. The names of her intended victims have been withheld for personal safety but some of the names belong to some of the oldest and most prestigious Pureblood families in our society. Madame Umbridge apparently isn’t above using torture and death threats to see to it that people complied with her demands. Several of her ‘allies’ have already come forward and have told on how she had arrived at their homes and tortured their young children or spouse in front of them until they gave in and agreed to comply with her demands.”

Madame Umbridge is currently being held in the Ministry cells until her trial while being guarded around the clock by two Aurors. When asked if Madame Umbridge is a Death Eater, Master Auror Alastor Moody had this to say:

“The woman isn’t a Death Eater; rather she’s something much worse. She’s a silent supporter of the former Dark Lord; one that was never marked but completely agreed with that monster’s ideals and beliefs. Many people tend to forget that the Dark Lord had silent supporters and partners in his reign of terror. The silent supporters are always the hardest to find because they don’t carry the dark mark which is the main key to identifying those who had been a part of the Dark Lord’s band of terrorists. These supporters would often offer their homes, resources and money to the Dark Lord and his Death Eaters which only made things much harder on those who were attempting to fight against the monster and his group. It brings us a small amount of satisfaction that at least one of the main silent supporters has been brought down and will face justice.”

However, this just raises another question: how many silent supporters are out there? How many former Death Eater’s really managed to escape and are just biding their time before striking? This writer is certainly relieved that our justice system seems to be making leaps and bounds in the right direction in protecting all of us from these people who would attempt to kill us and children just because of parentage.
November 21st, 1988

Respected Lawyer Guy Matthews elected Minister of Magic by a landslide of votes!

Written by Stephani Wormwood

Lord Guy Matthews of the Minor and Noble House of Matthews had won the election for Minister of Magic by a landslide of votes that have taken our world by surprise. As many may know, Lord Matthews is a highly respected lawyer here in our society. He is known for his dedication, intelligence, strong sense of justice and his ruthlessness when it comes to injustice. Since he became a lawyer in 1976, Lord Matthews has never lost a case in his entire career. His former clients were all those who had been wronged in some way, shape or form by businesses and people who used them for their own gain. It is well known that Lord Matthews took the case against the owners of Obscurus Books when they were selling the fictional Harry Potter books claiming that they were true. Lord Matthews and his client: Lord Lucas Othello-adopted father of Heir Potter, won the case and the owners of Obscurus Books had to recall every copy they sold and refund everyone who had bought a book believing their lies.

Lord Matthews told of plans for our society during his campaign; plans that will help us move on from the memories of the past war and allow us all to feel safe in our homes once more. He will be sworn into office tomorrow evening in a ceremony in the atrium of the Ministry of Magic. When asked about his win and hopeful plans, Lord Matthews had this to say:

“I am honestly surprised that I won the election. Yes, I may be a Lord of a Minor and Noble House, but that was only when I entered the Wizarding world myself at the tender age of eleven. I was raised as a Muggle and was classified as a Muggleborn until my heritage was revealed and the Goblins of Gringotts confirmed that my dear mother had been a fifth generation Squib. After that day I was classified as a Halfblood. I have lived through the racism that has rooted itself in our society and I have every intention of eradicating it. I am under no delusion that it will take time to root out the corruption in our society and ensure that the best and most qualified people are in the right positions in the Ministry.

“It will take time for people to realize that their blood status will no longer matter in our world. It should have never taken hold that certain people are privileged over others. In the Non-Magical world there are laws in place to prevent people from being discriminated against and I intended to have those laws implemented here in our world. I want the people of our world to believe in the Ministry and feel like everyone who works for the Ministry has their best intentions at heart. With all the reveals of scandal and corruption it is no wonder that many people are beginning to think twice about believing in their government. I can only hope that I do our world and its people proud and earn the support they have shown me in electing me as the new minister.”

Lord Matthews had spoken about reforms in the Ministry but it is unknown where and when these reforms will begin. What is known is that his first act as Minister of Magic will be presiding over the trials of Cornelius Fudge and Delores Umbridge.

December 2nd, 1988

Lord Parkinson arrested for attempted assassination of Minister Matthews! Minister Matthews
forces plans ahead!

Written by Monty Heart

Yesterday afternoon after the trials of Cornelius Fudge and Delores Umbridge, the Wizengamot chamber descended into chaos. Just minutes after Mister Fudge and Miss Umbridge were led away to cells to await transport to Azkaban, a member of the Wizengamot turned her wand onto Minister Matthews and fired the killing curse at the man. Thankfully, Lord Othello and Lord Black saw the movement and pulled the Minister, his advisor Beverly Winston and Madame Bones out of the way of the curse. The chamber was instantly in lockdown due to the curse having been cast and Aurors who were stationed around the room had the woman stunned and disarmed in a matter of seconds. However, it was Madame Longbottom, who had been seated next to Lady Donavan, who pointed out that the Lady had been acting strangely.

It didn’t take long before the Auror’s confirmed that Lady Donavan had been placed under the Imperius curse. Everyone inside the chamber were forced to give up their wands for testing and it was revealed that Lord Parkinson had been the one who placed Lady Donavan under the Imperius curse and ordered her to kill the Minister. Lord Parkinson was quickly shackled to the interrogation chair and force-fed Veritaserum; Minister Matthews stating that the man had given up his right to freedom as soon as he placed Lady Donavan under the Unforgivable curse. Lord Parkinson admitted to having cast the curse because he didn’t want an ‘upstart Mudblood’ ruining our society. Madame Bones, under the approval of Minister Matthews and Chief Warlock Dumbledore, questioned Lord Parkinson about his time as a Death Eater which had caused an uproar among select members of the Wizengamot. The uproar was quickly silenced and Minister Matthews announced one of his largest and most world-rocking plans.

“It is well known that many Death Eaters were allowed to walk free because money had been passed into the right hands. Death Eaters claimed that they had been forced into serving the Dark Lord without providing proof of their claims and they were believed simply because they are Purebloods. I have no intention of letting that continue. Old records will be looked at and every single suspected Death Eater and imprisoned Death Eater will be brought to the Ministry where they will undergo a trial using Veritaserum. It is no longer a matter of having a person’s rights violated; it is a matter of keeping our citizens safe.

“Those who were truly forced into serving the Dark Lord will simply have to pay a small fine and perform community service for a year. However, those who joined willingly will be heavily fined and sentenced to Azkaban for, at minimum ten years depending on the crimes they committed before and during the war. These people are terrorists, plain and simple. Too long have they grown complacent and confident that they’ll be protected simply by their blood status. Ability and talent has gone ignored and criminals are walking among us because they feel safe and are sure that none will go against them. No more.”

Lord Parkinson has been fined seventy percent of his gold which will be given to magical orphanages and the homeless shelter to help those who had been affected by the war. He has also been sentenced to Azkaban for life due to his crimes committed as a Death Eater and his attempted murder of Minister Matthews. Suspected ‘former’ Death Eaters are already being rounded up though those who had sat in the Wizengamot were allowed to be present to vote for the Minister’s proposal of a net tag being placed on our country which will locate any and all Death Eaters where they will be rounded up and brought in for their trials. The motion passed
two hours after the failed attempted assassination and was put into effect by the time night fell yesterday. Aurors, Unspeakables and Hit Wizards are already sweeping through the country and bringing in all Death Eaters, including those who had managed to avoid capture and had been in hiding in the Muggle World.

In the weeks following the activation of the net tag Death Eaters were rounded up and dragged kicking and screaming to the Ministry and placed in holding cells. Even those who had been placed in Azkaban were brought out of their cells, healed and given mental evaluations to deem if they were sane enough to go through questioning once more before placed in holding cells as well. However, there were two large shocks thanks to the net tag. The tag activated at the Burrow; home of Arthur and Molly Weasley and their children. When the Auror’s went there, they went through the house and discovered a rat cowering in a corner of the room underneath the bed of the Weasley’s youngest son. When the rat made a break for the door, Moody stunned the creature before casting a spell which forced animagi out of their animal forms. Everyone was shocked to discover that the rat was actually Peter Pettigrew, the man responsible for the deaths of the Potters.

Pettigrew was arrested and Amelia reassured Arthur and Molly that they wouldn’t be in trouble for ‘harboring’ the Death Eater. Arthur had proof of purchasing a ‘common brown rat’ from the Magical Menagerie in which the owner of the store said he found the ‘rat’ taking cover in the doorway of his store during a storm some years ago. He never thought that the rat would actually be an animagus. Remus and Sirius were overjoyed at the capture of Pettigrew and were present during their former friend’s trial. Peter was in tears throughout his trial and begged for mercy though none was given. Another major shock was when the net tag went off at Crouch manor. Amelia and Alastor discovered Barty hiding his son under an invisibility cloak while under the Imperius curse. Both men were arrested and Barty told his tale of fulfilling his dying wife’s wish of having their son out of prison. He also admitted to accepting bribes from known Death Eaters in order for them to remain out of Azkaban.

Millicent Bagnold, the Minister before Fudge, was quickly arrested when Barty admitted that she had accepted bribes as well in order to keep things quiet and make evidence disappear. Amelia had a hard time getting Bagnold as she had run to Australia after her term as Minister but the Australian Magical Government soon gave the woman up after Amelia presented them with proof of Bagnold’s crimes. Bagnold confessed without having to be placed under trial and accepted her punishment without any fuss.

While Azkaban was empty, Minister Matthews ordered the removal of the Dementors and poured money into the prison so it could be renovated. The place was brightened up and prisoners were given very basic amenities such as a toilet and shower along with a bed. This generated some mixed feelings with the public but Matthews explained that by keeping them in such horrid conditions proved that they were just as low as the very people they were incarcerating. All the trials and sentencing took enough time that, by the time all the Death Eaters in England were rounded up and put through a trial, the prison was finished and Amelia had enough specially trained personal to staff it. The entire prison is warded against magic so no one but the guards could use it by having a special armband that they wore underneath their uniforms. There was a special ward that was specifically designed so animagi couldn’t transform into their animal form and escape. Once the prison was done and fully staffed, prisoners were transported to their new cells.

People like Lucius Malfoy, Alexander Nott, Gregory Goyal, Christopher Crabb and many other ‘prestigious’ Purebloods had been found guilty of being a Death Eater by free will. Many were shocked that so many Purebloods had lied just to avoid prison time. While conditions in Azkaban improved, the prisoners were still miserable because they were left alone with their thoughts and
were in total isolation except for the books they were given and the occasional visit from family. Many were saddled with a ten year sentence, though some were there for life such as Bellatrix Lestrange and her husband and brother-in-law. Knowing that their fortunes had been reduced by seventy percent crippled them in more ways than one, especially for those who had been the main financial supporters in Voldemort’s ring such as the Malfoys and Flints. What was left of their fortunes were kept by their families as normal, though this meant that a lot of the families had to deal with only being able to access a certain amount of money due to not being the head of the house.

Another major event was a sweep of the Ministry and the reform of all of the departments. Many departments were completely changed and re-staffed with people who were qualified for the job. Purebloods and Halfbloods learned quickly that it no longer mattered if their parents or grandparents had been the head of a department for years. They had to go through an interview process just like everyone else. The Department of Misuse of Muggle Artifacts became the department of Non-Magical Relations and handled communication with the Non-Magical world with Arthur Weasley as the head of the department. It had many sub-departments which covered the rapidly advancing technology and weaponry of the Non-Magical world, magical accidents happening around Non-Magicals and other such occurrences. Purebloods who had looked down on Arthur for his knowledge of Non-Magicals and their world no longer looked down upon him like they once had. The scorn had gotten worse when the man had actually gone to college in the Non-Magical world and had gained two degrees in law and engineering. Now, they were envious of his high position and massive pay increase.

Minister Matthews believed in paying the employees a fair and just wage along with benefits and health care. Every employee of the Ministry had their property warded in case someone attacked them and their families and this actually saved the Weasleys and the Clearwaters when a group of angered former Ministry workers attempted to attack the homes of the two families because they had gained high positions in the new Ministry. The Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures was completely erased and became the Department of Beings and Magical Creatures in which they had many sub-departments to handle negotiations between different races such as Goblins, Vampires, Elves, House Elves, Merpeople and other intelligent/sentient beings. The Department of Research and Development was created so Witches and Wizards could study new ways to improve everyday life for the citizens along with creating new spells, potions, wards and so forth to help Aurors, Unspeakables and Hit Wizards to take down dangerous criminals safely.

The Board of Governors for Hogwarts was eradicated and instead an Advisory Board was set up with Madame Longbottom as someone from the Wizengamot, Jadetooth as the finical aid from Gringotts, Madame Marchbanks from the Department of Education and Lord Stonewall from the Department of Beings and Magical Creatures as Albus had expressed an interest in opening Hogwarts’ doors to more races over time. Yes, this cause an uproar among many who feared for their children’s safety when the idea of accepting Vampires, Sirens, Veela and other former ‘Dark Creatures’ arose, but Albus had already thought ahead and had measures that the students and staff could take to ensure the safety of everyone. He also assured them that it would happen slowly over time so everyone could adjust and get used to the idea of different races coexisting together in harmony. The idea was soon approved and Hogwarts finally opened its doors to Elves first as a new colony had been spotted at the edges of the newest magical town that had risen since the end of the war.

Of course, that’s not to say that everything was bright and sunshiny. Many old Pureblood families were unhappy with the new laws and changes happening around them. However, they were also smart enough not to broadcast their disdain openly. Those who were in the Wizengamot attempted to have laws passed that would limit some of the advancements and shifts in power. They voted against certain laws and prevented a few from getting passed because there weren’t enough votes for the law to be passed. Shops owned by Purebloods expressed their disdain by giving subpar service to those
who weren’t ‘pure’ enough for them, making many customers uncomfortable. A small group of the
more daring Purebloods actually attacked the homes and businesses of Muggleborns and those
owned by ‘Half-breeds’ and ‘Creatures’. Sirius and Remus found their shop targeted as well since
Remus was a known Werewolf and was co-owner of the shop. Sirius was enraged at the attack but
Remus was almost…apathetic towards it.

“I’m telling you, Remus, we need to do something!” Sirius raged, leading his friend through Othello
manor with a scowl on his face.

“Padfoot, I warned you that something like this would happen sooner or later. Minister Matthews has
been making a landslide of changes and it’s setting people on edge.” Remus said, nodding to a few
people.

“Uncle Moony! Uncle Padfoot!”

Remus and Sirius smiled as a ten year-old Harry raced towards them. The ten year-old looked like he
should be nearing twelve actually. Thanks to his training and healthy diet, Harry had a lithe build and
defined muscles. Sirius had heard that his godson was steadily developing a ‘swimmers build’ thanks
to his training and the fact that Harry preferred to use the manor’s swimming pool for his main
exercise. There wasn’t an ounce of baby fat on the young boy’s body and his movements were
graceful and quick. Harry had grown his hair out and it hung down to his shoulders in shaggy layers
and was often tied back during his training. His skin was richly tanned from hours spent outside in
all-weather while his eyes shone brightly with laughter, life and intelligence. Mira flew alongside her
bonded human; her body sleek and her muscles rippling under her scales. Like her bonded human,
she had been partaking in a special and newly developed method of training for the new familiars of
Assassins. She and Harry discovered that she had the unique ability to camouflage herself; her scales
actually rippling and changing color until she can blend in perfectly with her surroundings. She had
been getting better at teleporting and she and Harry have developed a strong enough bond to where
Harry could see through her eyes.

“Prongslet!” Sirius crowed, grinning as he swept the boy off his feet and hugged him.

“I heard about the attack. Is everyone alright?” Harry asked, hugging his godfather before reaching
over to hug Remus.

“We’re all okay, cub. The store was closed for lunch and no one was inside. The wards prevented a
fire so all they did was trash the place.” Remus said, his voice soft as Harry frowned.

“Did anyone see anything? ”He asked, watching as his uncles looked at each other.

“No. They managed to break in using the back door in the small alleyway behind the shop. The
blinds on the windows were drawn so no one could see inside.” Sirius answered.

“Remus, Sirius, it’s good to see you’re safe.” Delilah said, walking down the stairs towards the two
men.

Eliza shot down the stairs after her mother and barreled into the two men, asking questions and
demanding to make sure that they were, indeed, okay. The sound of running footsteps made they all
look towards the hall that led to the back door. Harry grinned when he saw Kano rushing towards
them. Kano slammed into Sirius, causing the animagus to let out an ‘oomph’ sound as the wind was
knocked out of him. He wrapped his arms around the small woman and held her close, feeling her
arms tighten around him. Their relationship was still relatively new as he had asked Kano out a few
months ago after having gotten to know the woman since he first moved into the manor. He found
Kano to be a delightful woman: witty, intelligent and compassionate. She had a calmness about her
that had drawn him in and, when he had first asked to court her, she had demanded to know his intentions. He admitted that he was looking for something long term and he could honestly see himself with her for many years. That had apparently been the right thing to say as Kano had accepted his offer and they’ve been together ever since.

Yes, there are moments when they argue like any couple. Sirius being worried about Kano whenever she was sent on a mission and was unable to contact him was a big one. However, he knew that she was a highly skilled Master Assassin and was always careful during her missions. Kano forced Sirius to finally grow up after he learned that Severus was actually an Assassin. There had been tension between the two men, though Sirius finally apologized fully to Severus and made no effort to stop the man from fighting him. Of course he had come out worse than Severus after their little fight, but since then they had been getting along and were actually able to have civil conversation and be in the same room with each other. Sirius knew and respected Severus’ position as a double agent; which he had never appreciated before. Not only was Severus a spy for Albus, but he was a spy for Lucas as well: reporting on Voldemort and Albus to Lucas.

“I heard about the attack.” Kano said, worry in her voice as she pulled back enough to look up at Sirius.

“I’m okay; everyone’s okay. All of us were out for lunch talking about opening a sister location in Hogsmeade. We’ve spoken with Dragonfang and there’s more than enough money to refurnish the store and get things back up.” Sirius said, gently running a hand down Kano’s cheek as she slowly relaxed.

“I can’t believe no one saw anything in broad daylight!” Eliza said, frowning as the others looked at her.

“They likely used a Notice-Me-Not charm before entering the back alley. Amelia has already promised to increase the Auror patrols in the alley and towns. There have been more attacks in Merlin’s Village and Phoenix Town.” Remus said.

“I get it that Minister Matthews has been making many advancements since he was elected but it’s been good for our society. Hogwarts is back on top as one of the best Magical Schools in the world and more and more people are flocking to our society. Not only that, but our people are more comfortable wandering around and even living in the Muggle world. Why can’t people understand that it’s for the best for everyone if we’re able to blend in with Muggles?” Sirius asked, frowning as the others sighed.

“Because many of the darker families want to keep their source of power and that power has been removed.” Harry said, Eliza and Delilah nodding in agreement.

“While the Minister is helping to ensure that the Dark Lord won’t have his powerbase, there are still the families of his Death Eaters who will want to join him because he will promise to return their powerbase. Minister Matthews has implemented a new law stating that all Ministry employees have to take a vow to be loyal to the Ministry. It prevents Death Eaters from gaining a foothold in the Ministry, but does nothing against the silent supporters. They can be loyal to the Ministry and Riddle.” Delilah said, her voice soft as Remus and Sirius sighed.

“We’ve sent everyone home for today but tomorrow we’re going to clean the shop and take stock over what needs to be repaired and replaced. Our factory is in the Muggle world and is under a Fidelius charm so no one but our employees know where it’s located. There’s no telling what damage could be done if that place was found.” Sirius said, shuddering at the thought.

“The potion labs alone would create a massive explosion.” Remus added, watching as the others
shook their heads.

“Will you be staying?” Delilah asked.

“If you don’t mind.” Remus said, smiling as Delilah scoffed and shook her head.

“Please, Remus, you know you’re always welcome here. I know you’ve moved into the flat above your shop but you’ll always have a room here.” She said.

Harry returned to his combat training while Eliza headed off for her free-running training. Kano, Remus, Sirius and Delilah headed to one of the parlors where a House Elf served them tea and light snacks. Delilah and Kano updated Remus and Sirius on Harry’s training, to which both men puffed up with pride as Kano praised Harry’s stealth and his evasion. Delilah remarked on Harry’s high grades in school, which Remus was very proud of. It was apparent that his cub had taken after Lily’s love of learning and her intelligence. Oh, don’t get him wrong, James was intelligent in his own right but he hadn’t been very studious and instead turned his intelligence towards planning pranks; same with Sirius. If he was honest with himself, Remus could see Harry being sorted into either Gryffindor or Ravenclaw when he went to Hogwarts. The boy was certainly intelligent and studious enough to get into the house of the Ravens and he was also brave and courageous enough to be in the house of the Lions.

“How is your mother doing, Siri?” Delilah asked, watching as Sirius sighed.

“The Healers have reported an improvement on her mental health but her magic has begun attacking her body because of her madness. When I visited yesterday she…she reverted back to the mother I once knew. She was shocked and horrified in learning that Regulus had been killed by Voldemort and she was even more horrified in learning that she had disowned me. We’re reconnecting.” Sirius said, smiling sadly as Kano leaned against his side in comfort.

“Have the Healers predicted how long she has left?” Delilah asked, her voice soft and filled with compassion.

“About a year or so according to their scans. They’ve placed a block on her magic to slow the assault on her body but it’s been happening for years now; even before she was committed. She’s very quiet and has taken to writing and reading to pass her time.” Sirius explained, the others nodding in understanding.

“She was always strict with us, but there was a time that she did love us. It’s nice having that part of her again, even if it is for a small amount of time.” He added, leaning into Kano as she reached up and ran a hand through his hair soothingly.

“You’re doing the right thing, Sirius.” Remus said, smiling gently as his friend looked at him and nodded.

“I know, Moony…I know.”

-XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX-
Shopping and Hogwarts

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Harry Potter and co. don’t belong to me. Assassin’s Creed and co. don’t belong to me. I’m just taking some credit for the plot and original characters. Fire Lizards belong to the talented Anne McCaffrey. In no way, shape or form am I making money from this.

Betas: Inuyasha-loves-Hanyou-Kagome, CrazyJanaCat

Edited On: 12/9/17

Main Story Warnings: A.U.-severe-, characters are OOC, canon is only a minor guideline, crossover, swearing, violence, gore, character death, Light Grey!Harry, Assassin!Harry, modern technology, OC’s abound, Ron!Molly!Ginny!Bashing, Dumbledore!Bashing

Pairings: James/Lily, Sirius/Kano, Remus/Emma, Harry/Luna, Neville/Hermione, Dean/Millicent

Author’s Note: Hoo boy! This is where thing’s get interesting! Now, this chapter features the Hogwarts letters arriving and Harry and Dean going shopping. I do have some surprises in store for you all and I hope that you like what I have planned. I will reassure all of you that Harry and Dean aren’t all powerful or can’t make mistakes, they do make mistakes and you’ll see that happening in future chapters. Now, I’ve just realized that Dean’s younger brother is Sam…yes I know those are the same names from Supernatural and I can honestly say that I didn’t think of that when naming Dean’s siblings! It’s only just hit me which is kinda sad considering I love that show. Anywho! Keep in mind that Harry and Dean are still considered Assassins in training or even Novice Assassins. They won’t be going on any huge, death defying missions until they’re older. Anyway, I hope you enjoy this chapter and let me know what you think!

Challenge: DZ2’s Way of the Warrior challenge. For more information look to the first chapter or DZ2’s forums.

[Parseltongue]

[Telepathic Speech]

Emphasis on words/Spells

Text

-XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXxx-

July 31st, 1991
Harry jolted awake mere seconds before his digital alarm clock went off. Rolling over, he hurriedly slapped the button on the top of the offending item. Getting up, he rushed through his morning routine and was soon dressed in a pair of jeans and t-shirt. Running out of his room, Harry grinned as a few people called out a greeting to him, shaking their heads fondly as the now eleven year-old sprinted through the halls and hurried down the stairs. Harry nearly skidded into the dining room; a grin on his face when he saw his parents, sister, godfather, Remus, Dean and Dean’s family. The House Elves had prepared a small feast for them and Harry was more than happy to see some of his favorite dishes.

“Morning!” He called, walking over to his mother to kiss her cheek.

“Good morning, son. Eager?” Lucas asked, grinning as Harry flushed and sat down between his sister and Dean.

“Lucas, don’t tease him.” Cassie said, smiling fondly at Harry as he grinned at the woman while piling food onto his plate.

“Has my letter come?” Harry asked.

“It’s being checked for portkeys and such as we speak.” Lucas said, making Harry nod in understanding.

“Do you really think that someone would try to take Harry using his Hogwarts letter?” Megan asked, concern in her voice as Lucas and Delilah looked at her.

“We can never be too careful. There have been attempts before so we’ve always screened all incoming mail.” Delilah said, Megan nodding lightly even though she still looked worried.

Breakfast was a lively affair in which Lucas and Delilah admitted that they had a party planned for their son later that day in which Cassie had plans on taking Harry and Dean out to an amusement park for a few hours while the others get ready for the party. Conversation turned to Harry and Dean’s training, in which both boys puffed up in pride as their parents praised their skills and how far they’d come in training so far. They had finally moved beyond using practice swords and were actually using swords with real blades though there was a protective barrier of magic so the blades didn’t actually draw blood but left behind a red mark on the skin and clothing as if it had cut through.

After they finished breakfast, Mira flew into the dining room as everyone began standing. In her front talons was a letter and Harry’s eyes widened when he saw it. She landed on his shoulder, her tail automatically curling around his neck to help gain her balance. Harry accepted the letter from his familiar and carefully broke the wax seal. The parchment felt heavy in his hands as he pulled out the acceptance letter and the list of items he’d need for his First Year. Eliza crowded in close, her eyes wide as she eagerly read the letter over Harry’s arm.

**Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry**

**Headmaster: Albus Dumbledore (Order of Merlin, First Class, Grand Sorc., Chf. Warlock, Supreme Mugwump, International Confed. of Wizards)**

**Dear Mister Harry James Potter-Othello**

*We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please find enclosed a list of all necessary books and equipment. Term begins on September 1. We await your owl by no later than July 31.*
Yours sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall

Deputy Headmistress

Harry set down his acceptance letter before taking out the supply list. The list was written on the same heavy parchment as the acceptance letter. Eliza was nearly vibrating in happiness as she knew that she’d only have two more years before she would be getting her own acceptance letter.

Below is a list of items the students shall need.

Uniform

First Year students will require:

- Three sets of the male/female Spring uniform
- Three sets of the male/female Winter uniform
- Three sets of plain work robes: black
- One winter cloak: black with silver fastenings
- One pair of work gloves: dragon hide or similar
- Two pairs of physical education uniforms: white shirt, black shorts
- One pair of swim wear

Students may bring everyday clothing for all seasons for weekends. Please ensure all clothing has the student’s names on the tags.

Equipment

Please ensure that students have the follow items for their classes:

- Trunk: please have student’s initials written on the trunk. Family crest is optional.
- Book Bag: Please have student’s initials written on the flap.
- Wand
- Cauldron: pewter, standard size two.
- One set of glass or crystal phials
- One set of brass scales
- Parchment: for assignments, quills/fountain pens, ink bottles.

Students are allowed to bring personal items from home. Enclosed is a list of rules and items that are banned.

Course Books

Please ensure that students write their names on the inside cover.

- One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi by Phyllida Spore
- The Standard Books of Spells Grade 1 by Miranda Goshawk
- A History of Magic by Bathilda Bagshot
- Magical Theory by Adalbert Waffling
- A Beginner’s Guide to Transfiguration by Emeric Switch
“At least you lot don’t have to wear those stupid pointed hats.” Sirius said, Remus snickering as he remembered the hats.

“We had to wear them at formal functions except for balls. Of course James and Sirius here kept making jokes and had charmed their hats to change different colors throughout the feasts.” Remus said, Sirius laughing as Delilah shook her head fondly.

“What are the plans for today?” Harry asked, eagerness in his voice as he looked to his parents.

“Well, you and Dean are going to get your true wands today. Master Silverhook will be arriving soon and then you lot will be going with Cassie to the amusement park. Later tonight we’ll be flooing over to the house so your Non-Magical friends can come over for the party.” Lucas explained, smiling as his son and Dean looked at each other with wide eyes.

Both boys had been told of true wands. True wands weren’t really Ministry approved as they used rare wand cores and woods that weren’t normally used in ‘main stream’ wands. The wands were often multi-cored and, at times, were made of more than one wood. When that happened the wand had to contain the blood of the user in order for the cores to work together without fighting against each other for domination in the wand. The wands were more powerful and more finely tuned to their user and didn’t have the trace that was on wands created by known wand makers like Ollivander. Yes, they would still get their ‘Ministry’ approved wands, but they need to get used to their true wands before then. They talked about what kind of wand they hoped for before they were interrupted by another Assassin who led the way for a rather tall and strong Goblin dressed in a dark tunic and armor.

“Master Silverhook, thank you for coming.” Lucas said, rising and bowing to the large Goblin who returned the gesture.

“It is no trouble. Lord Othello.” He said, looking Harry and Dean over with a critical eye.

“Now, this process isn’t simply you two picking an already made wand. I’ll be crafting a wand for you specifically. You’ll place your hand in a bag containing the wood and cores needed to make your wands. They should appear in your hand.” Silverhook explained, Harry and Dean nodding in understanding.

Dean went first as the eldest and had his measurements taken. His siblings watched with avid interest, though they knew that none of them would gain a specially made wand. These wands were made specifically for Assassins due to their power and how long it actually took to master them. Yes, they could get custom wands but it was hellishly expensive for people who weren’t Assassins to get them. Dean held still until the measuring tape finished and watched as Silverhook pulled out a dark blue bag. Reaching into the bag, Dean focused his magic into his hand and only had to wait a few seconds before he felt something fly into his hand. Pulling out a block of light colored wood, he set it down and Silverhook nodded his head.

“Red oak; a find wand for a duelist. Now, for the core.”
Again, Dean placed his hand in another bag, this one dark red. It took a little while longer before he, shockingly, felt two items fly into his hand. Both felt rather soft and fragile and Dean was careful as he drew out his hand and placed the items on the coffee table. One of the items was a dark strand of fur that all of them instantly knew belonged to a Werewolf while the second item was a rather large and beautiful dark grey feather.

“Werewolf hair and a Griffon feather. You are an interesting young man, Lord Woods.” Silverhook said, grinning as Dean stared at his cores in wonder.

Harry stepped up next and bowed to Silverhook, which the Goblin returned. Drawing on his magic, Harry placed his hand into the first bag and jumped when his wand wood instantly smacked into his hand. Pulling out the block of wood, he grinned when he saw that it was a very pale color, nearly white.

“Most interesting, Lord Potter-Othello. Yew is very rarely used nowadays in wands given their reputations as having close connections with life and death.” Silverhook said, the others listening intently.

Before Harry could reach into the bag containing the cores, Mira flew off of Harry’s shoulder and landed on the coffee table. Instead of speaking, she turned her head and gently pulled off one of her scales. Harry and the others winced as they knew that the action hurt but Mira simply set the scale down on the table before breathing a deep blue and white flame over it. The scale began shimmering and seemed to crystallize before Harry held his hand over it. In reaction to his magic the crystallized scale jumped into his hand, making him grin as Silverhook chuckled deeply.

“Looks like you have your first core. Let us see if you have a second one.” He said, holding out the bag to the preteen.

Harry reached into the bag and drew upon his magic. It took a minute before he felt something fine and delicate touch his palm inside the bag. Curling his fingers around it, he withdrew his hand and gently placed a fine, black hair on the table. Silverhook’s eyes widened in surprise and he looked from Harry to the core with interest and wonder.

“Thestral hair. I have only worked with this core once before and the owner of that wand went on to do many great things, Lord Potter-Othello.” He said, the others looking at Harry with great interest as Harry stared at his cores with wide eyes.

Silverhook drew a small vial of blood from the two boys in order to bind their cores so they’d work together. He promised to have the wands finished within a week before carefully collecting the materials and putting them away. After Silverhook was shown out of the manor the group began talking. Harry thanked Mira for willingly donating one of her scales and fire, to which she simply brushed off his thanks and stated that she had known her scales and fire would be a part of his wand for a year now. Lucas and Delilah disappeared for a moment before returning with two packages for the boys. Dean and Harry eagerly tore into the packages and were stunned at the sight of wand high quality wand holsters.

“You’ll need to keep your true wands hidden unless the need to use them arises. These holsters are specially made to be feather light, invisible and are enchanted so the wands cannot be summoned and will not show up on any scan done on you. We’ll also begin training you to cast with your ‘off’ hand.” Lucas explained, his wife nodding as Harry and Dean listened intently.

“That way, should you ever find yourself in a magical battle you will be able to cast using both hands instead of limited to one. It’s also always a good idea for an Assassin to have a trick up their sleeve.” Delilah said, grinning as Dean and Harry smirked.
“Alright you two head upstairs and put your things away. We have an amusement park to get to.” Cassie said, making Harry and Dean whoop and jump to their feet.

“What else is coming?” Harry asked, heading towards the door.

“Moony and I are tagging along of course. Can’t let Cassie handle all you sprogs alone. Kano and Hector are coming along as well for security.” Sirius said, making Dean and Harry nod.

Harry and Dean hurried away to get ready with Dean’s siblings running after. All of them were looking forward to spending time at the amusement park, including little Sam who was nearly four. Lucas and Delilah smiled before handing Cassie a small pouch filled with money. The woman tried to refuse, but they explained that it was for Harry so she wouldn’t be paying for anything that he wanted. Sirius and Remus protested as both men wanted a chance to spoil Harry, though Delilah and Lucas gave them a sharp look, knowing that both men had likely bought Harry an expensive birthday present. The sharp look made Sirius and Remus quiet down, though they offered sheepish smiles at the couple. Sirius, Remus and Cassie stood and headed to the main hallway where they only had to wait a few more minutes before the kids hurried towards them with Kano and Hector following behind.

“Let’s go!” Little Jessica cried, making the others laugh at her eagerness.

Harry, Dean, Megan, Sasha, Jessica and Sam had a blast at the amusement park. Cassie and the other adults had a hard time keeping the excitable group together and keeping them out of trouble. However, Harry and Dean were thankfully helping the adults out. They went from ride to ride and made sure to even go on rides that Sam could go on such as the merry-go-round and the smaller rollercoasters which were designed for young children. Sirius and Remus did manage to pay for an early lunch for the entire group, despite Cassie’s complaints and glares. Of course all of them got souvenirs from the various shops and games which they had a lot of fun trying to win the different prizes. By the time two o’clock came around, all of them were getting tired and were ready to head back home.

Back at the manor, Cassie put Sam down for a nap in their house while Harry got ready for his party at the house his parents owned. He really did understand the need for a seemingly normal house, though at the same time it made him wish that his friends could come to the manor and see where he really lived. Merlin, even Susan and Hannah weren’t allowed at the estate. The few times that they had hung out it was always at Bones Manor or at Potter Manor. Yes, he did understand that it was because of security and the safety of not only him and his family but for all of the Assassins that lived on the estate.

Flooing over to the house, Harry was surprised and rather happy when Hannah, Susan and Madame Bones arrived not long after they got there. Harry wisely opened their gifts first, which revealed some rather interesting books and a miniature broom along with Harry’s favorite player from Ireland’s team. All of them finished decorating the house and the large fenced in backyard which featured a pool and a trampoline. Guests started arriving by three and, thankfully, Susan and Hannah had no problem connecting with all of the friends Harry and Dean had made in primary school. All of their friends, bar Hannah and Susan of course, were saddened in learning that Harry and Dean are heading to a private school, but they were also glad that their friends were off to a good school. Snacks were continuous and all of the preteens headed outside after using the guest rooms and bathrooms to change into swimsuits and trunks.

Amelia had raised an eyebrow when she saw some of the bikinis, though she didn’t say anything. The kids were having a blast hanging out in the water or sunning themselves on the loungers. The
adults talked inside though Amelia and two others were outside watching over the kids to make sure no one got hurt. Amelia was rather surprised that she was able to connect so well with some of the parents. Many of the women were very supportive when they discovered that she was actually Susan’s aunt and not her mother and there were many compliments on how kind and well-mannered Susan and Hannah were. A few of the men/fathers were surprised in learning that she was pretty high ranking in a special branch of the police force. They, like many other men, didn’t think much of her because they fell for the ‘dumb blonde’ stereotype. A lot of the women/mothers grinned at the dumbfounded looks on the mens’ faces.

The kids eventually got out of the pool and showered before changing back into their normal clothes. They were soon running around outside and even headed to the local movie theater to catch a new movie that had come out a few days ago. Harry, thankfully, had spent time in the neighborhood and town so he knew his way around pretty well and so did Dean. All of them had a great time just laughing, hanging out and exploring; getting to be just kids. Dean and Harry loved the chance to drop all the airs and titles they had to carry, though both of them were keenly aware of Hector and Kano following their group in the shadows and crowds. They also sensed the presence of Susan’s bodyguard: Kingsley Shacklebolt, following nearby as well. Of course they weren’t expecting trouble but you could never be too careful. Having two trainee Assassins and the niece of the head of the D.M.L.E. were very tempting targets.

They made it back home before dark fell and were pleased to see pizza and chips waiting for them. For Susan, this was a day of many firsts for her. She has never had pizza, chips or gone to a movie theater. Hannah, on the other hand, was a Halfblood and her mum had made sure that she’d be comfortable in the Muggle world so they often took trips to the Muggle world for family days or even a girl’s day out. While they ate dinner, they happily watched a few Disney movies such as The Fox and the Hound, The Aristocats and the Sword in the Stone. Even Amelia was entertained by the movies, especially the Sword in the Stone which made Sirius and Remus grin and chuckle. After movies was cake and ice cream, which was a hit since Harry had gotten an ice cream cake from a local bakery. Harry grinned when he saw that it was in the shape of a football. He and Dean had played for a local youth team since they were six and were bloody good at the game if you were to ask them.

Once dessert was finished and cleaned up, all of the kids were demanding for Harry to open his presents. Sitting him down on the couch, each of his friends took turns handing their gifts over to Harry. He grinned at the many Manchester United paraphernalia, including a jersey with the named Potter-Othello on the back. Dean was an Arsenal fan so they often had plenty of arguments about the teams and players, though it was all in good fun of course. He also loved the new hoodies, shirts and movies that they also gave him. After that, things wound down and his friends were slowly heading back home. Of course Hannah, Susan and Amelia were the last to leave since they flooed over, though they were happy since that meant they got to watch a few more movies. Amelia helped to finish cleaning up and thanked Lucas and Delilah for inviting the girls.

“It meant a lot that they got an invitation.” Amelia said, her voice soft as she watched Harry and Dean explain something in the movie they were watching.

“Harry and Dean don’t have too many friends in the Magical world so those they do have mean a lot to them. Besides, they figured that Susan and Hannah would have a good time even if they’re around Muggles.” Remus said, Delilah nodding her head as she smiled at Amelia.

“It’s going to be hard on the boys; leaving behind their Muggle friends. However, they’re determined to spend time with them during the holidays.” Delilah said, wrapping up the last of the leftover cake.

“I remember on how Emily, Hannah’s mother, struggled in keeping up with her Muggle friends.
They made it work though by sending letters during the school year. However, with the way technology is advancing, Harry and Dean’s friends might wonder why they’re not using emails.” Amelia said, the other adults nodding though they looked worried.

“Though the Department of Research and Development is doing rather well in bringing our society up to date with technology but it is hard breaking traditions.” Lucas mused, Amelia sighing as she nodded.

“Did you hear about the new mailboxes? The post office is overjoyed with the new development but there’s also a small fear that using owls will run out of fashion.” Amelia said.

“Mailboxes?” Sirius asked, frowning lightly as the blonde nodded.

“They’re small three by three boxes that are divided in half. One half is for receiving mail and the other half is for outgoing mail. Apparently, there are no restrictions for weight or size of packages as they shrink as soon as they touch the side of the mailbox. For a fee, you can rent a mailbox if you can’t afford one. The post office is also offering the service of screening mail which will remove any harmful enchantments, portkeys, or substances that might be hidden in letters. They’ll still stay in business, but their owls might not be used as much.” Amelia explained, the others listening with rapt attention.

“I can see how that will be a very popular item. You won’t have to worry about an owl getting harmed in severe weather or being sabotaged or intercepted. However, I doubt people will forget or stop using owls. Many Witches and Wizards have familiars in owls.” Remus said, smiling gently at the thoughtful look on Amelia’s face.

“Scribbulus has also started using embossed stationary. I stopped by his shop a few days ago and saw some displays for the Ministry, Gringotts and a few popular businesses.” Delilah said, smiling as the other adults looked at her.

“Oh?!” Sirius asked, interest in his voice as he looked at his friend.

“Mhm. For a fee, of course, you can have your family crest embossed on a stack of stationary or even your business’ symbol. I’ve already bought a decent sized stack for our family. We’re going to be using them on official letters such as correspondence between allied houses and invitations to parties and balls.” Delilah said, her husband smiling as he wrapped an arm around her waist.

“We should get some for the shop, Siri. We have a lot of mail order customers and it’ll help make us seem more…official.” Remus said, Sirius nodding in agreement with a grin on his face.

They talked for a little while longer before Amelia finally took Hannah and Susan home, though the girls protested the entire time. Harry and Dean promised to see them again soon before saying goodbye. Hector and Kano locked up the house and set the alarm before all of them flopped back to the estate where the kids made their way to their rooms as the excitement of the day caught up with them. The adults stayed up for a while longer, making plans on taking the kids to Diagon Alley after they got their true wands from Silverhook.

“Harry and Dean need to go to Gringotts before we start school shopping.” Lucas said, sitting back in the loveseat next to his wife.

“Why? I thought those cards from Gringotts are linked to their vaults.” Cassie said, frowning lightly as the others nodded.

“Don’t worry, they are. However, now that Harry and Dean are eleven they’ll need their Head of
House Rings. You see, both Harry and Dean are and will become, Lords upon their maturity. The rings signify their status in our world and both are expected to wear the rings by those who know of their status. Harry will wear the Head of House ring for the Potter family and he’ll also wear a ring that signifies he’s the heir of House Othello. Dean will wear the Head of House ring for the Woods family. Upon their maturity the rings will be replaced by the rings that the Lords of their House would wear.” Lucas explained, holding out his right hand and showing Cassie a gold ring with a ruby which had a crest in the center of the gem.

“These rings are charmed, of course. They protect the wearer from minor jinxes, curses and hexes. They also flash when detecting harmful and mind altering potions and charms. My ring has already saved me many times from poisoning attempts.” Sirius said, showing Cassie his own ring which was white gold with a diamond which had the Black family crest in the center of the gem.

“Of course when they marry their spouse will be given a similar ring which signifies their status.” Delilah added, showing off her own ring which was a copy of her husband’s though in a more delicate and feminine style.

“It’s also another way to pay. Store keepers can take temporary imprints of the crest on the ring and charge it directly to the vault. Of course the imprints have charms on them that won’t allow them to be copied.” Remus said, Cassie nodding lightly in understanding.

“I’m just…well worried that the other children might be jealous. I know that Sasha is envious that Dean is an Assassin…” She said, sighing softly as Delilah gently squeezed her shoulder.

“If Dean doesn’t have any sons then the firstborn son of any of his sisters would become Lord Woods or his first male grandson. If he doesn’t want to claim the title of Lord Woods then it would pass to Samuel.” She explained, making Cassie frown.

“Why can’t one of my girls become Lady Woods?” She asked, confusion in her voice as Sirius sighed and took a sip of his brandy.

“As you know, our society was and…well still is mostly male dominate. Men held the power in our society and only recently has that begun changing. Many old families are Patriarchal with the eldest son inheriting the family line and fortune. Families with only daughters normally enter betrothal contracts with their husband taking on the title as Lord of the family upon their marriage and when the daughter’s father is ready to pass on the title. There are a few families that allowed both men and women to hold the title as Lord or Lady of the House and hold the power. The Founders of Hogwarts were like that along with the Peverell, Pendragon, Mayweather and Othello.” Remus explained, grinning as Cassie looked at Lucas and Delilah in surprise.

“It’s true. If Harry doesn’t wish to inherit our family line then it will go to Eliza or his second eldest child. His eldest child will hold the Potter title.” Lucas said, answering Cassie’s unasked question.

“Is it possible to change the rules?” She asked, frowning as the others looked at each other.

“It is possible but it’s frowned upon. A lot of our society clings to old traditions which are why we’re struggling with accepting so many changes. Many of Minister Matthews’s supporters are Muggleborns and Halfbloods who have a foot in both worlds. Of course there are Purebloods, like myself, Sirius and Amelia, who are accepting of change and welcome it. However, there are many who balk and claim that we’re forgetting tradition in the process of catching up with the rest of the world. Our society was the least developed besides a few in Africa. The I.C.W. is helping us to advance by sending in experts in certain fields to train people in the Ministry.” Remus answered.

“Now, what’s this business about betrothal contracts?” She asked, making Delilah giggle softly.
“Betrothal contracts are still popular in our society. It’s all about making connections between families, gaining more political power and wealth for many families. Some families, not many, refuse to send their daughters to school. Instead they keep them at home and teach them how to be a future Lady of a house and a good wife and mother. However, people have begun realizing that their children can make future powerful allies in school and are sending any and all children to Hogwarts to make connections and allies. Now, families like the Potters would only have their children enter betrothal contracts after letting their children date and come to them and their boyfriend/girlfriend’s family about a possible engagement. I know that James and Lily entered a betrothal contract when they were engaged in their Seventh Year.” Sirius explained, Cassie listening intently though she was still frowning.

“The contracts are ways of protecting the interests of both Houses. It’s a way to ensure that both lines will continue without being taken in by the Head of the family that they are marrying into. Say Harry and Susan wish to marry. Amelia and I would encourage them to enter a betrothal contract. Susan is the last of her family, just as Harry is the last of his. The contract will stipulate that the eldest child that they have will be in line to become Lord Potter. The second eldest child, likely a male unless they were to change the family magicks to allow a female to inherit the line, will become Lord Bones. Should they only have one child, that child’s first born will become Lord/Lady Bones and their second child will become Lord/Lady Potter.” Lucas added, watching as Cassie nodded in understanding.

“So, Dean should enter a betrothal contract when he’s found someone who he wants to marry.” She said, the others nodding in agreement.

“I guess it makes sense…” She muttered, watching as Remus smiled gently at her.

“Don’t worry, Cassie. It won’t happen until Dean’s much older.” He said, the woman nodding as she relaxed.

-August 10th, 1991-

Delilah and Cassie smiled as their sons eagerly looked around the Leaky Cauldron. Megan, Sasha, Jessica and Samuel had remained at the estate and were enjoying the horseback riding lessons they were getting. Of course Amanda was with them on protection detail, though Lucas had wanted another Assassin to go with his wife and son. However, Amanda and Delilah had reminded him that both of them were more than capable of handling any attacks and Harry and Dean weren’t completely defenseless either. Harry and Dean were both armed with their new true wands, which they had been practicing with ever since Silverhook brought them over on the fifth. Both boys had been shocked with the power of their spells and how their magic had reacted when they first picked up their wands. Dean’s eyes had begun glowing and doves had shot out of his wand as his magic celebrated. Harry’s eyes glowed as well as a powerful wind whipped up around him and his wand shot red and silver sparks into the air.

Their spells were massively more powerful than when they had begun learning with training wands. Of course they knew that the training wands weren’t too powerful but still, the boost had taken them by surprise. Now, they had enough control over their new wands that their parents thought it was time for them to get their main wands and the rest of their supplies. Both boys agreed to go shopping early so they wouldn’t be captured by the last minute school shopping rush. Heading out the back door, they reached the small alley behind the Leaky Cauldron where Delilah pulled out her wand and opened the entrance. As Diagon Alley came into view, the boys hurried ahead a few feet, grinning as they looked around. Both were saddened that they couldn’t bring their new Nimbus two-
thousands with them to school, even if it was just to go flying in their time off. However, they knew that they could enjoy their brooms during the holidays.

“Alright, Gringotts first and then we’ll start shopping.” Amanda said.

They headed up the alley to the large, white marble bank, though Harry and Dean pointed out a few things on the way that they wanted to stop and look at when they fully began shopping. Stepping inside the bank, they waited in one of the lines for the tellers and asked to speak with their account managers. Harry and Delilah headed off to speak with Goldspear while Dean and Cassie headed off to speak with Wolfclaw, the Woods account manager. It took about fifteen minutes before the group met in the main lobby, both boys now wearing their Head of House rings. Heading out to the alley, they looked around at the different shops before looking at their lists.

“Alright, where to first?” Cassie asked, frowning lightly as she looked at the list.

“Masters’ Trunks and Bags should be our first stop. The boys can get their trunks and shoulder bags which can be used to carry around our purchases.” Delilah said, nodding towards a nearby shop in which there was an open trunk and various shoulder bags on display in the windows.

“We need to stop by Padfoot and Moony’s shop before we leave.” Dean said, looking up at his mum as she smiled.

“We will, don’t worry.” She said, reaching out and ruffling her son’s hair which made Dean groan and pull away.

They soon entered Master’s Trunks where the owner walked over to them. He took one look at the rings on the boy’s fingers before bowing slightly to them and asking what they were looking for. Delilah took charge; ordering two trunks with three compartments lined in Mokeskin with Feather Light charms and wheels on one end. Mister Masters offered a magical signature lock, to which the boys agreed on. Neither of them wanted any of their school mates getting into their trunk and possibly stealing anything even though standard trunks had anti-theft charms on them. They also had their House crests placed on the lid of the trunks, mostly to make them stand out more while they were being sorted during the first night. Mister Masters explained that it’d take a few hours for the trunks to be ready, in which Cassie explained that it would be fine and asked if he could send them to the Leaky Cauldron for them to pick up after they finished shopping. Mister Masters nodded and pointed them in the direction of the bags before disappearing behind the counter.

Harry and Dean looked through the various bags before they found one that they both liked. Harry chose a black leather bag lined with Mokeskin and charmed Feather Light. He also spotted the runes for a permanent cushioning charm on the strap of the bag. Dean picked out a light tan leather bag with the same enchantments that Harry’s bag had. Both boys ensured that their bags had an anti-theft charm on them and had their names sewn onto the main flap of the bags in gold and black thread. After paying for the trunks and bags, they headed back outside and fully began their shopping trip. As Ollivander’s was across from Master’s, they headed to the wand shop where they boys were instantly on edge because of the dimly lit shop and the silence. Mister Ollivander’s sudden appearance made them jump while Cassie pressed a hand to her chest and Delilah and Amanda grinned.

Dean ended up going first and only had to try a few wands before a wand made of ebony with a core of a Dragon Heartstring chose him. Sparks shot out of the end of the wand as Ollivander smiled and praised the choice of wand. Dean flushed slightly and chose a wrist holster and a wand cleaning kit before paying for all three items. Harry went next and his ‘fitting’ dragged on for nearly fifteen minutes with the pile of rejected wand boxes grew on the counter. However, Ollivander seemed more and more excited with every rejected wand, which made Harry wonder about the aged man’s
sanity. Ollivander finally went quiet before disappearing from view among the rows of shelves which were filled with wand boxes. Harry glanced back at his mum, Cassie and Dean before looking forward when the wand maker walked back carrying a dust covered wand box.

Harry watched as Ollivander opened the box and hesitated slightly before handing it over to him. Picking the wand up, Harry blinked as his magic coursed through his body and birds shot from the tip of the wand. He was rather surprised but also pleased that another wand had chosen him. However, his good mood was instantly dampened when Ollivander remarked on how his new wand is the brother wand to Voldemort’s. Of course Harry knew all about his parents murders and that there was a very high chance that Voldemort wasn’t dead. Though, it was slightly disturbing that his wand was connected to Voldemort’s. Thanking the man, Harry paid for his wand, wand cleaning kit and a holster like Dean had. Exiting the store, Harry and Dean popped their wands into their holsters and practiced withdrawing them a few times before they moved onto the next shop.

They picked up their cauldrons which also came with a kit for First Years which have their needed phials along with a stirring rod, scales, cleaning kit and the various tools that they’d need for that class. Heading to another shop, they picked up their telescopes before heading over to Scribbulus’ shop. Harry and Dean both chose two fountain pens besides their normal stock of quills since fountain pens closely mimicked the writing of quills. They figured that they could use the pens for note taking and the quills for their assignments. They grabbed plenty of parchment and ink while their mothers bought stationary for home. After that was Madame Malkin’s, in which Dean and Harry groaned and protested when their mums decided that they had have a completely new wardrobe.

“Harrison, you’ve gained three inches in height and you’re filling out more in the shoulders. You need a new wardrobe.” Delilah insisted, ushering her son onto a small platform so one of the shop assistants could measure him.

“But, Mum…” Harry groaned, huffing when his mother raised an eyebrow at him as if daring him to finish his complaint.

The assistant fought back a giggle as she took the boy’s measurements; having seen the same scene play out many times before. Beside Harry, Dean was scowling at his own mother as Cassie spoke with the assistant who was measuring him about the new styles that had come in and what was new in the shop. All four of them glanced towards the door as the small bell above it chimed. Delilah watched as a striking blonde haired woman with a streak of black in her hair walked in the shop. The woman’s grey/blue eyes were clear and sharp, holding a haughty look in them as she looked around. Following beside her was a young boy, around Harry and Dean’s age, with slicked back bright blonde hair and silver/blue eyes. He blinked and sneered slightly at Dean and Harry, though that sneer vanished when he saw the rings on the boys’ fingers.

“Lady Malfoy, here for young Draco’s fitting?” Madame Malkin asked, approaching the woman and her son.

“Yes. Draconis is in need of his Hogwarts uniforms. However, you look rather busy.” Narcissa Malfoy said, glancing at Cassie and Delilah and their sons.

“Nonsense. I have another platform for young Draco here.” Madame Malkin said, smiling warmly as she walked over to a third platform.

Draco glanced back at his mother, in which she nodded and they followed Madame Malkin. Harry felt annoyance at being near Draco and could tell that Dean felt the same way. That annoyance only increased when Draco and Narcissa started talking about the quality of the robes, shirts, vests and pants Draco needed for his uniform. Harry and Dean glanced at each other before rolling their eyes.
Once their measurements were taken, Harry and Dean were let off the platforms and headed towards the back of the shop where the clothing selections were. Thankfully Madame Malkin had stocked all the latest fashion in the Muggle world for both men and women of all ages. The boys groaned as their mothers spent the next hour having them try on various robes, shirts, pants and accessories. Unfortunately, in their opinion, Draco was there for the same thing though his mother kept him in the ‘high end’ fashion section.

“Remember, Draconis, we have that party at the Parkinson’s tonight. You need a new dress robe.” Narcissa said, watching as her son blinked and sighed.

“Must I go?” He asked, wincing at the sharp look she gave him.

“You know you must, Draconis. Pansy is your betrothed and it would be considered an insult for you not to attend.” She said, not seeing Harry and Dean’s looks of disgust.

Both boys knew the Parkinson family from the various Ministry balls they attended. Lady Emily Parkinson was a beauty in her own right, though she had a haughty attitude like many Pureblood and Halfblood ladies of older Houses. Her only child, Pansy, was a perfect copy of her mother; in attitude at least. From what they’d seen of Pansy, she had fair skin, short black hair, beady dark hazel eyes and an upturned almost pug-like nose. Her voice was rather high pitched and had a nasally quality to it. Both boys clearly remembered on how Pansy had been gushing about her betrothal to Draco the last time they had seen the girl. It was all she had talked about and she clung to Draco like a leech. Neither of them could really see how the blonde ponce could stand the girl but then again they could hardly stand Draco and they don’t know much about him other than he looked like a miniature copy of his father.

“Alright you two, we’re done.” Cassie said, smiling as the boys sighed in relief and happily made their way to the front of the store.

Madame Malkin wrapped up their clothing and shrunk the boxes which went into the boys’ bags. After paying for their clothes, they headed across the street to Flourish and Blotts. The clerk behind the counter pointed them out to the course books which were quickly picked up and brought to the counter. However, Harry also wandered off in search of books to read in his spare time. Dean found a few books, though he wasn’t much of a reader unlike his friend. However, he did find a few books for his siblings that he knew they’d like. By the time Harry finished wandering the store the others were waiting while grinning at him. He flushed when he saw that he had chosen more extra reading books than course books. His mum, Cassie, Amanda and Dean laughed, though Delilah bent her head and kissed his forehead, making Harry flush and complain as he scrubbed at his forehead. The clerk grinned and rung up their purchases, to which Harry and Dean easily paid for them using their bank cards. The nice thing about the cards was that they also worked in the Muggle world so they didn’t have to worry about getting gold from the vault converted into pounds every time they wanted to shop in the Muggle world.

With their books wrapped and stored in their bags, the boys eagerly led their mothers and guard to Sirius and Remus’ shop. Shockingly, it wasn’t too busy though Harry and Dean were surprised to see two twin redhead boys helping Remus stock the shelves. Of course they knew that Sirius and Remus hired different people to help staff the store, most of them young teens or preteens so they could make some extra pocket money, help their parents, or even gain experience to better help them find a job later in life. Remus caught sight of the party first and grinned when he saw them.

“I was wondering when you’d show up.” He said, laughing as Harry ran over and hugged him.

“Have you missed Dean and I working here?” Harry asked, grinning up at his honorary uncle.
“Of course though these two are pretty good workers.” Remus said, nodding over to the twins which made the boys pause and look over.

“Fred, George, this is Harry Potter-Othello and Dean Thomas-Woods. Dean, Harry, this is Fred and George Weasley.” Remus said, smiling as Harry and Dean happily held out their hands for the twins to shake.

“Nice to meet you. We’ve seen you two running through the alley earlier this summer.” Fred said, grinning as Harry and Dean chuckled.

“Yeah, we’re mostly errand boys but we had to stop working because a few things came up. How do you like working here? Is Uncle Sirius giving you enough breaks?” Harry asked, smirking as Sirius huffed.

“We love it!” George gushed, his twin nodding happily.

“Our mum’s not exactly happy that we’re working for a joke/toy shop but we’re putting our wages away to save up for better brooms. We’re beaters for the Gryffindor Quidditch team.” Fred explained, Harry and Dean nodding in understanding.

“What year are you in?” Dean asked, watching as the twins grinned.

“Third. Our youngest brother is beginning Hogwarts this year and our little sister will attend next year. Our older brother Perfect Percy is in his Fifth Year and is the Gryffindor Prefect. He’ll be rather easy to spot.” Fred said, George snorting softly.

“Oh?” Dean asked, a grin on his face as the twins nodded.

“Yeah, he walks around like he’s got a broom up his bum.” George answered, making Harry and Dean laugh while Sirius shook his head.

“Come on now, boys. You two are due for a break and you two should check out the new version of Clue we’ve made.” Sirius said, ushering the twins towards the back of the store.

“It was nice meeting you two.” Harry said, the twins nodding happily.

“Same!”

“See you on the Express!”

As the last weeks of summer passed, Harry and Dean ramped up their training. They spent more and
more time training with weapons, their wands, hand-to-hand combat along with their stealth, climbing and free-running. While they would miss the routine of their training while at Hogwarts, they were also looking forward to learning more about magic and various spells and creatures. They were also looking forward to meeting new people and perhaps making new friends. Their instructors taught them how to spot others who might have the potential to be Assassins and that they should report those children to either Severus or Minerva so they could find out for sure. Both of them also paid careful attention to the various warnings they received about various students and children of Death Eaters who might be gunning for either of them due to Lucas’ support in the Minister’s crack down on Death Eaters.

Harry was also warned about Albus and how the man might try to get close to him. Dean and Harry were told that they weren’t allowed to be alone in the Headmaster’s office without their Head of House present. They were also allowed to sit at other House tables during meals so long as it was not during a feast. This made them relax since they were worried about not being able to hang out too much if they wound up in different Houses. Both of them also spent plenty of time going through their new course books, reading ahead and hardly able to wait before they could practice some of the spells and charms that are in the books. Neither of them had to take the new Wizarding Customs or Muggle Studies courses due to their background in both worlds. They’d already tested out of both classes at the Ministry earlier during the summer and had passed easily.

During the last week of August, Dean finally decided to go to the Magical Menagerie to see if he had a familiar. None of the Fire Lizards, including the new hatchlings from Slytha’s clutch had called out to him. It was a little disappointing, but he reasoned that there was a very slim chance of he and Harry having the same type of familiar. Wandering the large, dimly lit store, Dean was shocked when he felt a pull on his magic. Following the pull, Dean walked towards the back of the store where all the larger cages were located. His mum followed behind him, having caught sight of her son wandering off with a determined gait. Her eyes widened when she saw Dean stop in front of a cage and kneel down. A soft yipping sound came from within the cage and a young fox kit hurried over. Its fur was a light reddish orange with a black tipped tail, ears and paws. The kit barked softly and pressed its muzzle through the cage, closing its dark amber eyes in happiness as Dean lightly rubbed its chin.

“Mum, I can feel a connection with him.” Dean said, smiling as he looked up at Cassie.

“You’re sure?” Cassie asked, watching as her eldest lovingly scratched underneath the kit’s chin.

“Positive.”

Cassie headed to the front of the store and informed the owner that her son had found his familiar. The owner followed Cassie back to where Dean was sitting petting the kit. Only when Cassie told Dean to back away so the man could unlock the cage did her son stop and actually pull back. As soon as the cage was unlocked the fox kit bounded out of the cage and jumped into Dean’s arms. He laughed and rubbed the kit’s body, making the canine bark in happiness and nuzzle into his chest. The owner informed the preteen that the kit was a male and was only a few months old. Dean listened intently as the man told him how to take care of his newfound familiar though he was brought out of his musing when the kit bit his hand before licking it. Dean hissed faintly, though he was surprised when the wound healed instantly. Cassie was alarmed, though she looked to the owner when the man smiled.

“The kit just began the bond. Now, each bond is unique to everyone so there’s not much I can tell you besides the kit will have a longer life span and will be much more intelligent than normal foxes.” The owner said, Dean and Cassie nodding in understanding.
Standing up, Dean set down his familiar and walked around the store. He and Cassie picked up a collar, harness, toys, a bed, a leash and treats. As they shopped, Dean kept glancing down at his new familiar as he tried to think of a name for him. He finally came up with a name as they headed up to the counter to pay for everything.

“Ricki. That’s what I’ll name him.” Dean said, grinning as the newly named Ricki barked and looked at him with adoring eyes.

“Seems like he likes his new name.” Cassie said, smiling warmly as the owner began ringing everything up.

As soon as the collar was rung up, Dean crouched down and put it on Ricki. Ricki held still until the collar was on before instantly scratching at the new accessory. Settling down, he watched as Dean took the harness before looking down at his bonded human’s hands as Dean crouched down and began lifting his paws up so the preteen could slip on the harness. Ricki shifted slightly as he attempted to get used to the slight weight of the harness though his eyes brightened when Dean grabbed the leash and attached it to the harness. The owner packed everything else up and shrunk down the package so Cassie could slip the package into her purse. Thanking the owner after they paid for the items and for Ricki they headed outside with Ricki bounding along beside Dean and frolicking about his legs. A few people looked at the kit with some interest and amusement though others were smiling warmly at the sight.

They ran a few more errands, mostly picking up items for some of the people on the estate. Of course Dean and Cassie were aware of their guard a few feet away, though they were used to it by now. Wandering around, they stopped at Florean’s for a treat, in which they quickly discovered that Ricki enjoyed ice cream as well. After eating, they headed back to the Leaky Cauldron where they flooed back to the estate. Ricki didn’t really enjoy the trip home, though he absolutely loved running around the estate exploring all the rooms and meeting the House Elves and other staff members.

Harry was interrupted in his studying in the library when Ricki ran in and started sniffing around. Mira, who had been reading over Harry’s shoulder, looked up and flew over the fox kit where Ricki had looked at her with wide eyes before promptly attempting to chase her. Harry grinned as he watched Mira fly around the room with the small kit chasing and leaping up at her. The sight of Dean hurrying into the room instantly gave away who the kit belonged to.

“So you found your familiar I see.” He said, grinning as Dean chuckled.

“Yeah, sorry ‘bout that. I didn’t think he’d run off.” Dean said, shaking his head as Ricki laid down panting.

“It’s fine. Mira finds him interesting and rather adorable.” Harry said, nodding towards their familiars.

Looking over, Dean blinked and smiled at the sight of Mira nuzzling Ricki before she curled her body around him and rested her head over his neck. Ricki let out a pleased little murr at the warmth radiating from the Fire Lizard; his eyes drooping as the excitement of the day caught up with him. Dean happily talked about how he found Ricki and the fact that they’d already begun the bond. Harry talked more about his bond with Mira and all of the things they’ve discovered. Mira knew how to read now, though she read rather slowly right now. She could breathe flames hot enough to turn sand into glass and melt most metals though she could also breathe a different type of flame that actually froze things which was how she was able to crystallize her own scale for Harry’s wand. He was also beginning to be able to see through her eyes though the vision was slightly fuzzy and unfocused.

“There he is!” Sasha squealed, making the boys jump and their familiars jumped.
Sasha ran into the library with Jessica and Megan hurrying in after her. Ricki shrank back as the three girls crowded around him; causing Mira to stand and hiss at the girls, her wings flared in warning.

“Hey! Back away!” Dean called, scowling as he got to his feet.

The three girls backed away, shocked at Mira’s sudden aggression and rather terrified at that. Dean stepped closer to the two familiars and Mira instantly calmed down as she knew that Dean wouldn’t harm Ricki. Dean gently scooped Ricki into his arms; cuddling the kit to his chest and gently stroking the fox’s head. Ricki stopped trembling and curled into Dean’s arms, pressing his head into the boy’s hand as Harry frowned at Dean’s sisters.

“You should know better than to rush in and crowd around an animal; especially one that hasn’t met you.” He scolded, watching as Sasha huffed and pouted.

“How were we supposed to know that we’d scare him? We didn’t mean to.” She whined, Megan nodding in agreement with her younger sister.

“You should have more control over Mira. She was threatening us!” Megan said, frowning at the Fire Lizard as Mira hissed at her.

“Mira was defending Ricki. You three were the ones crowding around and scaring him. She reacted naturally and wouldn’t have harmed you unless you tried to harm Ricki. She was trying to get you to back off.” Harry said, mentally calling his familiar to him.

“Sasha, Megan, Dean and Harry are right.” Jessica said, her voice soft as she slowly approached her big brother.

“I’m sorry for scaring you, Ricki.” She said, her voice gentle as she reached out and let the kit sniff her fingers.

“But-?!”

“What is going on in here?” Cassie asked, raising an eyebrow as she walked into the library.

“Mum! Mira was threatening us!” Sasha whined, making the woman blink before she looked at her son and Harry.

“That’s not true.” Dean snapped, his sisters recoiling as he glared at them.

“Ricki and Mira had settled down together on the floor and were just about to fall asleep when Sasha, Megan and Jessica ran in squealing about Ricki. They crowded around him which startled him and he began trembling in fright. Mira rose to his defense and hissed at them. She wouldn’t have harmed them so long as they didn’t harm Ricki. She let Dean go over and pick Ricki up and then they started complaining about Mira. Only Jess has apologized so far.” Harry explained, watching as Cassie frowned as she rounded on her two older daughters.

“You girls should know better! All three of you have had lessons on what to do around new animals; surely you haven’t forgotten your lessons?” She said, watching as Megan and Sasha looked down at the ground.

“You never rush in at an animal and you never crowd around them. It’s your fault that Mira rose to Ricki’s defense. As for Mira’s reaction I can’t blame her. She was defending a new friend and fellow familiar from a perceived threat. However she didn’t attack you. She kept you back from touching Ricki until Dean got to him and comforted him. I’m glad that at least Jessica realized what she did
wrong. As for you two, you will be doing all the chores around the house for two weeks and you’ll be helping out to clean the stables.” Cassie said, watching as Sasha and Megan looked at her in surprise and disgust.

“B-But Mum!” They cried, wincing as she grabbed them and pulled them from the library.

“Not buts about it. Come, we’re going to speak to the House Elf in charge of the stables.” Cassie said, the door closing behind her and her two eldest daughters.

“How did you guys even find out about Ricki?” Harry asked, watching as Jessica looked up at him.

“Mum came into the house with all his things and told us that Dean found his familiar. We weren’t sure what Ricki was but when we were hurrying through the house we heard the others talking about a fox kit and made the connection. I really am sorry, Dean.” Jessica said, making her brother smile gently.

“It’s okay, Jess. You knew you were in the wrong and you apologized. Ricki doesn’t seem to mind you now. Just keep in mind that when you’re approaching new animals to move slowly and let them get used to you.” Dean said, Jessica nodding her head in understanding and agreement.

Jessica headed out while Harry went back to his studying. Dean, meanwhile, took Ricki on a tour around the estate with the kit safely in his arms. Ricki looked around with wide eyes as Dean took him around the rest of the manor and then stepped outside. Dean was slightly startled when he felt a faint presence in the back of his mind. The feeling of excitement, curiosity and also apprehension came from that presence. It took him a moment before he realized that the presence was actually Ricki, which meant that the bond was beginning to fully form between them. Ricki was greatly interested in all the Fire Lizards flying around or riding on the shoulders of various people. He was also interested in all the buildings and the two stables, one that held the horses and the other which held the Hippogriffs. However, when Dean went to set his kit down, Ricki clung onto Dean and whined as he pressed closer to the boy.

“Alright, alright, little one. I won’t put you down yet. You can explore later.” Dean said, smiling as he comforted Ricki until the kit settled down once more.

He headed to his and his family’s house which was closest to the Hippogriff enclosure. He smiled at the sight of his mum sitting on the patio swing on the front porch. Cassie blinked and smiled at her son, watching as he walked over and sat down next to her.

“Megan and Sasha are vacuuming right now. You should wait until they’re done before bringing Ricki inside.” She said, letting the kit sniff her hands before lightly scratching his head.

“Are they still coming to see me off on September first?” Dean asked, watching as Cassie sighed and set down her book.

“It depends on their behavior. They didn’t do too well last year in school which is why they had more chores to begin with. Apparently Megan had been teasing a few other girls and a few boys in her class as well.” Cassie said, frowning as she thought of her eldest daughter.

“I was wondering why you took away her allowance.”

“She needs to learn that there are consequences to her actions. Jessica hasn’t been doing too well either. I’m hoping that they’ll learn their lesson by having to muck the stables and do all the chores.” Cassie said, leaning against her son as Dean wrapped an arm around her.

“I’m sure they will, Mum.”
Megan sluggishly walked out of her bedroom, groaning as she rubbed the sleep out of her eyes. A gasp escaped her when Dean went rushing by, her eyes widening when Ricki went running after him. It took her a minute before it fully registered in her mind what the date was. As soon as she realized that it was the first of September an overwhelming combination of sadness and some jealousy spread through her. Dean, Harry, Tonks and many other kids that lived here on the estate were leaving for school. Elliot was heading off to Hogwarts with Dean, Harry and Tonks while Ashley, Will and Miranda were heading off to Beauxbatons and Melody, Henry, Alex and Justin were off to St. Brigid’s in Ireland. Only she and her sisters would remain…along with Sammy and a few other children who were barely old enough to play with. She was sad that her brother and the few friends she’s made were leaving and she wouldn’t get to see them until the holidays.

Of course, she was also jealous that her brother was getting to go to Hogwarts before her. Okay…so she wasn’t doing the best with her summer magical studies but it was so hard to sit still while the weather was absolutely perfect outside. Also, she wasn’t allowed to actually use magic until she entered Hogwarts. It was bad enough when she learned that she wouldn’t be getting a second wand like Dean, but seeing him actually use his magic had only made things worse. When her mum punished her and Sasha for upsetting Ricki and not apologizing to Harry and Dean well…that had made her even more upset than she had been since the beginning of the summer vacation. How was she supposed to know that Reggie Tomson had a speech impediment?! Her mum had been so angry when she found out that she and her friends had been teasing a few kids and yes she had seen that it hadn’t been the nicest of things to do but so many other people had been doing it too and she had gotten so many new friends when she had begun teasing Reggie and the other two.

“Mum, have you seen my Potions books?” Dean called, hurrying by his sister with an armful of books.

“It’s in the media room. Don’t forget that your uniforms are in the laundry room.”

Megan huffed and headed to the bathroom; closing the door a little harder than normal. Shucking off her clothes, she turned on the shower and listened to the sounds of her brother moving down the hallway once more before she stepped into the water. Her mum had told her that she had to stay home while she and the others headed to King’s Cross to see Dean off. Apparently it was because she hadn’t apologized to Dean and Harry for blaming them for what she did to upset Ricki and Mira. Okay, yes, she did know that she shouldn’t have rushed Ricki, but Harry should’ve apologized for Mira scaring her too! Now she was banned from seeing the Hogwarts Express and from saying goodbye to Dean and the others on the platform.

“Meg, hurry up!” Jessica called, knocking on the door which brought her sister out of her thoughts.

“Hold on!” Megan called, huffing as she hurried through the rest of her shower before turning off the water and hurriedly drying off.

Wrenching the door open she stomped off to her room, aware that Jessica and Sasha were watching her. Dean poked his head out of his room when he heard Megan’s door slam shut. Shaking his head, he went back to organizing the final compartment of his trunk. All of his clothes fit nicely and he had also added his toiletries, his drawing supplies and a couple posters and pictures. All of his books were in the first compartment and his other school supplies were in the second compartment. He had packed his shoulder bag with a few books and his drawing pad and pencils so he wouldn’t have to go digging through his trunk on the train. Ricki’s things were in the third compartment as well, though Dean made sure that his familiar had a few treats and his favorite toy in his carrier with him.
Looking around his room, Dean sighed when he realized that he wouldn’t be back until Christmas break. It was...odd in a way. He had never thought much about being away from his mum and siblings, but there was no doubt that he’d miss them; even Megan.

He’d miss Megan even more if she didn’t start to clean up her act that year according to their mum. Apparently, if Megan didn’t pick up her grades and change her attitude towards others then Megan wouldn’t be going to Hogwarts. Instead she’d either go to Beauxbatons or St. Brigid’s. All of them knew enough French to do well in Beauxbatons and it wouldn’t take very long to adjust to the accent in Ireland. St. Brigid’s wasn’t a boarding school; rather it was like a normal everyday school and Megan would be flooing or taking a portkey to and from the school grounds. He knew that Megan was looking forward to going to Hogwarts, but she still hadn’t fully learned it seemed.

“Do ya really have'ta leave, De?” Sam asked, making Dean turn and look at his little brother.

“I’m sorry, Sammy. You’ll be going to Hogwarts within no time.” Dean said, smiling as he pulled his little brother into his lap.

“But I wanna go with you now.” Sam pouted, scowling as Dean chuckled softly and hugged him.

“You have to wait until you’re eleven like me, Sammy. Before you know it, it’ll be Christmas and I’ll be back for a visit.” He said, watching as Sam blinked before tilting his head to the side.

“Promise?”

“Pinky promise.” Dean said, linking his pinky with his brother’s.

Sam soon walked off, content now that he had his older brother’s promise. Dean hurriedly finished his packing before closing his trunk and locking it. He already had a change of clothes in his shoulder bag so he won’t have to worry about trying to open the trunk again. Pulling his trunk out into the hallway, he nearly collided with Megan as she walked out of her room. She huffed when she saw the trunk and whirled around, disappearing back into her room and slamming the door shut once more. Shaking his head with a sigh, Dean continued on downstairs and set his things down by the fireplace. He and his mum and siblings were going to be flooing to the platform around nine thirty so they could beat the main crowds. The train didn’t leave until eleven, but they wanted to make sure they got there early and got the chance to mingle a little bit. Heading to the dining room, he smiled when he saw Jessica, Sam and Sasha already at the table which had a rather large selection of food to choose from.

“Think you made enough, Mum?” Dean asked, grinning as Cassie rolled her eyes.

“Oh hush and eat, Dean. Tonks told us that it’s better to have a large breakfast since there’s only a snack cart on the Express.” Cassie said, watching as her son loaded his plate with food.

Conversation was lively, though there was a noticeable gap at the table as Megan refused to come down and eat with them. Cassie gave her children a slightly strained smile and made sure that they were all eating before she headed upstairs. Heading down the hallway, she came to Megan’s room and knocked, listening as something shuffled behind the door.

“Megan, come down and have something to eat.” She called, frowning when she heard the bedsprings squeak.

“I’ll eat when you’re all gone.”

Sighing, Cassie opened the door and stood in the doorway, watching as her eldest daughter read a magazine on her bed. Megan refused to look over at her mum, knowing that she would want her go
to down and say goodbye to Dean. Yes…she’d miss her brother but at the same time he’s heading off to a wondrous school whereas she’d be stuck here attending a normal primary school for the year.

“Megan, come down and eat. Dean wants to see you before we leave.” Cassie said, watching as Megan huffed and shifted though made no move to get up.

“He promised to write didn’t he? Besides, he has that communication mirror.” She said, making Cassie frown at her daughter.

Sirius and Remus had recently created smaller, more portable versions of the communication mirrors Sirius and James had found in their Seventh Years. The two men managed to break down the runes and enchantments that were needed to create the mirrors and had made a good number of them already. Instead of hand mirrors, Remus had taken apart makeup compact mirrors and he and Sirius added the runes and enchantments to them in order to make them into communication mirrors. The smaller mirrors were more discrete and could be linked to multiple mirrors instead of being limited to just as few. Harry and Dean both had their own mirrors and Cassie had been given one that was linked to her son’s. Lucas and Delilah had seen the ingenious invention had had paid Remus and Sirius rather handsomely for the two men to create enough linked mirrors to give to all the Assassins in the brotherhood. It made missions safer and made relaying orders and locations a lot easier than having to rely on a messenger patronus.

“Dean would still like to say goodbye to you in person, Megan.” Cassie said, watching as her daughter rolled her eyes.

“Megan, what is up with you? You’re never like this.” She said, frustration in her voice as Megan finally looked away from her magazine.

“Maybe I just want to be alone; you ever think about that? Maybe I’m tired about hearing how Dean is the perfect child! Dean this! Dean that! It’s all about him!” Megan ranted, anger in her voice as Cassie looked at her with surprise and the beginnings of understanding.

“Megan-“

“Just leave me alone!” Megan snapped, turning around so her back was to her mother.

Cassie opened her mouth before closing it; knowing that she wouldn’t be able to calm Megan down at that moment. Moving back to the door, she stopped and looked back at her daughter, wishing that they had the time to work this out now. However, she needed to get Dean to the station and then she needed to head to the clinic. Shaking her head with a soft sigh, she headed back downstairs and finished her own breakfast. Ricki was coaxed into his carrier; it helped when they had stuck a few treats in there for him, before Dean draped a cloth over the openings in the carrier so Ricki wouldn’t freak out when they went through the floo.

Dean looked towards the stairs to see if Megan would appear. However, when she didn’t he simply sighed and grabbed the handle of his trunk before leading the way into the living room. Gathering around the fireplace, Cassie went first with Samuel in her arms and soon disappeared into the emerald green flames. Sasha and Jessica went together; as floo travel was a bit nerve wracking on their own. Glancing back behind him, Dean shook his head and grabbed a pinch of floo powder before tossing it into the fire.

“Goodbye, Megan. Keep watch over Mum and the others.” He called, stepping into the flames and turning so he was looking out towards the living room.
As he called out the floo address; Platform nine and three quarters, he caught sight of Megan rushing down the stairs and hurrying towards him. He blinked when he saw tears brimming in her eyes and caught her last words to him before the world became a blur of motion.

“I love you, big brother!”

Dean watched as various fireplaces flashed past him, each one allowing him a faint glimpse into the house or business beyond. He was glad that Megan had come down to say that she loved him and he made a mental note to send her a letter or to call her on the mirror that night after the feast. He had a feeling that something was bothering her, but had figured that it would be best if he just minded his own business and let her work it out. As he started slowing down, Dean went to take a step forward and smoothly exited the fireplace and stepped onto platform nine and three quarters. His eyes, however, were instantly drawn to the gleaming scarlet and black steam engine on the tracks in front of him. The golden letters proclaiming the train to be the Hogwarts Expressed glimmered in the lights of the station. Shaking himself, he moved away from the fireplaces and towards his mum and sisters.

“Are you sure you have’ta leave?” Samuel asked, pouting as he looked up at his brother.

“I’m sure, Sammy. Remember our promise.” Dean said, smiling as the boy nodded.

“Ah, there’s Harry.” Cassie said, smiling as she saw the family walk through the barrier.

There were only a few other families around considering on how early it was. However, they still looked to Harry and his family with awe and reverence. The Othellos ignored the stares and hurried towards Dean and his family, Harry grinning as he clapped his brother in all but blood on the shoulder.

“Ready for our new adventure?” He asked, eagerness in his voice as Dean grinned back.

“Of course!”

“Now hold on you two.” Cassie said, smiling as the boys looked at her.

“Remember you have training on the weekends. Also, call us on the mirrors after supper. We want to know which House you two are sorted in.” Delilah said, smoothing Harry’s bangs down which made him shift.

“Mind your professors.” Cassie said, her voice stern as Lucas grinned.

They were interrupted by the sudden arrival of Remus and Sirius, in which both men grinned sheepishly.

“Sorry we’re late. We couldn’t pass up seeing these two off.” Sirius said, grinning down at his godson as Remus nodded in agreement.

“You’re alright. There’s still plenty of time.” Lucas said, raising an eyebrow when Remus and Sirius pulled out two packages.

“Prongslet, I found a letter in a few things your parents had left me. They wanted me to give you this before you started your First Year. Now, normally I wouldn’t dream of passing this along to an eleven year-old. However, you’re not some simple eleven year-old. I trust that you’ll use this wisely.” Sirius said, passing over his package which was slightly squishy.

“Open it in private. It’s a Potter family heirloom that’s been passed down for generations.” He advised, watching as Harry nodded and gently put the package into his shoulder bag.
“These are for you both. Us Marauders made one for each of us during our time as students. I know these will be invaluable to you; both as students and as Marauders in training. Use them responsibly.” Remus said, handing Dean and Harry rather slim packages.

“It took us some time recreating them and improving them. If you ever find one of the originals in Hogwarts you’ll see what we mean by improved.” Sirius said, grinning as he ruffled Harry’s hair.

“Thanks.” Harry and Dean said, smiling as they put the gifts away.

“Why don’t you find a compartment and put your things away. Come back out and we’ll talk for a while longer.” Delilah suggested, smiling as the boys nodded and hurried away with their trunks and pet carriers.

Harry and Dean finally said their goodbyes to their families; the press of the crowd urging them to get into the train before it got even worse. The platform had filled up fast and the air was filled with the buzz of conversation and the various calls of different animals. Harry hugged his dad and kissed his mum on the cheek before hugging Eliza tightly and making her promise to prank a few of the adults to ensure they didn’t forget about him. Dean hugged and kissed his mum and sisters before hugging Sam tightly. Both boys promised to send pictures as they each had small cameras. Heading to the train, they made their way back to their compartment which Harry had locked to ensure no one would mess with their things. Now that they were inside they opened the blinds and kept the door unlocked, figuring that they might be joined by someone who is still looking for a place to sit. Opening the window, Harry looked outside at the platform and watched as more and more students said their goodbyes.

Turning their attention back to themselves, Harry and Dean pulled out the gifts and unwrapped the smaller packages. Both boys were intrigued by what looked like a folded piece of parchment. Looking at the parchment, they noticed a small note attached to the back.

**Harry/Dean**

These are enchanted maps of Hogwarts and the area surrounding the school, mainly Hogsmeade. They show the location of every room and every person for that matter. James, Pettigrew and us made these maps in our Fourth Year and used them as tools for our pranks. These maps also have a location feature which will allow you to locate the whereabouts of a certain person. All you have to do is place the tip of your wand against the parchment and tell the map to locate the specific person you’re looking for.

These maps also see through animagus forms, invisibility cloaks and various charms and potions that will alter a person’s appearance or render them invisible. This is something that isn’t on the original maps since we hadn’t figured out the enchantments needed to add it. Now, to activate the map, simply recite: I solemnly swear I am up to no good. To deactivate the map recite: Mischief Managed. This is the same passcodes for the original map.

Now, try not to get up to too much trouble with these things. We figured that these would be an important tool in your training and for when you decide to begin pull pranks yourselves.

**Sincerely,**

**Padfoot and Moony**
“Sweet!” Dean exclaimed, his eyes alight with glee as he looked at the parchment.

“Siri told me about the maps. I just never thought that he’d make ones for us.” Harry said, activating the map and unfolding it.

Both of them studied the maps for a few minutes; watching as the various footprints which were labeled as different people wandered around the castle. They easily figured out how to move to the different and many floors of the castle and tested out the locator function. Deactivating the maps, they stowed the priceless items away before Harry locked the compartment door and closed the blinds before pulling out the gift from Sirius and carefully unwrapping it. He and Dean fell silent at the sight of a silvery cloak made of fine, almost water like material. It felt like silk in Harry’s hands and he instantly knew what it was; having seen them in a shop and having seen his father use one himself when preparing for a mission.

“Harry…is that…?” Dean breathed, watching as his friend stood and twirled the cloak around his shoulders.

Harry draped the cloak around his shoulders and closed it, his eyes widening when his body, bar his head, became invisible. Mira, who had been lounging on the seat beside her human, looked at him with interest. Harry reached back and flicked up the hood, disappearing completely from view. He remained like that for a moment longer before he removed the cloak and carefully, reverently, folded it before he stood on the bench seat and unlocked his trunk. Opening the third compartment which had the rest of his clothes, he laid it down on the top before closing it and ensuring that it was locked.

“My dad’s cloak. Sirius had told me that a lot of things had been recovered from Dumbledore; one of which was a priceless heirloom. I think he was talking about that cloak.” Harry said, his voice soft as he sat back down.

“Why would your dad give up something like that?” Dean asked, frowning as Harry shook his head.

“I don’t know. But, what matters is that I have it and it was already searched for any charms or anything that hadn’t been on it in the first place. Sirius and my Dad had my account manager sweep through everything that was returned and all charms, potions or enchantments that had been placed on the items were stripped down and they were restored to their original condition.” Harry explained.

Unlocking the door once more, they settled down with Ricki sunning himself in a patch of sunlight while Mira rested on the back of the bench seat with her head resting on Harry’s shoulder. It was a minute or so before the train was set to take off when a knock came at the door. Dean stood and slid it open, revealing a slightly chubby, dark blonde haired boy. Nervous and slightly scared brown eyes looked at Dean before the boy glanced down at the floor.

“U-Um…c-could I sit here? Everywhere else is…is full.” He stammered, making Dean blink before he offered a kind smile to the scared boy.

“Sure. C’on in.” He said, stepping back and letting the boy into the compartment.

The boy dragged his trunk behind him and had a small cage in his other hand which contained a rather fat toad. Harry stood and he and Dean helped the boy lift his trunk onto the net above before sitting down again. The boy sat down as well and shifted, fidgeting nervously as Harry and Dean glanced at each other before shrugging.

“I’m Dean Thomas-Woods.” Dean said, holding his out to the boy who jumped and looked at him with wide eyes.
“O-Oh! Um…Neville Longbottom.” The boy said, reaching out and shaking Dean’s hand.

“Harry Potter-Othello.” Harry said, reaching over to shake Neville’s hand as well.

“R-Really?!!” Neville exclaimed, his eyes wide as he looked at Harry in shock and wonder.

“Mhm. Harry Potter-Othello, Heir of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Potter and Othello. You must be heir of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom?” Harry asked, watching as Neville blinked and nodded.

“Y-Yes. Sorry for my…outburst.” Neville said, flushing as Harry smiled kindly at him.

“It’s alright, Neville. This is my familiar: Mira.” Harry said, smiling as said Fire Lizard moved down and perched on his lap.

“Wow! S-She’s a…a Fire Lizard, right?” Neville asked, looking at Mira with awe.

“Yup! She’s only a few years old still though she’s come into many of her powers. Our connection is pretty strong.” Harry said, gently rubbing Mira’s head and neck much to her pleasure.

“That’s really cool. I’ve never seen a Fire Lizard before but I’ve read about them in a few books.” Neville said, smiling shyly at the other boy.

“This little trickster is Ricki. Don’t let the sweet looks fool you.” Dean said, grinning as said fox looked at him as if he was offended.

“He looks sweet.” Neville said, watching as Ricki got up and walked over to sniff him.

“Is that your familiar?” Dean asked, nodding to the caged toad.

Harry and Dean watched as Neville seemed to deflate at the question. The shy boy shifted and glanced at his caged toad before lightly shaking his head.

“Trevor was a…gift…from my uncle. I think it was to spite me more than anything. Gran was surprised when I got my Hogwarts letter.” Neville said, shame in his voice as Harry and Dean frowned.

“Why? The Longbottom’s are one of the oldest and well respected families. Their power is well known and Dowager Madame Longbottom was once a rather skilled warrior in her younger years.” Dean said, frowning as Neville shifted.

“I’ve never shown any great magical feats. Even my accidental magic was rather weak. The only reason why I’m on the train is because I was too afraid to get off.” Neville said, his voice weak and soft.

Harry and Dean looked at each other, their minds reeling. Harry had been told by his parents that Lady Alice Longbottom was his godmother just as his birth mum had been Neville’s godmother. However, the one reason why he hadn’t gone to live with Alice was because she and her husband were in St. Mungo’s after being tortured during the war by Bellatrix and a few other Death Eaters who had attacked Longbottom Manor. He had seen Neville a few times in Diagon Alley and his parents had even spoken with Madame Longbottom. He also knew that his family was allied with the Longbottoms and have been for many years now.

“Neville, everyone has different strengths and weaknesses. Everyone also matures at different times. Your magic simply has not caught up with you yet or perhaps you just have yet to see or realize your
true magical potential. Don’t doubt yourself.” Harry said, his voice firm as Neville looked at him with wide eyes.

“R-Really?” He asked, his voice holding such hope that it made Dean and Harry mentally wince at how little confidence Neville had in himself.

“Harry’s right, Neville. Besides the Potters and Longbottoms have been allies since the early seventeen hundreds.” Dean said, grinning as Neville looked shocked at that.

“Very true. I also know that my mum was your godmother and your mum is my godmother.” Harry said, his voice kind as Neville swallowed thickly and rubbed at his suspiciously damp eyes.

“…I-I never knew that…” Neville said, watching as Harry smiled kindly at him.

“If it hadn’t been for the intervention of my adopted parents, we might have been brothers sooner Neville. However now’s our chance. Now we can get to know each other and become friends. What do you say?” Harry asked, holding his hand out to the shy boy.

Neville didn’t even hesitate. Rather, he smiled brightly as he reached out and grasped Harry’s hand. Dean grinned as he watched the interaction, glad that a bond had been formed so quickly. Harry’s parents had told them that Madame Longbottom was a rather stern and old-fashioned woman. She had taken the hospitalization of her son and daughter-in-law harshly but hadn’t hesitated when it came to taking in Neville and raising him. They hadn’t been able to get Harry and Neville together for play dates because Madame Longbottom had been busy and hadn’t been too trusting of the Othello family given their status as a Grey family. Many Light families were weary of Grey families because they could switch between alliances so quickly. Lucas and Delilah had hoped that Madame Longbottom would allow the boys to meet given Harry’s status as a Potter and that his birth parents had been good friends with Alice and Frank but it seemed that the aged woman felt a little too raw about alliances and the deceased friends of her son and daughter-in-law.

“Great! What do you want to do to pass the time?” Dean asked, grinning as he looked at the two boys.

“I brought a few games we could play or we could just talk.” Harry suggested, shrugging lightly as he looked at Neville.

“I wouldn’t mind getting to know you two better.” Neville said, smiling shyly at the other two.

“Talking it is then. I’ll start if you want.” Dean offered, grinning as he settled into his seat.

“Have at it.” Harry said, stretching out with Mira on his lap.

Neville listened with great interest as Dean told him about his family. He was saddened when he learned that Dean’s father had passed away when he was younger, but he admired Dean’s mother for her strength and dedication to her children. He was greatly interested in learning how Harry and Dean had met and how Harry had had suspicions about Dean being a Wizard which led to his parents approaching Dean’s mum. He was shocked when hearing about Grace Clinic, a clinic run by Wizards and Witches which offered ‘treatments’ to Muggles. These treatments are actually potions and salves that had been modified to work of a period of time instead of instantly. When needed, they used memory charms to erase the memories of Muggles who needed more…dire treatments in order to save their lives quickly and without fear of losing them. They offered the medication in pill and liquid form and advertised them as natural remedies; which was true when you think about it.

He was rather impressed with the way the Healers got around the law of not performing magic
among Muggles. He also agreed that it was a good thing that they were doing and supported their cause. They were saving so many people from infants to the elderly using potions and salves. The Magical world had cures for illnesses that have plagued Muggles for centuries and none had been willing or cunning enough to find a way to offer those cures to Muggles without them finding out that magic was involved. Neville continued to listen as Dean told him about some of the pranks he and Harry had pulled in their Muggle school before the boy finished his tale and Harry began. It was interesting in learning about Harry’s life, especially since there had been so much speculation as to how the boy was being raised. He was interested in the lessons Harry had, though discovered that they were similar to his own. Harry told Neville about Sirius and Remus and how the two men were like his uncles and had helped him learn how to prank people with a very small chance of getting caught. He smiled when he heard that Harry’s little sister used to follow him around the manor and grounds.

“Alright, Nev, your turn.” Harry said, making the boy blink before flushing.

“My life hasn’t been all that exciting…” He said, shifting as Harry and Dean looked at him.

“Nonsense. Tell us more about yourself. You know I like drawing and Harry here likes exploring and swimming.” Dean said, Neville nodding lightly before he sighed.

“Alright. Well, I’ve always been drawn towards Herbology-“

-XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX-
New Friends, Sorting and the First Day

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Harry Potter and co. don’t belong to me. Assassin’s Creed and co. don’t belong to me. I’m just taking some credit for the plot and original characters. Fire Lizards belong to the talented Anne McCaffrey. In no way, shape or form am I making money from this.

Beta(s): Inuyasha-loves-Hanyou-Kagome, CrazyJanaCat

Edited On: 12/9/17

Main Story Warnings: A.U.-severe-, characters are OOC, canon is only a minor guideline, crossover, swearing, violence, gore, character death, Light Grey!Harry, Assassin!Harry, modern technology, OC’s abound, Ron!Molly!Ginny!Bashing, Dumbledore!Bashing

Pairings: James/Lily, Sirius/Kano, Remus/Emma, Harry/Luna, Neville/Hermione, Dean/Millicent

Author’s Note: Wow…I can’t believe how much this story has taken off! I can honestly say that I had some…hesitations in choosing Assassins Creed in this challenge but it’s worked out for the best so far! I do have a lot of plans and ideas for this series so far and perhaps a few one shots featuring their lives in the future when they’re all adults and married off. I did realize a mistake I made in the previous chapter. I made Sam out to be younger than he is. Dean and Megan are a year apart, when Sasha being a year behind Megan, Jessica a year behind Sasha and Sam a year younger than her. As such, Sam is six going on seven in this ‘year’. Apologies everyone! Now, Hermione and the others who I have in mind to become Assassins won’t be ‘discovered’ until mid to late in the year. Some will be ‘discovered’ before Christmas while others towards the end of the year. Now, I do love knowing what you all think and thanks again for all the lovely reviews!

Extra Note: The rant Harry has directed to Draco is based off of a very similar rant in Angry Harry and the Seven which is written by the very talented Sinyk. I have simply modified it to my needs. All credit goes to him.

Challenge: DZ2’s Way of the Warrior challenge. For more information look to the first chapter or DZ2’s forums.

[Parseltongue]

[Telepathic Speech]

Emphasis on words/Spells

Text
An hour into the train ride, Harry, Neville and Dean were having fun playing hangman with Dean’s set. The little skeleton stood near the collapsible gallows and whenever a letter was wrong, he would pull off a part of his body and attach it to the rope on the gallows until he had his whole entire body hanging. Yes, it was a little morbid but the skeleton man actually did a little jig whenever a letter was correct and many children and families had loved the product. Neville frowned as he looked at the letters on the sheet of parchment in front of all of them. The hangman’s head, torso and right arm were already hanging on the gallows and only five letters have been found out of the sentence, which wasn’t a very good start if you asked him. Looking at the hangman, he looked back down at the sheet.

“Um… ‘I’?” Neville asked, his eyes widening as the rest of the hangman’s body did a jig while the enchanted parchment filled in the letters.

“Good one, Nev!” Harry crowed, grinning as the blonde flushed and grinned at his new nickname.

All of them turned towards the door to their compartment when someone knocked. Dean, sitting closest to the door, stood and slid it open. He blinked and smiled when he saw Tonks standing there, already dressed in her uniform with her Head Girl’s badge pinned to her chest. Tonks smiled at Dean, her hair a bright bubblegum pink as she’d taken to having it since her Fourth Year. Harry grinned at his cousin, watching as she stepped inside.

“Wotcher, ‘Ry, De.” She said, grinning at the two boys before looking at Neville.

“Tonks, this is Neville Longbottom. Nev, this is my cousin Nymphadora Tonks.” Harry said, watching as Neville bowed towards the older teen.

“Watch yourself, Harry.” Tonks growled, though she smiled kindly at Neville when he looked at her with wide eyes.

“I prefer to go by Tonks or Nymph if you must. Don’t know what my mum and dad were thinking when they named me.” She muttered, making Neville smile and fight back a chuckle.

“Anyway, I was just checking up on you lot. Don’t let them convince you to get into too much trouble, Mister Longbottom. I may let some things slide as Head Girl but I can’t always turn a blind eye.” Tonks said, winking at the flushed blonde.

“I-I won’t, and call me Neville.” He said, Tonks nodding her head in acknowledgement.

“Whelp, I’m gonna continue on my patrol. Behave and the snack trolley will be by in an hour.” She said, heading out of the compartment as the boys said their goodbyes.

Dean closed the door and they returned to their game. However, they nearly had the entire game finished when another knock came at the door. Harry got up this time and pulled the door open, blinking when he saw a girl with rather frizzy brown hair and cinnamon brown eyes. Harry was instantly alarmed when he saw evidence that the girl had recently been crying.

“May I sit with you?” She asked, her voice soft as Harry blinked and looked at her.

“Sure. C’mon in.” He said, stepping aside and watching as she dragged her trunk behind her.

“Dean, give me a hand.” He said, making his friend blink and stand.
“O-Oh! You don’t have to-“

“Nonsense. This is too heavy for you to lift on your own.” Harry said, Dean walking over and helping him to lift the trunk onto the rack above the seats.

“Thank you.” The girls said, smiling shyly at the trio.

“I’m Harry Potter-Othello; Heir of the Most Ancient and Noble Houses of Potter and Othello.” Harry said, bowing slightly towards the brunette.

“Dean Thomas-Woods; Heir of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Woods.” Dean said, bowing as well as the girl looked at them with wide eyes.

“Neville Longbottom; Heir of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom.” Neville said, smiling shyly as he bowed as well.

“Oh wow! I’ve read about the House system in my books for Wizarding Customs!” The girl gushed, her eyes bright as the boys smiled and chuckled.

“And what’s your name, Miss?” Neville asked, watching as the girl blushed and smiled sheepishly at them.

“Oh! Sorry. I’m Hermione Granger. I’m the first one of my family to come to Hogwarts.” Hermione said, curtsying lightly.

“It’s nice to meet you Miss Granger. Call me Harry.” Harry said, smiling as Dean and Neville quickly told the brunette to call them by their first names.

Hermione blushed and quickly asked them to call her by her first name, to which they nodded and smiled. When she saw the small hangman, her eyes widened in surprise, to which Harry happily told her about the game and how they were getting along already. She looked intently at the letters already chosen and those that had been crossed out. All three boys could see the exact moment when she figured it out due to the brightening of her eyes and on how she nearly vibrated in her seat.

“Did you figure it out, Hermione?” Dean asked, grinning as she blinked and looked at him.

“Of course!” She said, watching as the trio chuckled which made her blush.

“What’s the answer? I’ve been stumped for a while.” Neville said, glaring at Dean who just smirked at him.

“Almost anything is possible with magic.” Hermione said, her eyes widening in surprise and delight as the little skeleton did a jig as he pulled himself off of the gallows.

“Brilliant!” Dean said, grinning as Hermione blushed but smiled proudly.

“Hermione, if you don’t mind me asking, what had you so upset? You looked as if you had been crying.” Harry said, his voice soft as Hermione blinked and looked down at her hands in her lap.

“I… I was in an empty compartment earlier. You see, my parents had gotten me here early and I had found a compartment to wait in. When people started arriving I didn’t think much of it until a few older girls walked into my compartment. I introduced myself but they…they just sneered and began insulting me. They called me a…a Mudblood.” Hermione said, her voice soft as she refused to look at the three boys.
Harry, Dean and Neville looked enraged at learning this and Neville walked over to Hermione and sat down next to her. Hermione jumped slightly when she felt someone wrap an arm around her shoulders. Looking up, her eyes widened when she saw the angered looks on Harry and Dean’s faces; heck, even Neville looked angry!

“Do you know the names of the girls?” Dean asked, his anger simmering just below the surface.

“U-Um, no I didn’t. But they had green trim on their robes.” Hermione said, frowning as the boys nodded lightly.

“Typical Slytherins. You’d think that kind of attitude wouldn’t be around anymore.” Harry muttered, glaring darkly towards the compartment door.

“Or they’d have more class than that.” Dean huffed, Neville nodding as Hermione blinked.

“I-I knew that what they said was something bad, but I didn’t understand it.” Hermione said, watching as the three boys looked at each other.

“M-Mudblood is a horrible name for Muggleborns. It means dirty blood and many Purebloods call Muggleborns this because they believe that Muggleborns are beneath them.” Harry spat, anger in his voice as Hermione’s eyes widened.

“Why would they-“

“Because they knew that you’re a Muggleborn and instantly thought less of you. Don’t worry though, none of us feel that way.” Dean said, watching as Hermione frowned lightly but nodded.

“That’s a barbaric way of thinking. Don’t they know that ability matters more than blood?” Hermione asked, making the boys smile.

“We know that. However many people are still clinging to the old way of thinking. Before Minister Matthews was elected and all of the reforms and new laws took place, Purebloods and some Halfbloods held all the power here in our society. Minister Matthews has ensured that our world has all the right people in the correct positions. Our society has been improving but some people refuse to change.” Neville explained, watching as Hermione nodded in understanding.

“Of course there are old families like the Longbottoms, Potters, Greengrasses, Bones’ and Othellos who never believed in that crap in the first place.” Harry said, smiling as Dean and Neville nodded.

Hermione smiled at them and they soon got back to their game. Hermione watched them and offered hints after she discovered the answer, which normally wasn’t too long after the first few letters were in place. When she noticed Mira Hermione was shocked and slightly worried about the small dragon-like creature. Harry, however, was quick to reassure her that Mira was perfectly safe so long as no one tried to hurt him or her. Hermione was more than interested in learning about the Fire Lizard and was absolutely amazed when Mira camouflaged herself. Her eyes lit up when Harry handed her a book on Fire Lizards and the girl spent the next hour eagerly reading the slim volume. When the snack trolley came around, Harry, Dean and Neville all bought something from the cart, though Hermione hesitated at first. Eventually the three boys pooled their money together and got Hermione one of everything, making her sputter and blush and try to get them to put some of the sweets back.

Settling back in their compartment Neville happily unwrapped a Cauldron Cake and ate the ‘foam’ first before eating the actual ‘cauldron’ part. Harry and Dean opened their Chocolate Frogs and Hermione squealed when the chocolate amphibians hopped out of their boxes and attempted to make
a get-away. The boys simply snatched them up and, after inspecting them, bit into the sweets, causing the amphibians to go limp. Neville chuckled when he saw the horrified look on Hermione’s face.

“Don’t worry, it’s an enchantment. They’re also spelled to be completely sanitary even if they get away and hop around the floor.” He said, Hermione nodding as she shook herself out of her thoughts.

Hermione tried a Pumpkin Pastry, which she loved, before trying her own Chocolate Frog. She managed to catch the enchanted sweet before it could land on the floor and hurriedly bit its head off, mentally wincing as it went limp in her hand. Humming contently at the taste, she glanced down at the package and her eyes widened when she saw a kind of trading card inside. Using her free hand, she pulled out the card and looked it over, taking in the moving picture of a dark skinned man holding a small telescope with a background showing the night sky.

“Woah! That’s Claudius Ptolemy! His card is rather rare.” Dean exclaimed, making Hermione look at him and Harry with surprise.

“Really?” She asked, blinking when the two boys nodded.

“He’s a famous Egyptian Astronomer, Geographer, Mathematician and Writer.” Harry said, smiling as Hermione looked at the card with interest.

“So, these are collectible?” She asked, making Neville chuckle.

“Yeah. It’s common to trade certain cards for other ones. If you keep that card you might have a few people asking to trade. Another rare card is Cornelius Agrippa besides Merlin and Morgana’s cards.” Neville said, watching as Harry and Dean looked at their cards.

“Another Dumbledore card. I have about…seven of him.” Dean said, sighing as Harry hummed lightly as he chewed on the back right leg of his sweet.

“I have Godric Gryffindor again.” Harry added, making Hermione perk up and look at him.

“Really!?” She asked, her eyes wide as Harry nodded and handed her the card.

Hermione looked down at the picture of a rather regal looking man with deep reddish brown hair and warm brown eyes. He was dressed in a gold and crimson robe and there was a Griffin in the background. The man smiled at her and waved, making Hermione blink in surprise before she smiled and handed the card back to Harry. As the group continued to devour their sweets, they talked about what they liked to do in their spare time and what House they hoped to be sorted into. Hermione, Harry and Dean were quick to reassure Neville that he’d likely make it into Gryffindor if he put his mind to it. Hermione admitted that she’d likely be sorted into Ravenclaw since she loved learning so much while Harry and Dean explained that they’d likely be sorted into Gryffindor. It was Dean who explained that they were allowed to sit at different House tables during meals so long as it wasn’t a feast. Hermione and Neville relaxed upon hearing that; glad that they’d still be able to eat and hang out together even if they got into different Houses.

Conversation shifted to their families, in which Neville was fascinated in learning that Hermione’s parents were dentists. He was slightly confused as to why they only worked on mouths, but Hermione was rather understanding and took her time explaining her parents occupation so the boy would understand. Hermione was rather interested in Neville’s grandmother and the fact that she was part of the advisory board for the school. Neville told her about what the board used to be and how things had improved thanks to the new laws and regulations that the Minister had implemented.
Harry simply explained that both his parents worked from home though his dad was very involved in politics while his mum mostly worked with the various charities and the orphanage. Dean explained that his mum was a nurse which left him to take care of his siblings for the most part but now they had neighbors who were willing to watch his sisters and brother now that he was heading to school and his mum was still working long hours.

Hermione was rather surprised on how different Harry was from the supposed ‘facts’ in the books that mention him. Yes, every book that had mentioned him had a warning stating that it was mostly speculation and she could see why. One of the books she had found said that Harry looked like an exact copy of his dad: James Potter, with messy black hair and glasses. However the Harry in front of her was the complete opposite. There were no glasses and his hair was shoulder length with streaks of dark blonde. Yes his eyes were a stunningly bright shade of emerald but there was also a very faint ring of ice blue around the pupils. Not only that, but Harry was rather tan and was surprisingly well built for a boy his age; Dean as well. It made her wonder if the two of them worked out or had been involved in some kind of sport. From what they had told her both of them had gone to a Muggle primary school so it wasn’t too hard to imagine them playing in their school’s football team or even a youth league like she had done.

-Hopefully I can learn more about them.-She thought, smiling as Dean pulled out a deck of Exploding Snap cards.

Halfway through their journey to Hogwarts, Hermione got to see another side of Harry and Dean. It happened when the door to their compartment was opened; rather rudely if you asked her. A boy stood in the doorway with slicked back bright blonde hair and stormy silver/grey eyes. His entire posture screamed: I am better than you, and on either side of him stood two brutes that looked like they belonged in a higher year than their unmarked school uniforms proclaimed. The boy looked around, sneering when he saw Neville and Hermione before his eyes finally fell on Harry and seemed to light up.

“I had heard you were on the train. You must be Harry Potter. I’m Draco, Draco Malfoy.” He said, blinking when Neville and Dean snorted softly.

“I can see you’ve already found the dredges of our society: a Squib and a Mudblood. You should know that some Wizarding families are better than others, Potter. You don’t want to go making friends with the wrong sort. I can help you there.” Draco said, sneering at Dean and Neville before focusing on Harry and holding his hand out to the other boy.

Neville seemed to shrink back at the insult while Dean and Hermione bristled with anger over the word Mudblood. Harry, however, glanced sharply at Dean who instantly calmed down. Harry looked at Draco before glancing at the blonde’s hand as he stood. Draco seemed to draw back when he saw that Harry was taller than him by at least three inches.

“A Malfoy, you say? I vaguely remember learning about the Malfoys during my history lesson with my godfather and father. A Minor House, of course. I believe my godfather had told me that your great-grandfather had actually bought his Lordship somehow. It’s a wonder how the House of Malfoy still has it considering its current Lord is in Azkaban.” Harry drawled, looking aloof as Draco’s cheeks reddened with anger and shame.

“I believe they’re somewhat wealthy Harry. Also, didn’t your godfather say that Lady Malfoy was a cousin?” Dean asked, fighting back his smirk as Harry nodded.

“Of course, of course. Though she wasn’t a main heiress and my godfather, Lord Black blasted her
off the family tree for wedding a Death Eater. Of course, he could’ve dissolved their marriage but since she never had the Dark Mark he allowed the marriage to remain. Anyway, I guess I could overlook your blunder; after all, your mother has only had so long to teach you respect after your father was imprisoned.

“You see, Heir Malfoy, I am Harry James Potter-Othello: Head of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Potter and Heir Apparent of the Most Ancient and House of Othello. Not only that, but I am also Heir Presumptive of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black. I have no need of your…assistance in finding the ‘right’ sort of people to surround myself with. Mister Dean Thomas-Woods, Head of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Woods is a good childhood friend of mine. Mister Neville Longbottom is the Heir Apparent of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom. I am also close friends with Miss Susan Bones: Heiress Apparent of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Bones and Miss Hannah Abbott; Heiress of the Ancient and Noble House of Abbott. All of them outrank you when it comes status in our world.” Harry drawled, looking down at Draco as the blonde trembled in rage.

“Now, I do believe you owe Heir Longbottom and Lord Thomas-Woods an apology for your…crass remarks.” He said, narrowing his eyes dangerously at the blonde.

Hermione watched as Malfoy glared murderously up at Harry; his hands balled into fists as slight tremors shook his form. She swore that the blonde was going to attempt to strike Harry, but instead Draco seemed to swallow his pride ‘man up’ so to say.

“I apologize, Heir Longbottom, Lord Thomas-Woods, for my rude and…disgusting remarks. I retract them unreservedly.” He grit out, his left eye twitching slightly.

Dean and Neville looked at each other; amusement in Dean’s eyes while Neville looked surprised and awestruck that someone had stepped up and defended him. Both boys nodded lightly before looking back at Malfoy.

“Apology accepted. Since you apologized for your…error, I won’t send word of my regent about what happened here.” Dean said, watching as Malfoy paled drastically.

“Same. My grandmother: Dowager Madame Longbottom, would’ve been most…displeased had you not apologized.” Neville added, making Draco pale even more until it looked as if the boy would faint.

Draco nodded and spun on his heel, stalking away with the two brutish boys following behind him. Harry closed the compartment door and returned to his seat, grinning when Dean started chuckling while Neville shook his head and looked at the black haired boy in wonder and gratefulness. Hermione had to blink a few times as her mind went over the entire interaction between Harry and Malfoy. From what she’d already read about her in her two Wizarding Customs books, Harry, Dean and Neville were very influential in their world. Not only that, but Draco was on one of the lower rungs in the House system given he was from a Minor House. However, the entire statement about Dean’s and Neville’s guardians and proxy confused her.

“Um…I didn’t understand that last part…” She said, her voice soft as the boys looked at her.

“Which part?” Neville asked, watching as Hermione shifted.

“When Dean mentioned that he doesn’t need to send word to his…regent about what happened and what you had said about your grandmother.” Hermione explained, the boys smiling and nodding in understanding.
“Currently, because I’m still a minor, I cannot take charge of the matter of my House. Harry’s godfather, Lord Sirius Black, is acting as my regent at this moment though he confers with my mother on all matters, especially when it comes to businesses to invest in and what to do with those families that owe debts to my House. If Malfoy hadn’t apologized and I sent word of what happened, Lord Black could’ve called Lady Malfoy out in an honor duel. She could’ve been heavily fined or injured as a result of her son’s stupidity” Dean explained, watching as Hermione’s eyes widened in horror.

“Young’s right. My grandmother is acting as proxy as well. She, like Lord Black, could’ve demanded satisfaction for Malfoy’s…remarks. She’s always been…against the Malfoy family. The Longbottom’s have an old feud with the family that dates back a couple years. My great-grandfather attempted to patch that feud by way of a betrothal between my grandmother and Abraxas Malfoy. However, he shamed her by ‘playing the field’ so to say. He actually got another woman pregnant days before their engagement party. Their parents were forced to end the betrothal because of it and Abraxas married the woman he had gotten pregnant. Abraxas’ parents were just glad that their son had knocked up a Pureblood. My grandmother was shamed but she eventually found my grandfather and they married.

“However, the current Lord and Lady Malfoy have openly insulted my family many times over. Lord and Lady Malfoy had tried to convince my parents and grandmother to agree to a betrothal contract before Draco and I were born. My parents and grandmother took great pleasure in refusing it which was basically a political slap in the face.” Neville explained, Hermione listening intently with some horror on her face.

“How could they betroth their unborn children to someone else?! I-It’s-“

“Hermione, calm down. You have to think. Betrothal contracts were and still are in use. It’s a way to solidify alliances between Houses, to ensure bloodlines continue and to strengthen bloodlines as well. I know there had been a betrothal between my great-great-grandfather and Neville’s great-great-grandmother and they had two children out of the union, one being my great-grandfather Charlus Potter and his sister Elizabeth Potter.” Harry explained, making the brunette frown.

“I do know that Malfoy is betrothed to Miss Pansy Parkinson; Heiress Apparent to the Elder House of Parkinson. They have been since before they were born. Also, when I find someone who I am intent on marrying, I’ll likely enter a betrothal with them.” Neville said, making Hermione’s eyes widen.

“The contracts will mostly have clauses which state that the firstborn child of the union will become the head of the husband’s family; should he be from an entitled House such as Harry’s, mine or Neville’s. The second born child will become the head of the wife’s family if she’s from an entitled House. Many contracts state that the pair are to have their first child a year or two after they are married, though some allow more leeway. It’s also to protect the interests of both Houses so the husband doesn’t simply ‘absorb’ the stocks, fortune, heirlooms and properties of his wife’s House into his House which will ‘end’ the second House; especially if the wife is the only child from that second House.” Dean explained, watching as Hermione slowly nodded as she began to understand.

“It’s just another difference, Hermione. You’ll learn more about it in Wizarding Customs.” Harry said, smiling gently at the girl.

“Thank you for explaining it to me. It still seems…barbaric, but I think I’m beginning to understand the need for them.” Hermione said, the boys nodding happily.

“Enough politics! We still have quite some way before we reach Hogwarts.” Dean said.
“How about we play truth or dare? But we can spice things up with Bertie Bott’s Every-Flavor Beans. Every time we pass on a truth or a dare we have to eat two random beans.” Harry suggested, grinning at Dean’s smirk, Neville’s worried look and the look of interest on Hermione’s face.

All of them agreed to the game, though Neville was hesitant to agree at the beginning. Hermione came up the idea of using an empty Pumpkin Juice bottle to determine who was to go first, to which the boys agreed since it would make things fair. Spinning the bottle, Neville was surprised when it landed on him. He shyly asked Hermione ‘truth or dare’ to which she picked truth. They learned that Hermione had a fear of flying, which often made visiting her relatives who lived in other countries slightly difficult. Harry was dared to speak in riddles for four minutes which was hilarious while Dean was the first one to eat two beans when he passed up the dare of running down the car of the train yelling that he was a pretty princess. All of them were laughing at Dean’s face when he ended up eating ear wax and grass. Needless to say he was very grateful for the bottle of Pumpkin Juice that Hermione had saved.

The game continued for most of the remainder of the ride to Hogwarts. Tonks had passed by the group’s compartment and paused when she heard shrieks of laughter coming from within. Raising an eyebrow, she edged open the door and blinked at the sight of Harry wearing makeup while Neville had a red lipstick kiss on his cheek. She was able to figure out what was happening when Neville spun the glass bottle on the floor between them and issued Dean the challenge of truth or dare. Shaking her head, Tonks chuckled as she closed the door and continued on her patrol. She was glad that Harry and Dean were making friends already. There was always the worry about Assassins being able to make friends outside of the Brotherhood. However, Harry and Dean had already managed to do that in primary school and Tonks knew that their parents would be happy to hear that they had made friends already even though they hadn’t made it to the school yet.

By the time the sky darkened, Harry, Dean, Hermione and Neville had managed to eat more than half the box of Bertie’s Beans. They decided to end the game, though promised to pick it up at a later time. Harry explained that it was a good idea to save room for the feast since it featured five courses, which made Hermione’s eyes widen while Dean groaned and hung his head. He instantly regretted having so many sweets, to which Hermione said ‘I told you so’ since she had been the one to warn him to slow down as he had also eaten a Sugar Quill and two more Chocolate Frogs during their game. Gathering up their trash, they tossed everything away in the small bin near the door and Harry and Neville got Hermione’s trunk down so she could change. She blushed and thanked them as they made their way out of the compartment to give her privacy. When she finished changing, Hermione opened the compartment door and stepped outside while the boys went inside to change as well.

Harry and Dean helped Neville get his trunk down before they all changed into their uniforms. After putting their trunks up, they called Hermione back into the compartment and spent the remainder of their time just talking and relaxing. Hermione admitted that she was nervous; especially since this would be the first time she’d be away from her parents for such a long time. Harry, Dean and Neville explained that it was the same with them, though, unlike her, they’ve known that this was coming for years now.

“It’ll seem like time has flown by, Hermione. We have Christmas break and then Easter break where we can go home.” Harry said, smiling as the girl relaxed and smiled back.

“Besides, you can always write letters to your parents and we have cameras in case you want to send them some pictures.” Dean offered, watching as the girl blinked before tilting her head thoughtfully.

“I-I never thought of that, actually. My parents would love the chance to see my school.” She said, watching as Dean dug through his bag before handing her a sleek black and gold camera.
“Here, you can have mine. It works just like a Muggle camera though you have to send the film to Lucy’s Photography Shop in Diagon Alley to have it developed for a small fee.” Dean said, watching as Hermione protested.

“I can’t just take your camera, Dean.” She said, frowning as the dark skinned boy smiled.

“It’s alright, ‘Mione. I have another one and I can always owl order another in case mine breaks. I have a catalog if you’d like to see the different cameras that are for sale.” Dean offered, making the girl blink before she nodded and smiled.

“Alright. Thank you, Dean.” She said, her voice soft.

“No problem.”

-Hogsmeade station had, at one point, been a small and rather simple platform that could barely handle the arrival and departure of all the students that attend Hogwarts. However, since the end of the war and especially since Minister Matthews was elected, the small village had expanded and stretched its boarders and things had greatly improved. One of the first things that had happened was Gringotts had been permitted to build a smaller bank in the village which had drawn more people to the village and encouraged them to settle down. The residents of Hogsmeade had decided that it was high time to create a full station for the students of Hogwarts instead of the tiny platform that had been there for years. Now, the platform was long enough to stretch the full length of the train on both sides with a bridge that went above the train that connected the two sides. The station was well lit and had various stairs so there was less confusion and congestion around a few staircases. Also, it was agreed by everyone that trunks and familiars should be left on the train to avoid cluttering and potential accidents caused by students tripping over said trunks.

Many residents looked out their windows and even stopped on the sidewalks as the Hogwarts Expressed pulled into the station. The children eagerly pulled their parents/guardians closer as the doors of the train opened and students steadily began stepped off and onto the platform. Many students began heading towards the row of horseless carriages waiting for them nearby while First Years were called towards another end of the station by the booming voice of Rebus Hagrid. Hermione stuck close to Dean, Harry and Neville; grateful that Harry and Dean were taller than her and had firmly placed her between them in order to prevent her from being knocked around by the press of bodies. Neville walked on the other side of Harry since he wasn’t much shorter than the black haired boy. Many students stared at Harry in shock as Mira had refused to wait in their compartment for the House Elves to come and collect her. Of course Ricki hadn’t been too happy in being put back into his carrier but Dean appeased him by way of treats.

The First Years nervously shifted and looked around as they gathered in the lamp light of Hagrid’s large lantern. Hermione was rather surprised on Hagrid’s large size and height and she was even more surprised when Harry quietly explained that the man is half-giant. Harry also explained that Hagrid was a gentle soul who served as the grounds keeper for the school. Looking up at Hagrid, Hermione felt herself relaxing when she saw the kindness in Hagrid’s beetle black eyes. Hagrid waited another minute before leading the rather large group of new students down a well-lit stone path that seemed to lead away from the main road leading up to the school. A few students muttered about this and wondered where they were being taken but they quickly fell silent when they saw the lake and a rather impressive fleet of boats at a dock.

“No more than four to a boat!” Hagrid called, walking down one of the docks where he got into a larger boat by himself.
Dean led the group to one of the first boats and stepped down into it. Turning, he held his hand out and helped Hermione get in and seated. Neville nearly slid as he tried stepping down into the boat, but Harry and Dean managed to steady him which made the boy blush but thank them. Harry got in last, though only after he made sure the boat behind them, which was being used by a group of four girls, had settled without any incident. Hagrid waited until everyone had settled in the boats before facing forward and calling for the boats to begin their journey across the lake. Admittedly, it was rather eerie as the fleet silently crossed the lake; the water reflecting the star lit sky and revealing nothing that might lie below the water. Mira shifted on Harry’s shoulders before she launched into the air. Harry kept a close eye on his familiar as she flew around their boat and dipped one of her wing tips into the water. She settled back on Harry’s shoulders after she circled their boat a few times, making the boy shake his head fondly.

Everyone gasped when they finally caught sight of Hogwarts. Sitting atop a cliff, the castle glimmered in the night as the hundreds of windows were lit up. Hermione, Dean and Harry hurriedly pulled out their cameras and quickly snapped a few pictures of the stunning sight. All of them ducked underneath a curtain of ivy which hung off of the inlet they were heading into. Underneath the cliff, they arrived at another set of docks and the boats came to a stop. Harry and Dean stepped out first and helped Hermione and Neville out of the boat before they went around and helped others who were struggling. Only when everyone was safely out of the boats and on the docks did Hagrid begin leading them up a stone path that was built into the cliff. They soon reached massive, double wooden doors which had black knockers the size of a child’s head. Hagrid smartly wrapped on the doors and stood back; causing the students to shift and whisper nervously to each other. After a minute one of the doors opened, revealing a stern looking woman with greying black hair which was held up in a tight bun, sharp dark green eyes and dressed in a deep green robe with a matching witch’s hat.

“All ‘ere, McGonagall.” Hagrid said, the woman glancing over the group before she nodded curtly. “Very well, thank you, Hagrid. Go ahead and join the others.” She said, causing Hagrid to nod and wave to the group of First Years before he walked inside.

“Follow me, quickly now.” The woman ordered, stepping back inside as the group looked at her.

Everyone hurriedly followed the woman inside and their eyes widened as they were led into the castle. The main hall was…well massive in size. Suits of armor lined the walls at odd intervals and moving portraits hung on the walls. All of the portraits smiled and waved at the new students, making some smile and wave back while others looked on in wonder. They were led past massive double doors, one of which was slightly cracked open and allowed the noise of hundreds of students to filter out to the main hall. Hermione swallowed nervously when she caught sight of a sea of older students sitting at two tables inside. They were led down a small hallway and into an ante-chamber. There, the woman turned and looked at them once the door was closed.

“Welcome to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. My name is Professor McGonagall. I am the Deputy Headmistress of this school, the Head of Gryffindor House and the Transfiguration Professor. The start-of-term banquet will begin shortly, but before you take your seats in the Great Hall, you will be sorted into your houses. The Sorting is a very important ceremony because, while you are here, your House will be something like your family within Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your House, sleep in your House dormitory and spend free time in your House common room.

“The four Houses are called Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Slytherin. Each House has its own noble history and each has produced outstanding witches and wizards. While you are at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn your House points, while any rule-breaking will lose House
points. At the end of the year, the House with the most points is awarded the House Cup, a great honor. I hope each of you will be a credit to whichever House you are sorted into.” She explained, her sharp eyes sweeping over them as they listened intently.

“The Sorting Ceremony will take place in a few minutes in front of the rest of the school. I suggest you all smarten yourselves up as much as you can while you are waiting. I will return when we are ready for you.” She finished, her eyes lingering over a few students who had crumbs or even smudges on their faces.

As soon as Professor McGonagall walked through another door and it closed behind her, the students split into groups and began talking nervously amongst themselves. Harry and Dean found themselves busy trying to keep Hermione and Neville calm as the pair was slowly getting worked up about the sorting. It certainly didn’t help when Ronald Weasley began stating, rather loudly, that his brothers had told him that they had to fight a Troll. Of course those who knew about what the actual sorting entailed didn’t fall for that statement, but the Muggleborns and Muggle-raised were becoming increasingly worried and looked on the verge of tears.

“Honestly, Mister Weasley, use your brain.” Harry snapped, making the entire room fall silent and focus on him.

“We’re First Years, Weasley; we haven’t even begun our magical schooling and training. The Professors and Headmaster of this school are not cruel and would never make eleven year-old children go against a class four dangerous being. Our sorting entails us simply having to don the Sorting Hat which will then scan our minds and determine which House we’re best suited to on our personalities. There is no pain and certainly no battling. I dare say your brothers were trying to make you panic. I sincerely doubt that your parents would allow you or any of your siblings attend Hogwarts if such a dangerous task was needed to be performed.” Harry drawled, watching as Ronald’s face turned bright red in anger and embarrassment.

Many of those who had been on the verge of panicking gave Harry grateful and relieved looks before he turned and focused on his friends. The chatter continued until there were shrieks from many of the girls. Turning, Harry and his friends watched as a group of ghosts floated through the wall near the ceiling. One of the ghosts ‘drifted’ down and welcomed them warmly before introducing himself as the ‘Fat Friar’, the House Ghost of Hufflepuff. After he introduced himself, Professor McGonagall returned and the Fat Friar headed out of the room through the wall. All of them formed a line and followed the deputy headmistress out of the ante-chamber and into the Great Hall. They were led down a row between two of the four massive tables where all of the upper class students were seated. At the back of the hall, on a raised platform, were the two Head tables where all of the professors and the headmaster were seated.

A stool appeared at the base of the stairs leading up to the platform and they stopped walking as soon as Professor McGonagall reached the stool. She explained that she would call their names and they were to come up to the stool, sit down and she would place the Sorting Hat on their heads. Some of the First Years shifted as they looked at the battered hat, though many jumped when the Hat twitched before seemingly forming a mouth and beginning to sing! The First Years were in awe as the Sorting Hat sang about all four Houses; explaining what traits were valued by each and giving a brief history on the four founders. Once it fell silent, everyone clapped for the hat before quieting as Professor McGonagall picked up the parchment and unrolled it. Hannah was the very first student sorted and Harry and Dean grinned when the Hat announced Hufflepuff for the girl. They clapped as their friend headed towards the table to their right as her robes gained a golden yellow trim as the school’s magic added her to the House.

Susan soon joined Hannah at Hufflepuff after a few other students were sorted. Harry and Dean also
noticed that there was a small number of students, both older years and in their own year group who were obviously not human. Two First Years were rather tall with deeply tanned skin and delicately pointed ears. Their natural grace and the way they stood calmly identified them as a type of Elf, Wood Elf from their appearances. Two girls in their year group were stunningly beautiful and Dean managed to catch a few words spoken by one of the girls. The melodious quality of her voice and the faint ‘daze’ it gave him identified her and her companion as Sirens. Another girl had rather pale skin and intensely bright blue eyes. When she smiled at the boy in front of her, Hermione caught sight of elongated fangs, identifying the girl as a Vampire.

“I didn’t know there are so many races.” She whispered, making Neville glance at her and smile.

“Yeah. Headmaster Dumbledore opened Hogwarts to different races years ago. It’s actually kinda nice to see so many already attending.” Neville said, Hermione nodding in agreement.

All four tables seem to have at least two to five non-human students. However, Harry pointed out that there may be more since Sirens, Veela and Werewolves looked just like any other student. They fell silent as soon as Hermione’s name was announced. Hermione drew in a deep breath before she walked to the stool and sat down. Her eyes were tightly clamped shut as the Sorting Hat was placed on her head. It took nearly a minute before the Hat announced Gryffindor, which made Harry, Dean and Neville grin. Neville was soon called up and Harry and Dean grinned when they saw their new friend walk to the Sorting Hat with his head held high. The Sorting Hat barely touched Neville’s head before it called out Gryffindor, making Harry, Dean and Hermione cheer as Neville removed the hat and headed towards the right most table.

The sorting continued with Draco Malfoy heading off to Slytherin after the Hat had barely touched his head. When Harry’s name was called, he nearly rolled his eyes when whispers erupted around the Great Hall. Heading up to the stool, he noticed that most of those whispers were about how people were shocked at his appearance and that fact that Mira was still on his shoulders. As he neared the Head table, he also noticed that many of the professors seemed surprised to see his familiar, though Hagrid looked gleeful.

-Ah, that’s right. I heard Hagrid is fascinated with Dragons.- He thought, sitting down with his back to the professors.

As the hat dropped below his eyes, Harry felt a light pressure against his Occlumency shields. Lowering his shields, he was greeted by a warm voice.

-Ah, Mister Potter-Othello. I was wondering when I would get to sort you.- The voice said, its rich timber alerting Harry that the Sorting Hat was a male.

-Now where to put you…Hmm…Ah, I see you’re noble, brave and passionate. However, you’re also very cunning and careful. I can also see that you’re dedicated and loyal to your family and friends while also being highly intelligent. You truly are a perfect blend of all four Houses.- The Hat said, making Harry frown lightly.

-Could you hurry it up? I’d like to join my friends.- Harry thought, making the magical artifact chuckle inside his mind.

-Ah yes, your friends. Never has there been a truer group than the ones you’ve found. I wish you luck, Mister Potter-Othello, in all your endeavors.-

“Gryffindor!”

Harry blinked as the Sorting Hat was pulled off of his head as the four Houses burst into applause.
with Gryffindor being the loudest. Fred and George were on their feet cheering and dancing around which made Harry chuckle as he walked over to the table of the Lions. Sitting down, the sorting continued with the remainder of the students being sorted into the different Houses. Dean soon joined Harry, Neville and Hermione at Gryffindor, to which he grinned as Hermione scooched over to make room for him beside her. Harry and Dean mentally groaned when Ronald Weasley was sorted into their House as well. Both boys knew that Ronald would be a pain in their arse, but there wasn’t much they could do. All they could hope for was that neither of them had to sleep near the redhead.

The sorting ended when a boy by the name of Blaise Zabini was sorted into Slytherin. Headmaster Dumbledore stood and welcomed them all to a new year before informing them that there would be announcements at the end of the feast. As the aged Wizard sat down, food appeared on the golden serving plates and bowls while pitchers filled with Pumpkin juice, fruit juice, milk and water. The din of hundreds of students talking and eating filled the Great Hall. Harry, Hermione, Neville and Dean soon met their fellow year mates in their House. A girl named Lavender Brown and her friend Parvati Patil, a rather pretty Indian Witch, were easily identified as the gossip queens of their year and House. Seamus Finnigan was a rather funny Irish lad and they quickly discovered he had been down to attend St. Brigid’s but his mum wanted him to attend Hogwarts where she had gone.

Another girl by the name of Eliana Grace quickly struck up a conversation with Hermione and another girl by the name of Jillian Michaels about the classes they were supposed to take and about the other schools. Hermione avidly asked questions about the three other schools, in which she learned that Jillian had nearly gone to Beauxbatons because they were generally more accepting of different races. At Hermione’s confused look, Jillian explained that she’s half-Vampire and Eliana chimed in with the explanation that she’s a Siren. Harry, Dean and Neville were surprised in learning this, though looking around they saw that some of the guys were almost constantly glancing towards Eliana every time she spoke. Ronald was practically drooling around the raven haired girl.

Throughout the entire feast Hermione, Harry, Dean and Neville conversed with their House mates and learned more about the school and its professors. They learned to never cross Professor McGonagall or Professor Snape as both were stern and Professor Snape tended to favor his Slytherins and often took points from Gryffindors whenever he could. They also learned that Professor Quirrell was a rather…skittish man who often jumped at the slightest of sounds. Apparently he had been the Muggle Studies professor before going on a two year trip. When he returned he knew very little about the new and updated material that was a requirement for the position as the Muggle Studies Professor. However, he did take on the position as Defense Against the Dark Arts professor instead. They asked plenty of questions about the staff and about daily life in the school. The male Prefect, Percy Weasley, informed them that the schedules were, well, rather interesting as the classes normally lasted an hour long and there was only about three or four classes a day for First Years.

Dean and Harry frowned lightly when they learned that as it meant that they’d have plenty of ‘off’ time to do what they please. They would need to find a room to practice their training quickly so they didn’t become bored. Focusing back on the conversations around them, they continued to talk and laugh with their new House mates, though they were greatly horrified by Ronald’s table manners… or lack thereof. The boy shoveled food into his mouth at a rapid rate though he hadn’t really touched the first course of the feast which had been salads that they could make themselves. Everyone around him inched away until there was a noticeable gap around him. Fred, George and Percy shot the new members of their House apologetic looks, silently apologizing for their younger brother’s horrible table manners. When the food finally disappeared, Harry and Dean were sure that they’d need to run four miles just to work everything off that they had eaten. However, before they could wonder about anything else, Headmaster Dumbledore stood once more.
The aged Headmaster warned them about the Forbidden Forest, in which his sparkling blue eyes locked onto the Weasley twins who just grinned sheepishly. Many older students were excited about the Quidditch tryouts, though Harry and Dean were slightly upset that they couldn’t try out for the Gryffindor team until next year. However, what made everyone pause was when Headmaster Dumbledore warned them to stay away from the third floor corridor; lest they wish to die a most horrible death. Many of the older students looked confused and slightly alarmed though it was mostly the First Years who looked fearful and worried. Hermione clutched onto Dean’s arm tightly, her eyes wide as the headmaster simply moved on from the comment and wished them a goodnight’s sleep. As everyone began getting up, the din rose as many began chatting about their summers and the announcements.

“First Years, follow me please.” Percy called, watching as the First Years slowly gathered around him and a rather pretty blonde.

“This way. Stay close now. We don’t need you getting lost.” The girl said, smiling warmly at the ten new students.

Harry yawned and smiled as Hermione sleepily leaned against him. He wrapped an arm around her waist to keep her on track as they slowly began the trek through the school and up to the seventh floor where Gryffindor Tower was located.

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In the common room Percy and the female Prefect, Morgana Stone, showed them around and explained some of the rules of their House and what was expected of them. The common room was tastefully decorated in deep gold and reds with three seating arrangements scattered around along with a few bookcases. Morgana pointed out the bulletin board where all the school notices were posted and where they could put up their own notices such as lost and found items along with messages. On the coffee table in front of the large fireplace was a stack of various board games and puzzles for students to play and put together in their free time. Against one of the windows overlooking the Great Lake was a rather well used but cared for chess set for students to use as well.

“Now, girls are up the stairs to left and boys are up the stairs to the right. First Years are on the first landing.” Morgana explained, watching as the sleepy-eyed students nodded.

After a few more points of interest, they were all released to head to their dorm room and get ready for bed. Harry, Dean and Neville said goodnight to Hermione, Eliana and Jillian before heading up the stairs to their dorm. Reaching the first landing, they easily found the door to the room and stepped inside. The dorm room was rather large and circular with five, four-poster canopy beds with dark crimson curtains and gold and black comforters and pillows. In the center of the room was a large, wood burning heater to help heat up the room during the harsh winters. Through another door was the bathroom which had toilet stalls and shower stalls along with four sinks and mirrors. Over all, it was a pretty nice setup and Dean and Harry were rather pleased that they could slightly personalize their own space.

All of them located their trunks near the door to the stairs and Harry and Dean were quick to snag their trunks and wheel them over to the two leftmost beds. Neville followed them and watched as Dean claimed the bed closest to the door and Harry claimed the second bed. He smiled as Harry grinned at him and happily set his trunk at the base of the bed on the other side of Harry’s. Kneeling down to open his trunk, he never saw the glare directed at him by Ronald, though Harry and Dean did. Harry narrowed his eyes at the redhead, making Ron blink before his eyes widened when he saw the anger in Harry’s eyes. Ronald quickly did the smart thing and backed off. Instead, he walked over and grabbed his trunk and chose the rightmost bed as Seamus had chosen the bed on the other
side of Neville’s. There wasn’t much talking as the five boys changed into their pajamas and climbed into bed. Harry and Dean set their alarms and place them on the shelf that had been built into the headboard of their bed. Wishing each other and Neville a goodnight, they drew their curtains around their beds. Both boys added a privacy charm and a silencing charm to the curtains around their beds, grateful that Lucas and Delilah had taught them those spells.

Sadly, it seemed like no time at all had passed before Harry and Dean were woken up by their alarms. Groaning, both boys turned off their alarms and slowly got up. Mira and Ricki looked at their humans before putting their heads back down and going back to sleep. Harry and Dean canceled the charms around their beds and quietly got up. They quickly used the bathroom and changed into their workout clothes which consisted of rather form fitting short sleeved shirts, jogging pants, socks and their trainers. Both of them snagged a towel and their water bottles, though Harry snagged his map of the school before they crept out of the dorm and padded down to the dark common room. It was only five in the morning so they weren’t surprised when they saw that the common room was empty. However, they were surprised by the sight of a smartly dressed House Elf cleaning the fireplace.

“Morning young Masters.” It chirped, making Harry and Dean look at each other and smile.

“Mornin’.” Dean said, nodding as Harry walked over to the House Elf.

“Excuse me, but I was wondering if you would be able to fill mine and Dean’s water bottles with some ice water. We’re heading outside for our morning run.” Harry explained, watching as the House Elf blinked before nodding.

“Of course!” It said, accepting the water bottles and disappearing with a faint pop.

It returned not even a minute later with their water bottles, to which Harry and Dean thanked the creature before heading out of the common room. They were shocked to find Tonks waiting for them dressed in a sports bra, workout pants and her trainers. She grinned when she saw them and nodded approvingly of their outfits.

“I was wondering if you two would be up. Shall we run around the lake?” She asked, leading the way down the staircases.

“Sure. When will we know our training schedules?” Dean asked, holding onto the railing as the staircase decided to move on them.

“Professor Snape and Professor McGonagall add the training schedule to the back of your class schedules. It’s under a heavy charm so that only you two will be able to read it.” Tonks explained, looking back at the boys as they listened intently.

“Huh, safe and effective.” Harry mused, his cousin nodding a she chuckled.

“Both of them also know about the mornings runs. Also, if you find out that anyone in your year has the potential to be…what we are, report to either of them A.S.A.P. I haven’t been able to find anyone though the Slytherin’s have a few…Templars among them.” Tonks said, scowling when she thought for the four Snakes.

“Will they know who I am?” Harry asked, concern in his voice as Tonks and Dean looked at him.

“They most likely won’t since none of the Templars actually know who leads our Brotherhood. They might just think you two are regular students. They certainly don’t know that I’m an Assassin.” Tonks said, making the boys relax and nod.

Heading down the various moving staircases, they fell into an easy silence that lasted until they
finally stepped outside in the cool morning air. Dew clung to the grass and they carefully picked their way down towards the lake as their eyes adjusted to the darkness. Tonks pulled out a waterproof blanket from her bag and spread it out underneath one of the trees before setting down her water bottle and towel on it. She pulled out a few snack bars which she happily shared with the boys. Harry and Dean thanked the older teen and ate the snack bars as they set down their own towels and water bottles. All three of them went through a series of stretches to hopefully reduce the chance of their muscles cramping during their run. Tonks told them about areas to avoid around the edges of the lake and explained that the terrain gets slightly…unstable as they get close to the area where the lake began to encroach on the forest. Harry and Dean promised to remain behind her and follow her lead around the lake to avoid any potholes and potential dangers. The last thing they wanted was a broken or sprained ankle on their first day.

Setting off at a light jog, the trio paced themselves as they began their run. There was no need to talk as the three novice Assassins went through the familiar motions of their morning routine. Harry and Dean did slow down as they got to the rough patch of ground. It was slightly disconcerting as their feet sank down into the soggy ground but thankfully their trainers were charmed to repel water, mud and snow from getting inside. It wasn’t long before they reached the other side of the lake and Harry and Dean were surprised when a couple massive tentacles rose from the water and waved about lazily.

“Don’t worry, that’s just the giant squid. He’s perfectly harmless and very friendly. It’s common to see students being gently thrown into the air and splashing down into the water or even diving off his tentacles in the warmer months.” Tonks explained, turning and running backwards in front of the boys.

“How deep is the lake?” Dean asked, a hint of slight nervousness in his voice as Tonks cocked her head to the side in thought.

“I…I’m not sure actually. I know there’s a Merfolk village at the very bottom though it’s rare to see them so close to the surface. There’s a good amount of different creatures living in the lake but they normally don’t bother students.” Tonks explained.

It was rather interesting when the giant squid came up close to the surface. The boys were shocked when they spotted a huge, pale eye looking at them with intelligence and interest from under the water. Tonks grinned and waved at the massive creature, to which she received a wave back. About five feet away from their starting point the trio spotted the large form of Hagrid step out of hut with a large dog bounding out in front of him. Tonks quickly explained that Hagrid lived on the grounds since he was the Grounds Keeper and Keeper of the Keys. He lived in the hut with his boarhound Fang who was overly friendly despite the name. Hagrid caught sight of them and waved, making the trio smile and wave back. As Hagrid went about his day, the trio worked on their second lap around the lake. This time, they removed their trainers and socks and ran through an inch of water and sand. Harry and Dean slowed down halfway around the lake and Tonks was jogging alongside them while giving them encouragement as the pair panted and stumbled through the water and wet sand.

Making it to the blanket, the boys practically fell onto it and allowed Tonks to clean off their feet, ankles and the bottoms of their jogging pants with a few flicks of her wand. She cleaned herself off before she sat down and headed the boys their water bottles. The boys knew better than to suck down the cold water though it was extremely tempting. Sipping on their water, they blinked when Tonks offered them a few crackers with some cheese on them. Thanking her, they nibbled on the light snack before they felt strong enough to finally stand and put their trainers back on. Packing up their things, they headed back inside and split up with Tonks heading down to the lower parts of the school. Harry and Dean decided to consult the map and saw that more and more people were waking up and getting ready for their first day. Harry led Dean to a blank section of the wall and, after
looking at the map, reached up to twist one of the sconces. A small section of the wall slid back, revealing a short flight of stairs. Ducking inside, Harry closed the wall and he and Dean activated their Eagle sight.

Their eyes glowed a faint white/blue color as they walked through the dark passage. Both of them could see through the walls and spotted a few professors making their rounds and heading towards the Great Hall. It only took a few minutes for the pair to reach the top of the staircase and Harry studied the area around them before reaching up and tapping a brick. A section of the wall slid away and Harry deactivated his sight. Dean followed suit and stepped out into the hall while Harry closed the passage.

“That’s damn handy.” Dean said, looking back at the section of wall.

“Nice thing about the map is that it shows all of the hidden passages. There are a lot of them and I think they’ll come in handy when trying to get to our classes.” Harry said, leading the way over to the portrait of the Fat Lady.

Giving the woman the password, they climbed into the common room and blinked when they saw a rather large number of their fellow Housemates milling around. They received many strange looks, though the Muggleborns and Muggle-raised smiled and nodded when they saw the workout outfits.

“Harry?! Dean?!”

Turning, they blinked when they saw Hermione sitting in one of the rather squashy, comfortable armchairs near the fireplace. The brunette looked shocked to see them dressed in workout clothes and she quickly marked her place in her book and walked over.

“I thought you two were still upstairs asleep.” Hermione said, frowning lightly as she looked at them.

“We were up at five to go on a run around the lake.” Harry explained, making Hermione blink in shock before she frowned.

“You shouldn’t have been up and wandering around so early! What if you had gotten hurt or in trouble?” Hermione asked, worry in her voice as the boys smiled.

“There’s nothing in the rules stating that we can’t be up at five in the morning. Besides, Head Girl Tonks was with us. She went running as well.” Dean said, making Hermione open her mouth before she closed it.

“Healthy mind, healthy body and healthy magic.” Harry recited.

“We’ll be done in a bit.” Dean said, following after Harry and leaving Hermione looking thoughtful at the bottom of the stairs.

Up in their dorm room, Harry and Dean ran into Neville as he walked out of the bathroom freshly showered and dressed. Neville asked where they had been and was rather shocked that his new friends had been awake since five in the morning and had run two laps around the lake. He listened as Dean explained that they were used to working out in the mornings and saw no reason why they should have to stop working out even though Hogwarts does have a new P.E. class. The pair gathered their toiletries from their trunks and ducked into the bathroom to go through their morning routine. Once they were showered, dressed and more awake and ready for the day did the pair come out of the bathroom and collected their bags. Mira settled herself on Harry’s shoulders while Ricki jumped into one of the pockets of Dean’s robes. They walked out just as Seamus and Ronald were finally waking up and getting out of bed.
Heading back down to the common room, they met up with Hermione, Eliana and Jillian. Jillian didn’t look very happy and Eliana looked rather upset which made the boys wonder what had happened. However, the two girls refused to say anything; rather they just nodded towards the entrance of the common room. Taking the hint all of them headed out of the tower and slowly made their way down the various flights of stairs and towards the Great Hall for breakfast.

“What happened?” Harry asked, concern in his voice as Jillian sighed.

“Lavender and her ‘bestie’ are what happened.” Eliana said, scowling as she thought of the two other Witches.

“What did they do?” Neville asked, his voice soft as Jillian shifted.

“They were making fun of Hermione’s hair because it’s so frizzy. They also stated that I have ‘old lady’ hair.” Jillian said, picking up a lock of her white hair with a faint scowl on her face.

“That’s rubbish!” Dean spat, anger in his voice as the girls looked at him in surprise.

“It shouldn’t matter what kind of hair you have. I personally think you look very pretty, Jillian.” Harry said, making the girl blush and smile shyly at him.

“And Hermione, you’re very pretty as well. I think the frizzy hair suits you.” Dean added, making the brunette blush mightily.

“Don’t let them get to you. By insulting you they’re trying to make themselves feel better about their own flaws.” Neville said, the girls looking at him with surprise before they smiled.

They went on talking about themselves and what they were looking forward to in way of their classes. Hermione admitted that she couldn’t wait until their Third Year where they could select new classes. This made the others chuckle as they had figured that Hermione would love the different classes and the various things they’d be able to learn. Reaching the Great Hall, they happily sat down and began loading their plates with various dishes such as porridge, cereal, fruits, pancakes, toast, eggs, bacon and a few more dishes as well. The older students happily talked with them, in which they discovered that Fred and George were on the Quidditch team for their House and were the beaters. They bemoaned the fact that, since their older brother Charlie had graduated, their team hadn’t found a decent Seeker that had been able to win them the cup. Dean grinned and explained that Harry was a decent Seeker, to which the raven haired boy rolled his eyes and shrugged when the twins looked at him.

“I might try out next year for the team. I can play Seeker and Chaser.” Harry explained.

“Well, we have a Chaser and a Seeker spot open right now. Angelina and Alicia are wicked Chasers and Oliver, our captain, plays a bloody good Keeper.” Fred said, his brother nodding with a proud look on his face.

“It’s a shame First Years aren’t allowed to play.” George muttered, making Hermione raise an eyebrow.

“Why can’t we?” Jillian asked, tilting her head to the side as Percy looked at them.

“Because Quidditch calls for skills that many First Years don’t have yet. Not only that, but it’s so the First Years can get used to being here and many don’t know how to properly handle a broom. They’ve actually made flying lessons into a full class.” Percy explained, the others nodding in understanding and agreement.
“Anyway, tell me more about your training.” Hermione said, focusing on Harry and Dean which made Jillian and Eliana look at them with interest.

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Breakfast passed much too quickly in the opinion of many of the students. Halfway through the meal, the Heads of the four Houses walked down and began passing out the class schedules for the year. Hermione had nearly been bouncing in her seat as Professor McGonagall made her way down the table towards them. The stern woman looked at them kindly as she handed them their schedules, in which Hermione eagerly unfolded hers and read it over. Harry and Dean caught the Master Assassin’s eye, to which McGonagall gave them a slight nod as she handed them their schedules. Harry and Dean accepted the piece of parchment before unfolding it and reading it over.

**Monday**

- **8.00-9.00:** Transfiguration with Slytherin  
- **9.30-10.30:** Charms with Ravenclaw  
- **12.00-1.00:** Lunch  
- **1.30-2.30:** History with Slytherin  
- **3.00-4.00:** Self-Study  
- **7.00-8.00:** Dinner  

**Tuesday**

- **8.00-9.00:** Herbology with Hufflepuff  
- **9.30-10.30:** Potions with Slytherin  
- **12.00-1.00:** Lunch  
- **1.30-2.30:** Defense Against the Dark Arts with Slytherin  
- **3.00-4.00:** Self-Study  
- **7.00-8.00:** Dinner  
- **9.00-10.00:** Astronomy with Slytherin  

**Wednesday**

- **7.30-9.30:** Transfiguration with Slytherin  
- **10.00-12.00:** Charms with Ravenclaw  
- **12.00-1.00:** Lunch  
- **1.30-3.30:** History with Slytherin  
- **4.00-6.00:** Self-Study
7.00-8.00: Dinner

**Thursday**

7.30-9.30: Herbology with Hufflepuff

10.00-12.00: Potions with Slytherin

12.00-1.00 Lunch

1.30-3.30: Defense Against the Dark Arts with Slytherin

4.00-5.00: Self-Study

7.00-8.00: Dinner

9.00-11.00: Astronomy with Slytherin

**Friday**

9.00-11.00 Broom Handling with Slytherin

12.00-1.00 Lunch

1.30-2.30: Basic First Aid with Hufflepuff

3.00-4.00: Physical Education and Health with Slytherin

4.30-6.30: Customs of Different Races with Ravenclaw

7.00-8.00: Dinner

“Woah…” Hermione breathed, her eyes wide as she went over her own schedule.

“Pretty easy year by the looks of it.” Dean said.

Hermione, Eliana and Jillian looked over Harry and Dean’s schedule and saw that neither of them had Muggle Customs or Wizarding Customs. At the questioning looks the girls gave them, Harry and Dean explained that both of them had tested out of the two classes as they were raised knowing both worlds. Of course they promised to help the girls out with any questions they had as Eliana and Hermione were taking Wizarding Customs while Jillian and Neville had Muggle Customs. All of them hurriedly finished their meals before heading back up to Gryffindor Tower in order to pack their school bags for the day’s lessons. Hermione and Eliana had Wizarding Customs after Self-Study while Jillian had Muggle Customs at the same time.

Talking with a few of their older House mates, the group also discovered that it was the fourth year where there were two professors per class. The new system made grading easier on the professors and they were able to dedicate more time to their students. Not only that but students in their Third Year and up were able to take nearly all of the electives instead of being limited because some elective courses ran at the same time. Hermione was more than happy in learning that bit of information which made her newfound friends laugh at her eagerness. Gathering their things, they met in the common room before heading out and finding their way to the Transfiguration classroom. Harry and Dean, in order to keep up appearances, took to asking the portraits for directions in which they were more than willing to direct the group to the classroom. When they finally reached the
Hermione and Jillian sat in the front while Harry and Dean sat behind them and then Neville and Eliana sat behind the two boys. A few Slytherins were already in their seats on the right side of the classroom. Harry and Dean nodded their heads to a rather stunning blonde haired girl with shocking blue eyes. She smiled faintly back and nodded as well while the strawberry blonde haired girl beside her watched with some curiosity. Neville quietly informed Eliana that the two girls were Daphne Greengrass and Tracy Davis; two heiresses of Most Ancient and Noble Houses and their families were considered Grey or even Dark Grey. More and more students found their way into the classroom and that was also when Harry noticed the rather regal looking Great Dane who sat near the professor’s desk.

When the bell signaling the start of class rang, everyone reached into their bags and pulled out their Transfiguration books, parchment, quills and ink. However, the absence of their professor confused all of them; as did the absence of Ronald and Seamus. A minute passed before the door to the classroom opened and the two missing Gryffindors ran into the room, their cheeks flushed as they panted for breath. Looking around, they were relieved when they didn’t see their professor and instantly headed towards the last remaining open desks. However, everyone gasped; though Padma and Lavender shrieked, when the Great Dane barked and stood. Its body seemed to ‘blur’ before a man in his early twenties with long dark brown hair and grey eyes stood before them.

“Mister Weasley, Mister Finnigan, did you not hear the bell signaling the start of class?” He asked, his deep voice firm but soft.

“W-We got lost.” Ronald said, flushing as the professor raised an eyebrow.

“Did you not think to ask an upper classmen the way? Or the portraits?” He asked, watching as the two boys flushed and looked down.

“Take your seats and five points from Gryffindor for your tardiness. You’ll soon learn that we professors do not tolerate students being late to our lessons unless you have a valid excuse.” He said, making the two boys frown as they took their seats.

“Welcome to Transfiguration. I am Professor Ross and shall be your Professor for your first three years of this class. What you just witnessed is an Animagus transformation. Many people do not possess the ability or the power to become an animagus. It is considered one of the highest levels of Transfiguration as you are turning into your inner animal while keeping your mind and senses. Transfiguration is one of the hardest, most complex and dangerous forms of magic you will learn here at Hogwarts. As such, if I catch anyone messing around or goofing off in my class, you shall be sent out and will not return.” He said, his sharp eyes sweeping over the entire class as they shifted uneasily under his stare.

After no one said anything, Professor Ross nodded and fully began the lesson. He explained what Transfiguration was and how it also bled into the art of conjuration. The entire class was busy writing notes, their eyes shifting between their professor and the parchment on their desks. However, they stopped when he showed them a few simple things such as turning a block of wood into a doll, a block of stone into a jewelry box and finally a small book into a goblet. He also turned a mouse into a matchbox while explaining that it was harder to turn a living animal into an inanimate object and vice-versa.

“Your first two years here will be learning theory and performing simple transfigurations. By the time you are in your Third Year, you shall be casting on animals. I can assure you now, that none of the mice or turtles truly mind. All are taken care of and the process doesn’t harm them.” He explained, having caught a few worried looks on some of the Muggleborn’s faces.
Near the last twenty minutes of the class they were all taught a rather simple spell and its wand movements before being handed a matchstick. Professor Ross demonstrated the process of turning said matchstick into a needle. He gently explained that he didn’t expect everyone to get it on the first try, but encouraged them to continue practicing outside of class. After that, the students began trying to perform their first ‘true’ spell here in Hogwarts. Jillian was the first one to turn her matchstick into a needle, though it still kept its wooden coloring instead of being silver. She blushed and smiled as she was given five points for her near perfect attempt. A Slytherin girl by the name of Millicent Bulstrode was the very first student to completely transfigure their matchstick into a needle. The black haired girl blushed as Professor Ross examined her needle and praised her for her skill. He awarded her ten points for the accomplishment, which made her desk partner: Blaise Zabini, smile and congratulate the large girl.

It was only a few minutes after that when the bell signaling the end of class rang. Their assignment was a foot long essay on the advantages of Transfiguration and for them to practice turning a needle into a matchstick. Walking out of the class, Neville instantly stated that he’d never make it in the class. Of course the others rounded on him and explained that all it took was practice. Eliana pointed out that Ronald and Seamus hadn’t even managed to get their matchsticks to change at all while he had gotten his to change silver and acquire a needle-sharp point on one end. Neville was slightly cheered up by this information, though the others could see that he still wasn’t too sure about his ability to cast spells and actually perform magic. It pained them to see their friend think so lowly about himself but all they could do was continue to offer their support and encouragement.

With the help of the portraits and ghosts once more, the group easily found their way to the Charms classroom. Thankfully the Eagles were rather quiet and mostly kept to themselves. In Transfiguration Professor Ross had intimidated all of them too much for Draco and his cronies to try something to harass the Gryffindors. However, Ronald had lost them ten more points by laughing at Theodore Nott when the boy had stuck himself with his half transfigured matchstick. Professor Winthrop proved to be a very cheerful and involving teacher and the class had a great time watching as the professor demonstrated some of the charms and spells they’d be learning that year. The very first spell he had them learn was the unlocking charm: Alohomora. The wand movement was a simple jab while incanting and Professor Winthrop had them practice incanting without using their wands. Some struggled with pronouncing the spell, but they soon got it and were given locked padlocks to practice with. Harry and Dean were the first of their group to unlock their padlocks with the others coming along a little behind them.

Professor Winthrop was overjoyed with how many students were getting the spell down. He had them practice a few times in order to ensure they understood the charm. He explained that they’d learn the locking charm: Colloportus, next year. However, he encouraged them to study up the next two charms that they’d be learning as the lesson came to an end. After gathering their things, Hermione instantly suggested that they head to the library to begin on their assignments, which made the others chuckle and lightly tease her for her eagerness. However, they did agree and, after getting directions to the library once more, found themselves walking through the large double doors. Miss Pince, the librarian, stopped them from advancing any further and gave them a rundown on the rules of the library. They learned that they weren’t allowed in the restricted section until they’re in their Fifth Year because some of the books were charmed, or, if they had a permission slip from one of their professors.

Heading through the various shelves of books, they found a large enough table for them all to sit at. Sitting down, they soon began working on their Transfiguration assignment. Hermione happily helped Neville with his essay by directing him to the correct section in their book and in another book she found on a nearby shelf. All of them happily chatted while doing their assignments and they admitted that they were all eager for their other classes after lunch and those set for the next day. Admittedly, the double lessons later in the week were a little daunting, but they were also looking
forward to learning more in their lessons. They managed to finish both assignments by the time lunch came around which was a huge relief. Packing up, they headed to the Great Hall and decided to sit at the Hufflepuff table with Susan and Hannah. The two ‘Puffs were surprised, but they were more than happy at the same time. Sure, they got some weird looks from the other ‘Puffs around them, but no one said anything against them sitting at their table.

“It’s actually encouraged for us to sit at other tables. There’s nothing keeping you from sitting with your other friends who are in different Houses.” Hermione said, smiling as a few ‘Puffs blinked before nodding.

“Thank you, Miss Granger.” One ‘Puff said, smiling shyly at Hermione who smiled back.

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The rest of their first day passed without much incident. History was fascinating as they were beginning with what Wizards and Witches knew about Merlin and Morgana Le Fay from what records had been found throughout history. Yes, there was a lot of note taking, but Professor Jackson made things interesting by calling up various students to help him reenact different scenes. They learned that they would be learning about magic and the history of magic in general throughout the year and would likely cover up until a little after the Founder’s era and what Hogwarts was like all those years ago. The only part of History that none of them liked was when Professor Jackson took points when Ronald started snoring halfway through the man’s lecture. Instead of just waking Ronald up, Professor Jackson walked over to the redhead, picked up his history book and let it drop onto the desk next to Ronald’s head. The Slytherin’s and even most of the Gryffindor’ laughed when Ronald screamed in fright and fell out of his chair.

“Mister Weasley it will do you well to try to remain awake in my class. You never know when I’ll issue a pop-quiz at the start or end of the lesson. Consider this a warning, Mister Weasley.” He said, frowning as Ronald flushed in embarrassment and shame.

After History ended, they all headed back to the library for Self-Study. They learned from Madame Pince that the ‘class’ was the perfect time for them to do research on different magicks, do assignments and they could also go and visit their professors in their offices if they needed help. The group used the hour to finish up their assignments, which included reading two chapters of their History book and write a small essay about Merlin and Morgana’s childhood. Harry and Dean said goodbye to the others once Self-Study finished as the others had to head to their next class. Hannah, like Harry and Dean, tested out of Wizarding Customs and Muggle Customs. However, she headed outside to enjoy the warm weather before it disappeared.

“All right, we need to check our training schedule.” Dean said, pulling out his class schedule from his bag as Harry followed his example.

The two boys turned their schedules over and pressed the tips of their ‘true’ wands to the parchment. Instantly the spell concealing the message faded and words came into view.

**Mister Thomas-Woods,**

*You and Mister Potter-Othello are to report to the seventh floor, South Wing every Saturday and Sunday at five am for training. The room is located across the tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy trying to teach Trolls to tap-dance. Training will be until seven am. Do not bring anyone with you besides those who already know what we are.*

*Should you discover any students with our abilities, please alert either myself or Professor Snape.*
“Well, so much for a lie-in.” Dean said, sighing as he tucked his schedule back into his bag.

“Since when have we ever been able to have a lie-in, De?” Harry asked, raising an eyebrow at his friend.

“…True…” Dean muttered.

“So, what do you want to do now? We’re finished with our assignments, read ahead in our books…” Dean said, looking over at his friend.

“We could go outside. Han had the right idea in spending time outside before it gets too cold outside.” Harry suggested, picking up his bag and as he got to his feet.

“Let’s drop our bags off in our room.” Dean suggested, Harry nodding his head in agreement.

After dropping their bags off, they headed outside and wandered around. There were a few First Years milling about as they didn’t have to take either Muggle or Wizarding Customs. Some older students were wandering around as well, enjoying the sunshine and warmth while they could. Harry and Dean eventually found themselves near Hagrid’s hut. The tall man sat outside his hut on a tree stump with Fang lying down beside him. As the two boys walked over, they noticed that Hagrid is actually whittling something out of a block of wood. Fang lifted his head and barked, though his tail is wagging swiftly in his eagerness.

“Hello, Hagrid.” Harry said, smiling as the gentle man looked at him.

“‘Arry! I was wonderin’ if ya’d visit.” Hagrid said, smiling warmly at the young boy.

Harry smiled when Mira flew off of his shoulders and over to Hagrid, making the man freeze when she settled on one of his massive shoulders. Dean and Harry chuckled as Hagrid’s eyes sparkled and a wide smile crossed his face. Harry told Hagrid about his familiar and told him about her various abilities and more about Fire Lizards in general. Hagrid listened with fascination and asked plenty of questions about the creatures. Harry and Dean explained that the Fire Lizards were just as dangerous as Dragons, but were more accepted by Wizards and Witches as familiars. Hagrid admitted that he wished he could meet a few more Fire Lizards, in which Harry talked with Mira about the possibility of some of the Fire Lizards migrating to the Forbidden Forest.

[It could be possible, but we would have to know what creatures reside in the forest.] Mira explained, Harry nodding in understanding.

“Hagrid, Mira is wondering what creatures are in the forest.” Harry said, looking to the Forbidden Forest behind the large man.

“Well, there’re Unicorns, a Centaur herd, Acromantulas, Thestrals an’ some normal animals like deer, rabbits, ferret an’ such.” Hagrid answered, Harry and Dean looked at him in shock.

“Acromantulas live in the forest?! Isn’t it too dangerous to have them around?” Dean asked, worry in his voice as he glanced towards the forest.

“Don’t worry, they’re ‘armless.” Hagrid said, smiling as he rubbed Mira’s head while the boys glanced at each other.

They continued visiting with Hagrid for a little while longer before heading off to explore the grounds some more. They found the Quidditch pitch, in which they looked around the stands with
interest. Both of them couldn’t wait to watch the school games and hoped that Gryffindor had a good team. Moving on, they stopped by the Great Lake and watched as a couple older students swam around in the warm water. They smiled and nodded to a few of their upper Housemates, to which they were called into the water. Looking at each other, the boys grinned and hurried back into the castle and used the hidden passage to get to the common room faster.

They hurriedly changed into their swim trunks and pulled on a shirt before grabbing a few towels. Rushing out of their dorm room, they hurried through the common room, making a few people stare after them in confusion. Using the hidden passage once more, they sprinted down to the lake and pulled off their trainers, socks and shirt. Neither of them really noticed the stares they were getting from some of the females as their torsos were revealed. Running into the cool water, they laughed and dove into the water.

“Glad you could join us.” Lyle Briggs said, grinning as the pair swam past him.

“The weather’s perfect so why not?” Harry asked, shifting so he was floating on his back.

“Hey, Han, c’mon in!” Dean called, waving over to their friend who sat near the shore on a flat boulder.

“No thanks.” Hannah said, blushing as she looked at Dean and Harry.

The pair shrugged lightly before having fun playing keep-away using a ball one of the upper years had brought with them. Alicia and Katie were two of the girls who joined their game along with a Sixth Year Slytherin by the name of Lucy Maxwell. Oliver, Cedric Diggory from Hufflepuff, Terrence Hodge from their House, Patrick Miles from Ravenclaw and Xander Miles from their House, made up the rest of the teams. The game lasted a while before some of the guys headed back inside to shower and get ready for a class or just to do their assignments.

“Hey, Harry, how are you and Dean so buff? You’re only eleven.” Alicia said, eyeing Harry’s torso as the preteen floated on his back.

“’Ry and I work out regularly. Though you’re pretty toned yourself, Alicia.” Dean said, grinning as the brunette flushed and rolled her eyes.

“Quidditch practice for three hours will do that to you. Oliver also has us running every other day to keep in shape. He’s apparently found a new workout routine for us to try this year.” Katie said, shuddering lightly at the thought.

“I take it Oliver’s a task master?” Harry asked.

“Merlin yes! He wakes us up at five in the morning no matter the weather just so we can go on a run or use one of the empty classrooms to workout. I mean, I understand since Slytherin uses brute strength to win. I swear our last Seeker had a broken hip, broken collarbone and his entire right leg was broken. Both Beaters and a Chaser ganged up on him.” Alicia said, watching as the pair frowned.

“Some people have no concept of playing fair.” Dean muttered, Harry nodding in agreement as the girls nodded.

“Marcus Flint, the captain of our team, encourages the players to play dirty. He only allows boys on the team as well and looks for brawn over brains.” Lucy said, a frown on her face as she thought of the large Slytherin.

“Some people you just can’t change, even with how our world is changing. People like Marcus and
the Malfoys will always think themselves superior of others.” Harry explained, watching as Lucy scoffed and shook her head.

“Don’t even get me started on ‘darling’ Draco. Pansy Parkinson has made the entire House aware that she and ‘dear’ Draco are betrothed. Draco, meanwhile, is strutting around our House acting like he’s the greatest thing and we should all bow down to him. He seems to think he’s greater than all of us even though he’s only from a Minor House. Miss Greengrass, Miss Davis and Miss Bulstrode have taken to ignoring him and Pansy. Blaise Zabini is the same way though Theodore Nott has firmly planted himself in the ‘Malfoy is great’ camp.” Lucy said, the others shaking their heads in awe over the sheer stupidity and arrogance of the blonde ponce.

“Enough politics and talking about Malfoy. We should get going; it’s cooling off and dinner will be served soon.” Katie said.

Making their way out of the lake, they dried off and put on their robes and other clothing they had worn outside. Heading back into the castle, Harry and Dean walked with Alicia and Katie back up to Gryffindor Tower while Lucy headed down to the dungeons. Up in the tower, Harry and Dean headed to their dorm room and showered before redressing back into the outfits they had been wearing before. Hurrying down to the Great Hall, they arrived just in time to spot their friends heading towards Gryffindor table. Hermione paused when she heard someone call her name and turned around, smiling when she saw Harry and Dean walking over.

“There you are. What did you two get up to while we were in class?” Hermione asked, sitting down next to Harry as they reached the table.

“Walked around outside, talked to Hagrid and went swimming in the lake.” Dean answered, making the others blink.

“I didn’t know we could go swimming.” Hermione mused, Jillian and Eliana nodding in agreement.

“We’re allowed. Though if you think about it, we don’t get a lot of chances to swim. It’s terribly cold here in the winters from what Uncle Sirius told me and we won’t get in a lot of time to swim unless it’s now or near the end of the school year.” Harry explained, the others nodding in understanding.

“So, how was Wizarding Customs?” Dean asked, grinning as Hermione and Eliana brightened up.

The pair gushed about their class; explaining that it was a relief that there were so many other classmates who don’t know much about the Wizarding world. Harry and Dean were glad that, apparently, the girls would be learning about the Wizengamot and some of the other Magical societies and how they were different and similar to their society. Neville and Jillian talked about Muggle Customs, in which both admitted that it was rather shocking on how much Muggles had accomplished without magic. Both classes would have various fieldtrips to different places and Hermione and Eliana were looking forward to getting to visit the Ministry of Magic near the end of the year. Of course the two girls promised to help Neville and Jillian with their classwork while Neville and Jillian promised the same.

All of them were looking forward to their second day, especially since they’d be going through their next set of new classes. Talking to a few older students, they were relieved to learn that they wouldn’t have Professor Snape until their Fourth Year. Instead, they would be taught by Professor Harper; a rather pretty young women with silver hair and bright amber eyes. They were told that Professor Harper was very strict but fair. Of course they were warned that Potions was one of the most dangerous classes besides Transfiguration since, if handled wrong or made incorrectly, a potion could explode. It was the Weasley twins who helped to calm some of their nerves.
“The first few weeks you’ll be learning the proper way to prepare ingredients and the different terminology used in the books. You’ll also be brewing simple potions and salves or even beginning the process of a longer, more complex potion that’ll be finished by an upper year class.” George explained, the First Years relaxing slowly.

“Yeah. First Year is really about learning how to be safe in a potions lab.” Fred said, his twin agreeing.

“Ever since the education has been restructured, things have become much safer here. Even Professor Snape’s teaching style has improved.” Oliver added, making the others focus on him.

“He no longer has us just open our books or read the instructions on the board before setting us loose in making a potion or salve. He explains the uses of what we’re making and brews it alongside us.” Percy explained, glancing up at the head table towards the dark eyed Potions Master.

“It’s a good thing that things have changed here for the better. There were rumors that Hogwarts wasn’t in the top spot for the best magical education establishment for a while. However, now it’s risen back to the top and we’re getting more and more students from around the world wanting to come here.” Percy added, pride in his voice as the other students nodded happily while the First Years sat up a little straighter.

-Let’s just hope it stays that way.- Harry thought, glancing towards the head table and noticing that Headmaster Dumbledore was watching him.

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The second day of their schoolyear at Hogwarts began with another run in the early morning. Tonks explained that she normally found it too cold to run in the mornings when late October to mid-November hit. That was when the frost really hit and it was much too cold to be outside so early. However, that was also when she began using the special training room for her runs. The boys were curious about the mysterious room though Tonks just smiled and explained that they would learn
about the room on Saturday morning. Dean and Harry were greatly intrigued, though Tonks refused to say anything more about it. After their routine of their run and getting ready for the day; they headed down to the Great Hall with Hermione, Neville, Jillian and Eliana. All of them were eager for their second ‘set’ of classes to begin after the meal. However, that was slightly dampened when an owl flew down carrying the Daily Prophet. Hermione relieved the owl of its burden and paid it before unrolling the paper.

**Break-In at Gringotts Bank!**

“Woah!” Hermione gasped, making the others look at her.

“Bloody hell! That’s never happened!” Dean gasped, his eyes wide as he caught sight of the headline.

“I thought Gringotts was supposed to be completely secure…” Neville muttered, frowning lightly as he added some eggs to a piece of toast.

“What does it say, Hermione?” Jillian asked, looking at their friend.

“Apparently there was a break-in at Gringotts on the thirty-first of July. The Goblins and Auror’s kept it under wraps while an investigation was carried out.” Hermione explained, her eyes eagerly devouring the paper.

“According to the Aurors and the Goblins, the vault had been cleared out earlier that day and it had contained just a single parcel. Of course they cannot say what had been inside the vault. From what the scans have discovered, whoever had broken into the vault had used Dark Magic and had managed to trick one of the tellers. They discovered a teller and a cart attendant had their memories altered which is a shock in itself. Whoever had done this was strong enough to overcome the charms and protections placed on the building and the teller booths.” She added, the others shifting uneasily.

“What’s being done about it?” Harry asked, concern in his voice as the brunette sighed.

“They’ve increased the strength of the wards around the bank and have added more protections to the tellers, account managers and cart attendants. There are also more guards in the main lobby and by the vaults.” Hermione answered, the others nodding.

“Hopefully nothing like this happens again. It’s good that none of the major families were targeted in the robbery.” Neville said, the others nodding in agreement.

“Gringotts would’ve had a lot of people pull their fortunes out of the bank and sought out another bank. I know Italy, France and Ireland have their own banks alongside Gringotts.” Harry said, Dean and Neville nodding.

“It makes me wonder what was stolen that was so important. There are so many protections in Gringotts; not including the guards and Dragons.” Jillian muttered, watching as Hermione looked at her with wide eyes.

“Dragons?!”

“Mhm. Gringotts have specially trained Dragons that protect the vaults of some of the wealthiest families in our society. They are trained to attack any intruder not with a cart attendant. It’s said that the Goblins are experts at handling Dragons and know the habits of every Dragon known.” Jillian explained, Hermione looking at her with shock and some awe.

“My family’s vault is guarded by a Dragon. I have to admit that it was pretty daunting seeing it up
close.” Harry admitted, the others listening with interest.

They continued talking about the news, though Hermione flicked through the different pages and read out a few small tidbits that might be of interest to the others. Once they finished breakfast, they visited the bathrooms before heading outside towards the greenhouses. Neville was positively giddy about Herbology, which made Hermione, Harry and Dean grin as the blonde haired boy told Eliana and Jillian that Herbology was one thing that he excelled at. He happily told them about the different greenhouses at his home, though none of them were currently in use. He explained that he was hoping to get them up and running soon. One greenhouse would be used to grow fresh fruits and vegetables for their own use while the other greenhouses would be used to grow potion ingredients that could be sold to various stores and private companies.

“Do many people have greenhouses?” Hermione asked, watching as the others shrugged.

“It depends really. Some people only have a small greenhouse to grow their own potion ingredients or even some fruits and vegetables. Some, however, have more greenhouses to grow food for their family and to sell locally. Same with potions ingredients.” Harry explained, Hermione nodding lightly in understanding.

Stepping into the greenhouse, all of them looked around at the various plants lining the walls. Neville happily pointed out a few of the plants, to which his friends listened with interest and asked a few questions. It was easy to see Neville’s enthusiasm for Herbology and it made them smile. The rest of the Gryffindor First Years filed in only a few minutes after the group arrived. They were shortly joined by the Hufflepuff First Years, in which Susan and Hannah happily moved to the work tables and stood across from Harry and his friends. When the bell rang, an older woman with greying black hair and dark brown, nearly black, eyes walked into the greenhouse; closing the door behind her. She introduced herself as Professor Gallagher and after taking roll-call she explained that they’d be learning how to tend to various plants and what their properties are.

“You’ll be learning how these plants are used both in Healing and in Potions. Assignments in this class will be about the properties of certain plants and their ideal growing conditions.” She explained, looking at her students with a critical eye.

Professor Gallagher showed them how to repot small plants which were being grown for Potions. She told them about the herb they’re repotting and what it was used for along with the ideal growing conditions it needed. Everyone listened as she talked about how many potions Aloe was used in and its medicinal properties. A few students answered some of her questions, in which Neville earned Gryffindor fifteen points due to his knowledge and his skill in repotting his plants. Hermione wasn’t too happy with Herbology, in which the others learned that she didn’t really like mud, dirt or bugs. It was rather amusing watching her cringe as some dirt got into her gloves and she was wincing every time she moved her hands. The class was interesting and rather relaxing compared to the classes they’d had thus far. By the time the hour was over, all of them were happily chatting about what they learned while they cleaned up and headed back to the castle. Neville explained that, as the years passed, they’d be handling more and more dangerous plants.

Heading down to the dungeons, they stepped into the Potions classroom with interest. There were workstations spaced evenly apart and the Slytherin First Years were already occupying the right side of the classroom. Against the left wall was a long counter with deep sinks and cupboards where they could rinse out their cauldrons and other supplies. Hanging on the walls were various diagrams which displayed proper stirring and cutting procedures. At the back of the room was the professor’s desk along with a workstation and a blackboard which had the day’s date and the agenda for the lesson. Harry and Hermione took the front station with the others sitting behind them. As the bell rang, Professor Harper walked into the room, the door closing behind her.
“Welcome to Potions, class. In this room you shall learn how to brew everything from the simplest healing salve to one of the most complex potions known to our society. All of the potions have the potential to cause a rather…chaotic mess. As such, I have absolutely no tolerance for people wishing to tamper with other’s potions. If I catch you attempting to tamper with a classmate’s potion you will be removed from this class, receive a zero from the day and will receive a three day detention at minimum. I shall also inform your head of House about what you did.” She said, whirling around and narrowing her eyes at the class.

“Now…time to assign teams.” She said, making the students look at her with wide eyes.

“I don’t care if Gryffindor and Slytherin have a ‘feud’. In this class those feuds shall be ignored. Some of the potions you will be learning how to brew will be a team effort due to their complexity. Now, everyone stand.” She ordered, watching as they shifted before slowly standing up with their bags.

Professor Harper studied them silently for a minute before nodding and beginning to write down the different ‘teams’. Harry was paired with a rather broad shouldered Slytherin girl named Millicent Bulstrode. Dean was paired with Daphne Greengrass, Hermione with Blaise Zabini, Neville with Tracy Davis, Jillian with Gregory Goyle, Eliana with Vincent Crabbe, Ronald with Pansy Parkinson, Parvati with Theodore Nott, Lavender with Draco Malfoy and Seamus with Sabrina Dragon-Heart. All of them were soon seated with their new partners and Professor Harper informed them that they’d be with that partner until after their Third Year. Needless to say, there were many unhappy mutterings which were quickly silenced by a rather fierce glare from their professor.

“If you’re unhappy with your partner then please, feel free to leave. Just know that once you walk out of this classroom you won’t be able to come back.” She said, watching as the entire class fell silent and none got up to leave.

Nodding to herself, she flipped the board over and revealed the instructions for the day.

“In this lesson you’ll be learning the proper way to cut and dice ingredients. Potions require a precise and steady hand and a careful eye. If an ingredient is prepared wrong then it could spell disaster for the entire potion. Do not expect to get to the actual brewing phase until December. This is so all of you understand the dangers that come with Potions and what is expected of you.” She said, walking over to the cupboards where she pulled out a silver container.

“Now, one person from each station is to go and get a container of Dandelion flowers. They are clearly marked so there should be no reason for any…mishaps. We’ll begin by learning what it means to cut open the stems and remove the fibers and essence from the stems and properly prepare them for a potion. All ingredients that are prepared in this class will be used by myself, Professor Snape or a higher year class.” Professor Harper explained, watching as the students stood and went to the cupboards where she pulled out a silver container.

Returning to their tables with the containers in hand, everyone listened and watched as Professor Harper carefully showed them the process herself. She used a projection spell so everyone, including those in the back of the class, could clearly see how she went about each step. She emphasized on cleaning their tools before and after each step to prevent contamination and she actually stopped Ronald and Draco from making the mistake of not cleaning their knives before they could begin the process. Harry could see that Draco was tempted to whine and complain, but the blonde wisely kept his mouth shut though he scowled the entire time. Harry also discovered that Millicent, while brutish looking, was actually rather shy and intelligent. As they worked after Professor Harper finished showing them what to do, Harry struck up a quiet conversation with the black haired girl. Millicent was rather surprised when Harry began talking to her though she did answer his questions and asked
She struggled to keep the blush from rising to her cheeks as the handsome boy talked to her and she could practically feel Daphne and Tracy glancing at her. There was no doubt that Harry was a very attractive boy with only Dean and possibly Blaise even coming close to comparison. Of course she had noticed that Harry, Dean and their group of friends don’t seem to ‘conform’ to the standard ‘Gryffindors hate Slytherins’ mentality that they were warned about. In fact, everyone in Harry’s group of friends seemed rather open to making friends with others from different Houses. She asked a few questions, especially about his familiar Mira who was perched happily on his shoulder and watching them work. Harry smiled and answered Millicent’s questions and he was greatly pleased when Mira let the girl pat her head. Glancing at the different stations where his friends were sitting, Harry was pleased to see Daphne and Dean talking and getting along while Tracy appeared to be gently coaching Neville and demonstrating what she was doing. Hermione appeared to be a rather deep and intense conversation with Blaise which made Harry chuckle and shake his head fondly.

However, Ronald wasn’t doing too well with Pansy as his partner. The girl was hissing at him and, from the redness of his face and ears, appeared to be goading him as he cut too deep into the stem of the flower and actually cut it in half. Not only that, but she was glaring at Lavender and Harry could practically sense her anger towards there being another girl sitting beside ‘her’ Draco. Draco didn’t seem too pleased either and was pointedly ignoring Lavender and sneering as she struggled with her preparations. Parvati and Theo didn’t seem to be struggling, but then again they didn’t seem to be talking to each other. Jillian and Eliana, on the other hand, were talking softly with Vincent and Gregory. It made Harry wonder if there was something more to the two brutish looking boys than meets the eye. He wouldn’t doubt it and easily figured that their parents could’ve ordered them to be Malfoy’s friends. Seamus seemed to be getting the silent treatment from Sabrina; hence the silent treatment.

There were some incidents during the class, mostly when Draco began sneering and whispering insults to Lavender. The blonde got so flustered and upset that she eventually burst into tears only a few minutes to the end of class. Parvati rounded on Draco and started screaming insults at him while holding Lavender in her arms. Professor Harper was quick to put an end to it took points from both Houses, though Slytherin got more points taken away when Professor Harper discovered that Draco had started the entire thing. Needless to say, Draco was pissed that he earned himself a detention scrubbing cauldrons during the weekend. Lavender and Parvati were excused from the rest of the lesson and when the bell rang Draco was held back after they were all given their assignments.

“I always knew Malfoy was an idiot but still…to make Lavender cry like that…” Hermione said, shaking her head as the others nodded.

“I may not like Parvati and Lavender but no one deserves that.” Eliana muttered, walking up the stairs to the main floor.

“Lord Brown will surely be hearing about what happened. I wonder how Malfoy will get out of this one.” Harry mused.

“Oh?” Jillian asked, frowning as Neville suddenly realized what Harry was talking about.

“Like Susan Bones, Lavender is the only child of her family. The Browns are an Elder family and Lord Brown dots on his daughter. No doubt Lavender will write a letter to her father about what happened, if she won’t then Parvati will. Lady Malfoy will soon have an irate Lord on her hands.” Neville explained, Harry nodding in agreement.

“I’ve seen Lord Brown a few times and he is very protective of his daughter.” Harry confirmed.
“I know my dad wouldn’t be happy if he heard that someone had made me cry in class.” Hermione said, thinking fondly of her parents with a small smile on her face.

“Well, Parvati is helping Lavender so she’ll be okay. Let’s get started on our assignments.” Eliana said, grinning as Hermione perked up at the idea.

Defense Against the Dark Arts was…interesting to say the least. Professor Quirrell proved to be a very timid man who jumped at every loud sound. His stutter made it increasingly hard to understand what he was saying and the entire class had a hard time taking the man seriously. However, he thankfully wrote down what he attempted to explain and the first ‘lesson’ was an explanation that one of the main fundamentals of defense was evasion and using their surroundings to their advantage. He also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of various terrains and how to use them to gain the upper hand in hiding and fighting. While everyone was busy taking notes, Harry and Dean watched their professor with mild curiosity and some concern. There was something…off about their Defense professor. How could a man who seemed frightened of his own shadow have a Defense Mastery? Had something happen to Professor Quirrell that made him so timid and scared? Not only that, but there was a distinct lingering smell of garlic and rotten eggs around the man that seemed to emanate from underneath his turban.

In Self-Study once they finished their assignments Harry and Dean found other defense text books among the shelves. Hermione and the others watched them with interest as the two boys flicked through the books before they began reading.

“What are you looking for?” Jillian asked, frowning as Harry and Dean flicked through a few more pages.

“Everyone knows that magic is like a muscle, right?” Dean asked, their friends nodding though they looked confused.

“Every muscle needs to be exercised. Therefore, wouldn’t it make more sense to teach us some protection spells even if they might not be very strong?” Harry asked.

“Well…one of the main protection spells is the shield spell: Protego. However, that’s a Third Year spell.” Susan said, frowning as Harry and Dean looked at her calmly.

“But why is it a Third Year spell? The wand movement needed for the spell is a simply point and a tight circular motion. Even if a spell could easily penetrate it wouldn’t it be better to teach it to us now so we’d have a slight chance of protecting ourselves? I say we find an empty classroom and teach ourselves. We can study from other defense books, ones that had been used in the past. We could ask some of our older Housemates what they had learned in their First Year. I’m sure Percy, Oliver and a few Seventh Years would be willing to direct us to a good book or even more than one book.” Harry suggested, looking at the others as they stared at him thoughtfully.

“…You do have a point…” Hannah said, her voice soft as Susan nodded.

“Auntie told me that we don’t learn any protective spells until our Third Year…however that doesn’t make sense because we begin learning about dueling in our Second Year. You’d think they would teach us how to protect ourselves beforehand.” Susan said, huffing lightly as the others smiled.

“How will we get the books to study from? I think someone might find it pretty suspicious if we’re all checking out defense books.” Eliana said, frowning lightly as Harry and Dean smiled.
“We could get the list from our older Housemates and then I’ll see if my godfather could buy them for us. That way we won’t have to constantly check out certain books and potentially attract unwanted attention.” Harry suggested.

“Are you sure your godfather will be alright with that?” Hermione asked, nibbling on her lower lip in worry as Harry nodded.

“Of course. Sirius used to be an Auror and knows how important it is to learn how to protect yourself. I’ll write him tonight.” Harry said, smiling as the others thanked him.

They did some research into various other forms of protection. Protego was the main form of protection, though they read about another ‘shield’ charm which was a stronger form of Protego. There was also a ‘gate’ shield which could protect from high level hexes and curses though that spell was mostly used by Aurors due to how difficult it was to cast the spell. During their reading, they also learned that many people would conjure stone and marble ‘walls’ to deflect spells and this form of protection was also known to help shield against the Unforgivables. Once Self-Study was over, Harry and Dean led their friends to an empty classroom on the third floor which made the others nervous but they were relieved when Harry and Dean took them to the opposite end of the corridor. Entering an empty classroom, Dean cast a cleaning spell to get rid of all the dust before all of them moved the desks and chairs away from the center of the room. Harry was encouraged to go first, so he moved to the center of the room and held his wand in front of him.

“Alright, point, tight circle motion going clockwise and incant.” He said, demonstrating the wand motion a few times for himself and the others.

“Protego!” He called, pushing with his magic.

A faint, wispy shield spread out in front of Harry, flickering as the preteen pushed more and more magic through his wand. Harry furrowed his brow as the shield disappeared. However, the others clapped and smiled at him which made him relax and smile back. He tried once more and managed to make the shield spread out even further until it covered his upper body completely and it was nearly translucent. Susan went next and barely managed to produce even a faint shield. However, she still produced something. On her next attempt she managed to produce a better result which earned her clapping and cheering from the others. Hannah had the same results as Susan while Dean’s results were more like Harry’s. Hermione struggled slightly, though on her third try she produced results like Susan and Hannah. Neville was hesitant to try, but stepped forward and attempted the spell. When nothing happened after the third try, the blonde looked almost as if he would begin crying.

“Mister Longbottom, is your wand one you had chosen?”

All of them jumped at the sound of Professor McGonagall’s voice. Spinning around, they spotted the stern Witch in the doorway to the room watching them intently. Professor McGonagall walked into the room and stopped in front of the nervous boy.

“N-No, professor. My wand used to be my father’s.” Neville admitted, blinking when the others frowned and Professor McGonagall looked thoughtful.

“Mister Potter-Othello, could Mister Longbottom use your wand for a moment?” She asked, watching as realization dawned on Harry’s face.

“Sure.” Harry said, turning his wand over and presenting the hilt to his friend.

“W-What?! But-“
“No buts, Mister Longbottom.” Professor McGonagall said, watching as the boy faltered before slowly accepting Harry’s wand.

He instantly gasped as a rush of power flooded him; his eyes widening as his magic practically sung inside of him. Harry, meanwhile, took Neville’s wand and frowned deeply when he barely got any reaction from it. Casting the shield charm, he and the others were shocked when a misty shield that looked like Harry and Dean’s instantly formed from the tip of the wand. The others cheered for their friend, though Neville just stared at Harry’s wand in shock and wonder.

“Mister Longbottom, your professors expressed some worry with your struggles during class. I can now see why. This wand simply doesn’t match you and won’t work for you.” McGonagall said, watching as Neville blinked before seemingly deflating.

“My Grandma wanted me to use my dad’s wand to…to honor him. I don’t think she would-“

“Mister Longbottom, she never should’ve tried to pressure you into fitting into your father’s place. Your parents were brave people and what happened to them was horrible. However, you are your own person, Mister Longbottom and your grandmother needs to understand that. I shall set up a meeting with her within the next few days. You need your own wand in order to fully progress in your studies.” McGonagall explained, watching as Neville shifted but nodded.

The stern professor returned the wand back to Neville and he stored it away in his pocket. Professor McGonagall asked them what they were doing in the empty classroom which prompted Hermione to explain Harry’s reasoning behind them needing to learn how to defend themselves from an early age. Harry further explained that, even though their shields might be weak, they’d at least hold up to one low powered spell and the spell would only get stronger the more they practice and aged. Minerva was surprised in hearing the explanations but after thinking about their reasoning behind it, she agreed with it. She also listened as Harry explained that Professor Quirrell was so jumpy that it was hard to understand what he was teaching them. Though they did agree that evasion and dodging was very important to learn, they wished Professor Quirrell was more confident and it was easier to understand him. Professor McGonagall was the one who explained that Hogwarts had always had a hard time finding and keeping a Defense professor for the past few years.

“I’ll pass on your concerns to Headmaster Dumbledore about Professor Quirrell. All I ask is that you be careful with the spells you’re attempting to learn.” She warned, looking at them sternly until they all nodded in agreement and understanding.

After Professor McGonagall left, the group practiced the spell a few more times, in which Harry loaned Neville his wand for practicing. However, they soon stopped practicing and headed to the Great Hall as it neared dinner time. Hermione promised to loan Neville her wand for Transfiguration which made the boy smile shyly and thank her. He worried about what his grandmother would do when Professor McGonagall told her that he needed his own wand. Hermione asked Neville about his parents; her voice soft as she understood that it was a very sensitive subject. Neville faltered for a moment before he softly told Hermione, Eliana and Jillian about his parents. The girls were horrified in learning that his parents had been tortured into insanity and they held Neville tightly as his voice started breaking during the story. He told them about his visits to the hospital and how he still had some hope that one day his parents would come back to him and get better. Harry shifted when he heard this and glanced at Dean. Dean nodded minutely, agreeing that they would have to get in touch with Sirius and others about possibly looking into Neville’s parents and their condition.

The supposed cause for the Longbottom’s insanity was the Cruciatus curse. However, there were other spells that could drive people insane. Sirius and healer June would be the best bet to contact because Sirius could look up Black family magic and spells that only his family would know that
might cause insanity while Healer June could confirm if it was, indeed, the Cruciatius curse that caused Alice and Frank’s insanity. If Sirius and Healer June discovered something about Frank and Alice that the healers at St. Mungo’s had missed then there was hope. However, they’d have to approach Madame Longbottom carefully about this considering how sensitive the subject of her son and daughter-in-law was. Tuning back into the conversation, they discovered that Hermione had tactfully changed the subject and was discussing birthdays and other holidays. They discovered that Hermione’s birthday was on the nineteenth of that month. Instantly they began asking the brunette what she’d like for her birthday, to which she blushed and shifted.

“I don’t need anything…” She muttered, making the others raise an eyebrow at her.

“Of course you do, Hermione. Make up a list for us.” Jillian said, smiling kindly at her friend as Hermione blinked before nodding.

Harry and Dean instantly put their heads together in an attempt to come up with something for Hermione on her birthday. They were positive that if they got Professor McGonagall’s permission they could use one of the abandoned classrooms to hold a small party in. They could also speak with the castle House Elves about getting food and drinks in whatever room they planned on using. A letter to Sirius and their parents meant they could easily get Hermione any presents they wanted. Looking at Susan, Hannah, Jillian, Eliana and Neville, they nodded lightly which made them blink before smiling in understanding; knowing that they’d be able to ask for any gifts they wish to give Hermione though the pair. After dinner, Harry and Dean went exploring for a little while Hermione, Neville, Jillian and Eliana decided to take a small nap before Astronomy.

“I think we should pool our money together and get ‘Mione a charm bracelet.” Harry said, Dean looking at him with interest.

“Oh?”

“Yeah, an enchanted one of course. You’ve seen the looks Malfoy, Parkinson and Nott have been giving her. Not to mention Ronald. It should be charmed to shield her against most school level charms, hexes and jinxes. Each year for her birthday we can give her a new charm or something.” He explained, watching as Dean hummed thoughtfully as he gave the idea consideration.

“We could do the same for Eliana, Jillian, Susan and Hannah for their birthdays as well. Make it a kind of theme. Susan might be the most protected out of all of us besides you, Neville and I. She has a head of house ring as well which should have the same protections as our rings.” Dean mused.

“True, but we can’t be sure. Not all head of house rings were enchanted. It depends on how paranoid the family had been. Though I doubt Madame Bones would let her only niece be unprotected in such an environment.” Harry said, turning down a hallway and leading the way up a flight of stairs.

“True. Still it’s good to take a chance and get her charm bracelet as well. It’s a simple enough piece that no one will really question the price and they’ll be able to wear them with any outfit.” Dean added, Harry nodding happily.

“However…if we want them to continue to be safe then we should tell them about the charms on bracelets. If we don’t then they’ll think the bracelets are just normal, everyday bracelets and won’t wear them every day.” He said, watching as Harry blinked before sighing.

“You have a point. I just don’t want the girls to think that we don’t think they’re capable of protecting themselves.” Harry muttered, blinking when Dean placed a hand on his arm.

“Harry, I think they’d understand that we just want to protect them as our friends. Just like Eliza
wears that necklace that acts as a portkey back to the estate and our head of house rings; they keep us safe.” Dean explained, smiling as Harry nodded.

They continued wandering around and explored some of the hidden passages. Of course in their latest letter from Sirius and Remus they learned that the one-eyed humpback witch statue actually led out of the castle and to Hogsmeade so they avoided that passage. They were rather interested in the passageway that took them from near the astronomy tower down to the hallway where the entrance to the Hufflepuff common room was located. Looking around the hallway, they spotted the pile of barrels that hid the entrance to the common room. Hannah and Susan had told them that, in order to gain access to the common room, you had to find a specific barrel and press your wand into a notch while giving the password. If you did that to any of the other barrels then you’d be sprayed with water or honey. The pair found the kitchens and, after looking at the map, finally gained entrance by tickling the pear which turned into a door handle. Stepping through the portrait, they looked around the vast kitchens with interest before a House Elf popped in front of them.

“Can I be helping yous?” It asked, looking up at the boys with interest.

“Sorry, we were just wandering around. We didn’t mean to disturb you.” Dean said, smiling gently at the creature.

The House Elf smiled at them and popped away while the boys looked around. They easily figured out that the House Elves laid out the dishes and drinks on the four tables which were in the same position as the actual House tables in the Great Hall. Harry and Dean exited the kitchens after looking around for a few minutes and headed back up to Gryffindor tower to wait out the last hour before Astronomy. All of them were planning on having a bit of a lie-in since they’d be up late. Heading back through the passages, they happily talked about what they found and mentally wrote letters that they planned on sending to their parents.

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Astronomy was interesting and the professor: Professor McCarthy, was very passionate about his subject. It was slightly boring just looking at the night sky through their telescopes, but it was interesting in learning about the movements of the planets and the stars and how they affected different forms of magic such as rituals and potions. The next morning during a late breakfast, Neville received a message from Professor McGonagall informing that his grandmother would be arriving at the school after classes ended. Neville was understandably nervous, even more so since he didn’t know how his grandmother would take to being told that she had made a mistake. She wasn’t one who took criticism very well, especially when it came to her own actions. It was one of his grandmother’s more…dominate faults. Hopefully she would handle it better hearing it from Professor McGonagall than from him or one of his friends.

Neville also told Harry and Dean that he planned on getting Hermione a mailbox for herself and for her parents so it would be easier for them to communicate. Harry and Dean greatly approved of the idea and told him that if he needed help purchasing either of the mailboxes they’d be more than happy to help. Susan and Hannah were planning on getting Hermione a special shampoo and conditioner that’ll help her tame her hair since the girl was very self-conscious about it. Jillian and Eliana were in on their idea and were going to be getting the hairs that the potions brewers would need in order to make the shampoo and conditioner. Eliana planned on getting Hermione the latest Nancy Drew books since the series was one of Hermione’s favorites. Jillian planned on getting Hermione some fantasy and romance books from the Magical world along with some children stories that were common in their world.

All of them wrote to their parents/guardians about the gifts and all were approved of.
and Delilah loved the idea of the charm bracelets and promised to have Hermione’s completed in time for her birthday. They approved of the boys’ desire to keep their friends safe, especially since so many desired to get close to Harry because of his fame and fortune. Harry managed to approach Professor McGonagall before classes started at the end of breakfast. The stern Witch was surprised at the idea of a small birthday party but approved. She gladly offered to chaperone the party and would write hall passes if need be.

Their first day of double period classes was interesting to say the least. As promised, Harry and Hermione allowed Neville to use their wands during Transfiguration and Charms. Thankfully their professors understood why they were doing so and supported their desire to help their friend. Of course Ronald couldn’t help but complain about what they were doing when he saw Harry hand Neville his wand but Professor Ross was quick to explain that there was no rule against students sharing a wand to help each other out. He also explained that Professor McGonagall had alerted all of the staff to the reasoning behind Harry and Hermione allowing Neville to use their wands. Those who had made fun of Neville for his lack of apparent power and ability in Transfiguration and Charms quickly learned that the boy wasn’t as powerless as they claimed he was. They were shocked when Neville flawlessly performed a transfiguration and managed to complete the charm they were taught. His friends were pleased and rather smug when they saw the shock and awe on the other’s faces.

When Self-Study came around after a double period of History, all of them were grateful for the two hours to complete their assignments. Their professors were already trying to cram as much information in their minds and seemed to think that a double period meant they could give them twice the amount of work. Thankfully the two hours of Self-Study allowed them to get half of their work done before the class ended. Neville was noticeably quiet as they packed up their bags and he only offered them a weak smile when they assured him that he’d be fine and his grandmother would listen to reason with Professor McGonagall explaining things. All of them walked with Neville to Professor McGonagall’s office which was close to Gryffindor tower. He thanked them for walking with him before knocking on the door as his friends slowly walked away.

“Come in.”

Neville drew in a deep breath before opening the door and stepping inside. Professor McGonagall sat behind her desk and the familiar sight of his grandmother sat in one of the two chairs in front of the professor’s desk. Augusta Longbottom nee Oda was a formidable Witch. During her younger days she had been an expert duelist and had served well in the war. Her once brown hair was heavily streaked with silver though her blue eyes were still sharp and focused. Dressed in deep green robes with her trademark hat which has a stuffed vulture on top, she instantly rendered her grandson to a nervous wreck.

“Hello, Grandmother.” Neville said, walking over and kissing her cheek lightly.

“It’s good to see you, Neville. How are your studies?” Augusta asked, looking her grandson up and down critically.

“They’re going well.” Neville answered.

“No, I mean your studies. I assume you’re referring to your magical studies.” Augusta replied, raising a brow.

“They’re going well.” Neville answered.

“Thank you for joining us, Mister Longbottom. Now, Madame Longbottom, I and Mister Longbottom’s other professors have been concerned by the seemingly lack of magical power Mister Longbottom possessed. However, Mister Longbottom’s friends discovered that it isn’t that Mister Longbottom doesn’t possess the magical power, it’s that his wand is ill suited for him.” Minerva said, watching as Augusta frowned and looked from her to her grandson.

“That’s absurd. His wand-“
“Belonged to his father, yes. But it is an ill-suited match for Mister Longbottom. I know you wish for your grandson to excel like his parents did but in order to do that he has to step away from their shadows and find his own way and make his own path. Madame Longbottom, you of all people know that a wand must choose their partner.” Minerva said, making Augusta frown at the interruption.

“Madame Longbottom, you’re doing more harm to your grandson than good. By using his father’s wand, it’s holding him back. Honor your son and daughter-in-law by helping their son reach his true potential. Mister Longbottom is doing extremely well thus far in his lessons and has already made friends with four others from his House and another two from Hufflepuff. Mister Potter-Othello and Miss Granger, two of his new friends, have been loaning him their wands during Charms and Transfiguration. The difference between the three wands is startling and is what showed us that Mister Longbottom needs his own wand in order to perform like he should.” Minerva added, watching as Augusta looked at her before she looked at her grandson.

“Neville, is this true?” She asked, making her grandson shift in his seat before nodding.

“Yes, Grandmother, it’s true. I was able to cast spells better than with Dad’s wand.” Neville said, his voice soft as Augusta nodded sharply before looking at Minerva.

“You can use the floo here in my office to floo over to the Leaky Cauldron if you wish to get his wand now.” She offered, watching as the aged woman nodded.

“I believe that would be for the best. I shall have him back within an hour or so.” Augusta said, rising to her feet as Neville looked up at her in surprise.

“You can leave your bag here, Mister Longbottom. No one will take it.” Minerva said, watching as Neville set his bag down before getting up to follow his grandmother.

It took a minute before they were able to floo to the Leaky Cauldron. After stepping out of the fireplace and banishing the soot and ash from their clothes, they headed into the alley proper and began the walk to Ollivanders. Neville talked about his lessons and his favorite ones so far, in which Herbology was at the top of said list. He also talked about his friends, in which Augusta was slightly concerned that he was friends with a Siren and a half-Vampire. However, she relaxed the more the boy spoke and saw his obvious happiness. Before Ollivanders, Neville convinced his grandmother to stop at the Post Office. Augusta asked her grandson questions about Hermione and why he wanted to buy her a mailbox for both Hermione and her parents. Neville quickly explained his relationship with Hermione and how he wanted her to be safer with her mail and for it to be easier for her to get into contact with her parents. Augusta certainly understood about the protection of his friend, especially since she was a Muggleborn and she was pleased that her son wished to do something so kind for a friend.

Heading into the Post Office, Neville ended up purchasing two beautiful mailboxes made of king wood. The owner of the Post Office gladly accepted the address to Hermione’s house from Neville; which he had gotten from Eliana, and confirmed that the protections against portkeys and harmful mail would be in place. It was Augusta who suggested that the mailbox for Hermione’s parents to have the Granger crest on the lid while Hermione’s mailbox would have a rather beautiful floral pattern with her name on the lid. Neville wasn’t too sure since it would cost more money, but Augusta fronted the extra cost. Like Harry’s birth parents, Frank and Alice had set up a trust vault for their son should anything happen to them. Since they were incapacitated the trust vault had been activated for Neville. Neville thanked his grandmother and the owner quickly had the mailboxes designed and wrapped. The owner also explained that the mailboxes wouldn’t be activated until Hermione tapped her wand on both boxes before sending the second mailbox to her parents. It
would also add the Grangers to the mailing list at the Post Office and begin redirecting the mail through the office for safety.

Once that was done, they headed off to Ollivanders where the elderly Wizard was pleased to see them. He lightly admonished Augusta for not having brought Neville there before he started school; especially when he examined Frank’s wand and proclaimed that the wand was actually working against Neville every time he used it. After taking Neville’s measurements, he brought forward one wand which he took away only a second after Neville held it. It took Neville a tries before his magic surged through a rather handsome cherry wood wand containing a core of a Unicorn Hair. Doves shot out of the tip of the wand, causing Augusta to stare in awe while Ollivander smiled and clapped. Augusta instantly knew that Minerva and Ollivander had been right. She had been holding her grandson back by trying to have him live in his father’s shadow. Ollivander handed her Frank’s wand after cleaning it and polishing it for her. She thanked him and carefully stowed it away in a wand box to keep it safe until she could display it back at the manor. To help make up for her wrongdoings to her grandson, she bought Neville a nice wrist wand holster and a wand cleaning kit.

With his wand safely stored on his wrist in its new holster, they paid for their purchases and headed back to the Leaky Cauldron. On the way, they stopped at a nice restaurant where they had dinner since their outing had taken a little longer than they had thought. Augusta talked about the greenhouse at the manor and his relatives during the meal. She also told him about his parents and that there still hadn’t been any improvements much to his dismay. However with the new medical advancements that were taking place in their society there was still some hope that the Healers would discover a new way to possibly treat his parents. She also confirmed that she would be putting Frank’s wand on the fireplace mantle next to Alice’s which made Neville smile and nod. She encouraged him to do well in his classes and explained that she was pleased that he had already made so many new friends. After their meal, Neville hugged his grandmother before saying goodbye and stepping through the floo at the Leaky Cauldron. Entering Professor McGonagall’s office, he was greeted by the stern woman and she offered him a rare smile when he showed her his new wand.

“It is a rather handsome wand, Mister Longbottom. Now, head off to Gryffindor tower. I expect your friends are eagerly waiting for you.” She said, watching as the lad nodded and thanked her.

Neville grabbed his bag and hurried up to the seventh floor where he quickly gave the Fat Lady the password. She raised an eyebrow at him but admitted him entrance. Climbing through the hole, Neville grinned when he saw Harry, Hermione, Dean, Jillian and Eliana sitting in front of the fireplace. Eliana spotted him first and eagerly called him over, making the others look up and smile. Neville, after making sure Hermione’s gifts were stored away in his bag, hurried over and sat down in one of the chairs.

“Well? Did you get a new wand?” Eliana asked, excitement in her voice as Neville grinned.

“Yeah, Gran took me to Diagon Alley and we got my new wand. Ten and a half inches made of cherry with Unicorn hair.” Neville said, beaming as he removed his wand.

The girls cooed over the wand and its beauty while Dean and Harry congratulated Neville on finally having his own wand that will actually work for him. He told them about Professor McGonagall’s conversation with his grandmother and how Ollivander even scolded his grandmother for making him use his father’s wand. All of them were glad that Neville had gained a boost of confidence now that he finally had his own wand that chose him. While he was still shy and quiet, they sensed an inner strength growing inside their friend. A few other older members of their House stopped by when they saw Neville’s new wand. Fred and George congratulated the blonde on gaining his new wand while Percy remarked that it truly was a handsome wand. Many of the older females smiled
and gushed over the color of Neville’s wand like Hermione, Jillian and Eliana did. Neville flushed at
the praise though there was no doubting the pride in his posture.

Hermione managed to get them focused and they went over their completed assignments that they
had to hand in tomorrow. Once they were positive that their assignments were correct, they turned
their attention to the assignments that they hadn’t yet completed. When practicing the new spell they
learned in Transfiguration, Neville was pleased when he got the hang of the spell after a few tries. It
would’ve taken him much longer to complete the transfiguration with his father’s wand. Everyone
had managed to complete the ‘turning a matchstick into a needle’ halfway through double period.
Professor Ross had then taught them how to a silver spoon into a stone spoon. It was difficult to say
the least because metal was naturally resistant to magic. To alter metal with magic took a lot of
willpower and focus. Professor Ross had explained that he didn’t expect them to grasp the spell right
away, but they would revisit the spell and process over the course of the year in hopes that they
would gain the power and focus to finally complete the transfiguration.

It was near the end of completing their assignments when Ronald walked into the common room
with Seamus. Harry, Dean and Neville were slightly saddened that Seamus, who had been so kind at
the beginning was slowly becoming closed off to them the more he hung around Ronald. Harry
 glanced up when the two boys walked through the common room laughing and talking about
something they had heard. Of course, Ronald could never pass up the opportunity to make fun of
Neville and, apparently, try to get Harry’s attention.

“Hey, Longbottom, they haven’t sent you home yet? I’m surprised they haven’t deemed you a Squib
and taken away your wand.” Ron taunted, smirking as he sauntered over to the group.

“Well, considering I’ve been progressing further in our classes than you; that should tell you that I’m
not a Squib, Weasley.” Neville said.

Ronald’s ears steadily turned red as his temper rose. However, he instantly focused on Eliana as she
shifted on the couch where she was sitting between Hermione and Dean. As she asked Hermione a
question about History, Ronald’s mind fogged over slightly at the melodious tone of her voice. Even
Seamus was slightly affected by Eliana though she hadn’t using her power in charm-speak, as she
deemed her abilities. She had explained to her friends that she rarely used her charm-speak or her
allure. Yes, it was a struggle to keep her abilities under control, but those who were easily susceptible
to influences with their minds were easily drawn to her even without her using her powers. Dean and
Harry weren’t affected because of their occlumency shields and Neville had admitted on their second
day that his grandmother had begun teaching him occlumency as well before he had come to
Hogwarts.

“Hey, Eliana, why hang around losers like Longbottom and Thomas? Seamus and I are much better
than them.” Ronald said, puffing out his chest as Eliana looked at him.

“In your dreams, Weasley. For your information Harry, Neville, Dean, Hermione and Jillian are my
friends. Neville and Dean are worlds better than you are.” She said, flicking a lock of hair away from
her face as Ronald and Seamus turned red in anger and embarrassment.

The idea that Longbottom was better than him was laughable in Ron’s mind. However, even he had
seen the improvement the wimpy boy had been making in class. Since he found out that Harry was
friends with Dean, he had been trying to come up with some way to pull them apart. However, now
Potter was friends with the know-it-all of their entire year, the Siren, the creepy half-breed and
Longbottom. His mum had told him to try and get close to Potter, but so far he hadn’t been able to
get close to the boy. Potter was never far away from his friends which was annoying as hell. He had
been trying to keep an eye out any kind of opportunity to get Potter away from the others but nothing
had come up thus far. However, he was determined to get in with Harry. After all, if anyone deserved the fame of being the friend of the Boy-Who-Lived, it was him.

The second day of double classes showed a vast improvement in Neville’s performance. Neville was a lot happier now that he had a wand that listened to him and was steadily becoming more confident as the day progressed. However, on Friday morning, Neville and Hermione were noticeably on edge. It took some coaxing, but the others soon learned that both of them had a rather severe fear of flying. Hermione’s fear stemmed more from her fear of heights and the idea of being high up in the air with only a broom underneath her. Neville, meanwhile, told them that he had rather traumatizing experiences with flying on brooms thanks to his uncle. Eliana was understandably nervous, as most Muggle raised and born were. She explained that she normally wasn’t comfortable with heights and flying due to the fact, as a Siren, she was more connected with the water and earth. Jillian, like Harry and Dean, was excited about the upcoming lesson even though it would be on a cool morning. She, Dean and Harry rallied around Neville, Hermione and Eliana; determined to help them out when need be.

After breakfast, the First Year Gryffindors and Slytherins headed outside to the Quidditch pitch. Madame Hooch, a rather stern looking woman with sharp yellow eyes and short brown hair, took rollcall before instructing them to stand on the left side of the training brooms which rested on the ground. Madame Hooch quickly introduced herself and dove straight into the rules of her class.

“In this class it doesn’t matter how long you’ve been flying a broom. It doesn’t matter if you already know how to fly. I expect you to follow my instruction, no matter what. Flying on a broom can be very dangerous. A broom, if mishandled, can fail and you can find yourself falling to the ground from a height of a hundred feet. If you do know how to fly already then I would greatly appreciate it if you were to help your fellow classmates who don’t know.” She said, her sharp gaze locking onto each of them.

“Now, hold your right hand above the broom and say ‘up’.” She instructed, watching as the students hurried to obey.

Harry issued the command and watched as the broom, a Cleansweep T, shot into his hand. Looking to his right he saw that Dean had gotten the same reaction from his broom. To his left, however, Neville was fairly shaking as his broom simply lay there. Hermione’s broom rolled on the ground while Jillian’s broom had shot into her hand and Eliana’s slowly rose up to meet her hand.

“Neville you need calm down. It knows you’re scared and it’s reacting to that fear. We’re not gonna let anything happen to you.” Harry said, his voice soothing as Neville swallowed nervously.

Neville looked at Harry before taking a deep, shaky breath and nodding. It took him two more tries before his broom finally shot into his hand. Neville blinked in surprise before he smiled brightly. Hermione’s broom finally rose to her hand after coaching from Dean and Jillian. Madame Hooch walked around the students, gently coaching them on how to get the brooms to rise up to their hands. Once everyone had their brooms in hand Madame Hooch instructed them how to properly mount their brooms, in which Harry and his friends smirked when Madame Hooch informed Malfoy that he was doing it wrong. The girls were glad that their older Housemates had instructed them to wear shorts underneath their skirts or else they’d have to learn how to ride sidesaddle. After properly mounting their brooms, Madame Hooch showed them how to kick off from the ground and hover before landing once more. On her command, many kicked off from the ground and hovered a few feet in the air. Of course there were some who were bobbing up and down, though they were quickly helped before they went up too high.
Harry gently coaxed Neville onto his broom and up into the air. Neville’s broom dipped down though the blonde quickly managed to bring it back up. Nearby, Dean and Jillian helped Eliana get up into the air before turning their focus on Hermione. Her knuckles had turned white with on how tight she was gripping her broom handle. Jillian managed to coax Hermione up into the air and she and Dean remained right beside her as she gently bobbed in the air. Madame Hooch had them all land and explained how to actually get their brooms to move in various directions, speed up and slow down. She was firm when she told them that she didn’t want to see any of them pulling any stunts or tricks.

“You’re to remain inside this pitch. The highest you’re to go is, at most, to the top of the goals.” Madame Hooch said, gesturing towards the Quidditch goals towering above them on either side of the pitch.

The class spread out slightly to ensure that they won’t be knocking into each other. Kicking off, many of the students rose into the air and were soon flying around at various speeds and heights. Dean, Harry and Jillian remained near Neville, Hermione and Eliana to help them overcome their fear and discomfort. Neville steadily became more and more comfortable the longer he flew around. Eliana became more comfortable up in the air and was soon ready to fly around on her own. Hermione, however, struggled to conquer her fear of heights. Harry and Dean moved over to Hermione and gently talked to her and soothed her frazzled nerves. It took a few minutes before Hermione finally relaxed and stopped trembling. At her nod, Harry and Dean began flying around with the other students. Madame Hooch was flying around as well, helping other students gain their confidence in flying and ensuring that no one was doing anything dangerous. She had to threaten a few students with detention when she caught them attempting to do dangerous tricks like barrel rolls and dives; in which the students quickly stopped since no one wanted to spend their weekend scrubbing floors or polishing trophies with Mister Filch.

Ronald watched Harry and Dean closely, his eyes narrowing as the two boys flew off and circled the goals while laughing and cheering. Looking at the other members of Potter’s group, he smirked when he saw the know-it-all flying around by herself. He looked over at Madame Hooch; his confidence growing when he saw that she was occupied by a few Snakes. Flying over to Granger, he sped up and shot towards her, catching the brunette by surprise. Hermione cried out as she was forced to dive in order to avoid Ronald. However, as she dove she slipped sideways on her broom. The entire class turned at her terror filled scream; cries of shock and horror leaving them when they saw the brunette plunge towards the ground.

“Hermione!” Harry and Dean cried, urging their brooms to go faster and faster as they dove towards their friend.

There was a sickening crack as Hermione landed on the ground. Harry and Dean jumped off of their brooms and raced towards Hermione; Madame Hooch, Neville, Eliana and Jillian right behind them. Madame Hooch ordered the boys away from Hermione before crouching down beside the girl. Turning Hermione over, all of them winced when they saw that Hermione’s right arm was bent at an unnatural angle.

“What happened?” Madame Hooch demanded, conjuring a stretcher which floated a few inches above the ground.

“She fell.” Lavender said, a gasp escaping her as she suddenly found herself face-to-face with an angry half-Vampire and Siren.

“No she bloody didn’t!” Jillian screeched, making the others flinch and step back as the half-Vampire bared her fangs at them.
“Ronald bloody Weasley attacked her. He shot towards her to scare her and forced her to dive in order to avoid a collision. While he was laughing she lost control and slipped off. She was level with the first seat of the stands.” Eliana snarled, her eyes glinting dangerously.

“Mister Weasley, you wait right here while I take Miss Granger to the hospital wing. If I catch anyone up in the air you’ll be out of here before you can say ‘Quidditch’.” Madame Hooch snapped, glaring Ronald as he shifted.

Hermione was levitated onto the stretcher and she and Madame Hooch soon disappeared off of the pitch. Lavender and Parvati were standing together, whispering and glancing towards the exit of the pitch. When they snickered, Jillian and Eliana rounded on the two girls who instantly fell silent as the two girls began yelling at them.

“How would you feel if it had been you who fell?”

“Would you be laughing then?”

“Nope you’d be crying like a little baby!”

“You’d write home to daddy telling them all about the bully and demanding that something be done.”

Parvati and Lavender wilted underneath the barrage of snarls and insults; their faces turning red in anger, shame and embarrassment. Meanwhile, Harry, Dean and Neville rounded on Ronald.

“I don’t know what went through that pathetic excuse of a lump you call a brain, Weasley, but you went too far.” Harry snarled, his eyes flashing dangerously as Ronald realized he had made a massive mistake.

“Some Gryffindor you are, Weasley. We stick together, not attack our own because of some stupid, petty reason.” Dean snapped, glaring at the redhead.

“I think Madame Hooch was too soft on you. Attacking another Housemate, a girl at that, should’ve gotten you more points taken away. No doubt Professor McGonagall will be writing to your parents about this. I wonder what your mum will say.” Neville drawled, watching as panic flashed through Ronald’s eyes at the idea.

Before Ronald could say anything, Madame Hooch returned with Professor McGonagall beside her. This was the first time any of the First Years had seen Professor McGonagall so angry. Her eyes were filled with anger and her mouth was pursed in a thin, white line. Looking at the group of students in front of her, her gaze was drawn to Miss Patil and Miss Brown who looked as if they were about ready to burst into tears as Miss Grace and Miss Michael glared at them. However, Mister Potter-Othello, Mister Longbottom and Mister Thomas-Woods looked as if they were about ready to tear strips off of Mister Weasley.

“Mister Weasley, come with me.” She snapped, making Ronald flinch but hurry after her as she turned and stalked away.

Madame Hooch soon had them back up and flying around for the remainder of the class. However, she took a position where she could watch them all. When she heard Malfoy taunting a few of the Gryffindors she quickly snapped at him and took away twenty points from Slytherin which shut the blonde up. When the bell rang, all of them dismounted and put the brooms away before heading back to the castle. Harry, Neville, Dean, Jillian and Eliana hurried to the hospital wing; eager to see how Hermione was doing and what was being done about her arm. Walking into the hospital wing,
they were greeted by a stern woman with sharp brown eyes and grey hair wearing white healer robes. Another person, a younger looking man with light brown hair and hazel eyes, looked up from where he was seated at a desk near the entrance of the wing.

“Can I help you?” The woman asked, looking them over carefully.

“We’re here to see Hermione Granger.” Harry said, the woman raising an eyebrow at him.

“Is she alright? Is Hermione okay?” Jillian asked, worry in her voice as the woman looked at her before relaxing.

“Miss Granger is resting right now. I’ve had to banish the bones in her arm because of how severe the break was. She’s in for a long night; re-growing bones is a nasty business.” The woman said, leading them back towards the back of the wing.

The sight of Hermione lying on the white bed wearing a soft grey hospital gown was rather frightening. Her arm was in a loose splint and it was rather unnerving seeing their friend sleeping. The woman, Madame Pomfrey, explained that Hermione was in a magic induced sleep so she wouldn’t experience the discomfort of re-growing bones. Jillian asked when Hermione would be able to leave, to which Madame Pomfrey explained that Hermione would be kept confined to bed until tomorrow morning at the latest.

“Well, Hermione won’t be happy about that.” Neville said.

“She’ll be missing three classes.” He clarified, having caught the confused looks the others sent his way.

Meanwhile up in Professor McGonagall’s office, Ronald shifted uncomfortably as his Head of House looked down at him with narrowed eyes.

“Of all of the inexcusable things I have heard of I never thought that one of the members of my House would purposely attack a fellow member.” She growled, watching as Ronald flinched and squirmed in his seat.

“I didn’t know she would fall…” Ronald mumbled, glancing up only to look down when he saw the anger in Professor McGonagall’s eyes.

“That doesn’t matter! You sought Miss Granger out with the intent to scare her, Mister Weasley. Because of what you did, Miss Granger has to spend the night in the Hospital Wing having the bones in her arm re-grown. What you did was inexcusable. As such, I will be writing to your parents and informing them of what you have done to a female housemate. Seventy points will be removed from Gryffindor for what you have done and you’ll be serving detention every night for two weeks with Mister Filch.” Minerva said, watching as Ronald looked at her with wide eyes.

“W-What?! You can’t!”

“I can and I am, Mister Weasley. You purposely attacked Miss Granger for no reason. Your actions have consequences and I hope, for your sake, that you learn this.” Minerva said, watching as Ronald flushed in anger.

“Now, you may leave. Report to Mister Filches’ office tonight promptly after dinner; I will know if you try to skip out on your detentions.” She said, her eyes narrowing as Ronald huffed and stormed from her office.

Minerva sighed and shook her head, knowing that Molly and Arthur wouldn’t be happy with the
news. All of their children thus far had been kind and courteous towards others bar a few rivalries with certain students. However, none had attacked any other student unless it was in defense of a friend or Housemate. Fred and George, her two biggest headaches, were fair in their pranks and always ensured that their pranks were harmless and wore off within a few hours. She had been shocked when she learned of what Ronald had done, but then again, she wasn’t at the same time.

Lucas, Delilah and Sirius had told her and Severus of Molly Weasley’s fascination with Harry and her determination to integrate her family with the lad. When she first seen Ronald she knew that the boy would be trouble. The greed was clear in his eyes and so was the rampant jealousy. She had seen Ronald watching Harry and his friends enviously during meals and she had already heard various tidbits of gossip about the different times Ronald had attempted to approach Harry and pull him away from his friends.

However, she also knew that Harry would never abandon his friends and he would do anything to protect them. Though…she also had a feeling that Molly wasn’t too keen on giving up anytime soon on her desires to have the Potter fortune within her grasp. No doubt Harry was even more appealing since the Othello wealth was even more well-known than the Potter fortune. Hopefully Molly and her two youngest wouldn’t resort to trying to use potions on Harry and the others. If so, then they’d learn quickly not to mess with Harry and his friends.

“I can only hope they won’t be that desperate.” She muttered, reaching over and pulling over a piece of parchment to begin her letter to Arthur and Molly.

Basic First Aid was rather interesting for the First Years. Surprisingly, it hadn’t taken place in the hospital wing like they all thought it would. Instead, Healer Briggs taught them in a classroom that was near the hospital wing. He asked them plenty of questions about what illnesses they knew and about the different potions and salves they knew of and what each treated. He further explained the different potions and salves that they had listed; telling them the dangers of each one and the different dosage for the potions. He also talked about how Muggle medicine and medicinal practices were being adopted into their society which raised a lot of questioning eyebrows. Those who had been raised in the Magical world were shocked that Muggles had various ways of bringing people back to life after they were ‘assumed’ to be dead. It took a few minutes before they understood that Muggles didn’t really know the true nature about people’s ‘souls’ though it still fascinated them that someone could be brought back to life under the right conditions.

Healer Briggs taught them how to bandage minor cuts and scrapes after properly cleaning and disinfecting them. They were also taught a few spells that would clean a wound and another that would disinfect it. He showed them various Muggle medicines and what they used to bandage some wounds, in which some questioned the use of Band-Aids though quickly understood that it was a way for minor cuts and wounds to be covered without having to wear a full bandage until the wound healed. He also talked about some of the limitations that certain healing potions, salves and spells had. As he talked, the class took notes and asked questions. Neville, who had the ‘cleanest’ writing out of his group of friends, ensured that he took detailed notes so his could be copied for Hermione’s benefit. When the bell rang, the entire class was surprised since it hadn’t seemed like their lesson had lasted all that long. Healer Briggs gave them their assignment, in which they had to research how medical practices have changed throughout the last fifteen years, before dismissing them.

The Physical Education and Health classroom was located on the main floor as well and was only a few feet away from the Basic First Aid classroom. There, they met Professor Godfrey; a kind though rather buff man who they soon learned had once been an Auror. Professor Godfrey explained that they’d be spending the first half of the year there in the classroom learning about health and the
benefits of keeping in shape and various other health related problems and issues. Many Purebloods and Halfbloods in the class were shocked to discover that the second half of the schoolyear would be spent in the school’s new gymnasium. They followed Professor Godfrey outside and across the laws to a new building that turned out to be a massive gymnasium.

The workout building was a large, two story building with a main gymnasium which was rather large. A flight of stairs along the side led up to an indoor running track which looped around the gym. A section of one of the gym walls was actually a large climbing wall. Professor Godfrey explained that the wall could be changed depending on how advanced students were. There were two large locker rooms, one for girls and the other for boys. There was also a fully equipped weight room which had top of the line workout equipment and weights. There were also two dance type studios which were mainly used for yoga and the part of the class when students learned different dances. All of them were surprised and rather excited when they were led into the final section of the building which held a massive pool that had a rather large diving board and four diving platforms at the deep end.

After the tour of the building Professor Godfrey handed them locks and had them head into the locker rooms and pick out their lockers. He explained that each Year had their own section of the locker rooms and theirs was labeled clearly. He further explained that the House Elves cleaned their gym uniforms after every class so they didn’t have to worry about wearing sweaty, dirty clothes.

“All the workout room is open to everyone from ten in the morning to eight at night. If you wish to come in and use the equipment just sign in at the door and feel free to change and workout. Myself, Professor Snow or Madame Hooch will always be in here to watch over things. We’ll be more than happy to help you learn how to use the many machines. During the weekend the pool is open for everyone to use.” He explained, smiling as the students headed into the locker rooms while chatting excitedly.

Inside the locker rooms, they easily found their section of the large rooms and soon claimed their lockers. Their names appeared on the small lockers and they put their gym clothes inside them before locking the doors and choosing their codes to unlock the locks they had been given. Of course, many students were complaining about the class already.

“I can’t believe he expects us to run around and learn about different sports. The only sport that matters is Quidditch. When are we ever going to play some Muggle sport?” Lavender said, frowning as she sat down on a bench while Parvati chose her combination.

“I never thought we would be using those machines. Our magic keeps us fit and in shape. Why get sweaty and gross?” Parvati said, her frown matching her friend’s.

“Because even magic has its limits. Besides, this way you won’t be so out of breath in Defense when Professor Quirrell has us running around and finding cover.” Jillian said, having overheard the girls’ complaining.

“Besides, there are many forms of exercise. It can actually be rather relaxing. My parents were happy when I told them that we have gym.” Eliana added, smiling as her friend nodded in agreement.

“Well—“

“They’re right, you know.”

All of the girls paused at the soft voice of Millicent Bulstrode. Lavender and Parvati opened their mouths to snap something back at the tall girl but their eyes widened at the rare sight of Millicent without her robes on. Yes, Millicent had rather broad shoulders and their school robes weren’t the
most flattering, but they never expected to see a rather trim waist and the beginnings of a rather nice chest on the Slytherin girl. Even though classes had only started a few days ago, they had mentally deemed her a troll because they had simply thought she had been overweight. However, this proved them wrong.

As Millicent removed her school blouse, the others were rather shocked and slightly intimidated by the strong muscles which flexed beneath Millicent’s skin. There was nothing about the black haired Slytherin that could be deemed fat. Her body was muscular and would put some of the guys to shame once she stepped out of the locker room. Jillian, Eliana, Daphne and Tracy all smirked at the shocked looks from the other girls as they followed Millicent out. Sure enough all of the guys were in shock at the sight of Millicent. Harry, Dean, Blaise and Neville recovered rather quickly and smiled warmly at Millicent as they walked over and struck up a conversation with her and the others.

Professor Godfrey waited until everyone was back before taking them through the workout room and showing them the various machines. He showed them how to use a few of them, in which some of the students willingly helped demonstrate the proper way to use them since they’ve used them before. There was a noticeable unease in those who’ve never used the machines before but everyone looked rather curious and interested in trying them out. They spent the rest of the lesson going over what Professor Godfrey had planned; in which some were relieved that they wouldn’t have to use the weight room until after Christmas. A few minutes before the bell rang they were allowed back into the locker rooms to change back into their normal uniforms. When the bell rang, everyone was rather interested for the next time they’d have the class and wondered if their current eating habits were healthy or not; though some could care less. Harry and Dean were rather interested in getting to try out the workout room, in which Eliana eagerly agreed with them.

“Mum and Dad were worried that I wouldn’t get to work out or keep in shape. It’s one of the ways I’m able to focus and keep calm.” Eliana said, the others listening with interest.

“It’d be nice to lose some of my…extra pounds…” Neville said, glancing down at himself.

“It won’t take too long, Nev. We all start somewhere. ‘Ry and I have been working out since we were young. We can help you out.” Dean said, smiling as Neville looked at him gratefully.

They all headed back to the castle and up to the second floor where they found the Customs classroom. Inside, they were greatly interested in the various pictures of different races and settlements, one being a Centaur settlement and another being a stunning shot of a Merfolk village. Looking around, they were rather tempted to look closer at the photos but they sat down at the different tables and pulled out their books. The Ravens were already going through their books while talking softly with each other, though a few nodded to some of the Lions as they continued to trickle into the room. Again, Neville agreed to let Hermione copy his notes for the class though he explained that it was rather daunting knowing that Hermione will be using his notes.

“It’s hard trying to copy everything down. I’m worried that I’ll miss something.” Neville muttered, shifting in his seat as Harry grinned.

“I’ll let her look at my notes too if you’d like. My writing’s not as neat as yours but it’s still legible. We’ll see about getting Fred and Gorge to use a copying spell on our notes so she’ll be able to read them over without having to constantly borrow them.” Harry offered.

When the bell rang, everyone watched as their professor stepped through a door near the back of the room where his desk was located. There were gasps of surprise and awe when they caught their first close-up look at Professor Frost. White hair fell past his shoulders and was neatly tied back using a strip of leather. Intense, frost blue eyes looked at them with kindness and interest. Instead of a robe like the other professors wore, Professor Frost was dressed in an emerald green and sapphire blue
tunic. A golden circlet rested on his forehead, a deep blue gem glinting in the light of the classroom. His ears were like those of Elves; delicately pointed at the tip. Besides his handsome features, what really stood out to the class were the nearly transparent wings which lay against Professor Frost’s back. The wings looked like those which belong to a butterfly and were various, light shades of blue and green.

“Welcome, class, to Customs of Different Races. In this class you will learn about the various races that live alongside humans and magic users. I am sure that you have already spotted that I am not ‘human’. I am what is known as a Fae; a sentient race that appears human in appearance except for their beauty, wings, ears and powers. Some of my abilities are being able to ‘see’ magic and auras, harness wild magic and make myself invisible at will. Yes, I am also able to fly.” He said, making some of the students smile and chuckle.

“Now, at different points throughout the schoolyear we shall be going on trips to different settlements of various races. Headmaster Dumbledore has granted me permission to take you out, at some time this year, to the Forbidden Forest to meet the Centaur herd that calls the forest home. No harm will come to any of you of course. At some points we may actually stay the night with a settlement to learn more about them and observe them in their natural routines and perhaps even participate with them.” He added, watching as the students eagerly whispered to each other.

“Yes Miss Li?” He asked, looking to a rather pretty Chinese girl who had her hand raised.

“Will we be learning about what classifies a race as sentient and non-sentient?” She asked, her voice soft as Professor Frost smiled.

“Yes, we shall. One of the first subjects we will be talking about is what classifies a race as a ‘Creature’ and a ‘Being’. As you may know, there have been a lot of changes to this classification within recent years thanks to Minister Matthews. A few years ago Goblins, Werewolves and Vampires were considered ‘Dark Creatures’.” He began, watching as Annabelle Wall, a rather pretty Ravenclaw, and Jillian bristled at that.

“However, thanks to Minister Matthews, those classifications have changed and those races and many more are considered equal to Wizards and Witches. Now, if you’ll open your books to chapter one we shall start with the different classifications and talk about some of the differences between the various races…”

Instead of having the students read to themselves, Professor Frost read aloud; often pausing to answer questions they might ask or ask them questions himself. Professor Frost had such a relaxed air about him that the students quickly became comfortable with asking him questions and speaking honestly with him. The class was interesting and kept all of them enthralled and wanting to know more. Yes, the idea of spending a night in the Forbidden Forest had worried them, but as Professor Frost touched on some of the different races they found themselves curious about getting the chance to speak with some of the different races like the Centaurs. Anthony Goldstein, a golden haired and deeply tanned Ravenclaw, flushed when he was asked if he’d like to come up to the front of the class. However, Anthony nodded and walked to the front of the class; his cheeks reddening even more when the entire class noticed some features they hadn’t quite spotted before.

“Mister Goldstein, would you mind telling us what race you are?” Professor Frost asked, watching as the boy shifted.

“I’m a Wood Elf, Professor.” He said.

“Now class, many Elves live in communities though the locations of those communities are vastly different. Some of the ‘branches’ of Elven races are named off of elements or because of where they
prefer to settle.” Professor Frost explained, earning a nod from Anthony.

“We live in a cabin in the middle of a large forest. All of us are also greatly attuned to the forest and nature, but many Elves are.” Anthony said, earning a smile of encouragement from their professor.

“Miss Grace, could you come up here, please?”

Eliana blushed but got up and walked over to stand beside Anthony and smiling shyly at the Elf. Annabelle Wall was soon called up along with Jillian and they stood side-by-side as Professor Frost talked about the differences in appearances between the races. He also touched on the subject of cross breeds, which was what Jillian was classified as because she was part-human and part-Vampire. Jillian shyly talked about some of her abilities though explained that her mother, a full Vampire, has many more abilities and was much stronger than her. Jillian and Eliana nearly groaned when Seamus raised his hand and Professor Frost called on him.

“Yes, Mister Finnigan?”

“Will we ever witness a Siren’s song or a Veela’s allure?” He asked, making Professor Frost glance at Eliana before focusing on the Irish boy.

“When we fully begin looking into those two races…perhaps. However, it also depends on Miss Grace if she would be comfortable enough with singing for us. Missus Winters, another professor here, might be willing to give you all a taste of the power of a Veela’s allure but again, it depends on her if she wishes to.” Professor Frost answered, the class nodding in understanding.

The group was sent back to their seats and the lesson continued for another twenty minutes. Everyone was surprised that two hours have passed, though they were happily chatting about everything that has been discussed so far. Instead of heading up to Gryffindor Tower, Harry, Dean, Neville, Eliana and Jillian headed to the hospital wing where they saw Hermione sitting up in her bed. Hermione’s eyes lit up when she saw them and she smiled brightly as they headed over.

“Madame Pomfrey told me you visited after Flying class.” Hermione said, hugging Jillian and Eliana happily.

“How are you doing, ‘Mione?” Harry asked, concern in his voice as he looked at her limp arm.

“I’m okay. Healer Briggs gave me a Pain Numbing potion so I’m not feeling anything in my arm. I have to say, though, it’s…disconcerting knowing that I’m re-growing the bones in my arm.” Hermione said, glancing down at her arm before looking at the others.

“Neville’s going to let you use his notes. We just need a professor or an older student to copy them for us so you can keep them.” Eliana explained, smiling as Hermione beamed and thanked Neville.

“What did you need?”

All of them turned as Healer Briggs walked over pushing a rolling tray which had a covered plate on it.

“We need someone to copy Neville’s notes onto spare parchment so Hermione can go over today’s notes on the classes she’s missed.” Dean explained, watching as Healer Briggs looked at Neville.

“I can do that for you easily.” He said, smiling lightly as the students thanked him.

Neville pulled out his notes while Jillian provided the extra parchment. With a few flicks of his wand and a muttered spell, Neville’s notes were duplicated and Healer Briggs made the copy permanent.
Hermione smiled brightly and hugged Neville before thanking him and Healer Briggs for the help. Healer Briggs wheeled the table next to Hermione and pulled the cover off of the plate; revealing a rather nice dinner. He shooed the others off to the Great Hall for the evening meal; explaining that they could always come back after dinner to visit Hermione for a little while. Heading out, Hermione settled into her meal and went over the notes that Neville had taken for her. She was so happy that the others had been considerate enough to take notes and give them to her. It pained her knowing that she had missed three new classes, especially from what they told her about Customs of Different Races.

-Thankfully I’ll be better tomorrow.- She thought, taking a bite of chicken.

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Saturday morning dawned early for Dean and Harry. Waking at four thirty in the morning, they dressed in their training outfits and silently made their way out of the tower and headed through the halls. They finally made it to the area where they had been told to meet Professor McGonagall and Professor Snape. Looking around, they turned when they heard a few others walking towards them. Elliot, who had been sorted into Hufflepuff, Tonks and a Seventh Year Slytherin named Rachel Davidson, appeared at the entrance of the hallway. Tonks grinned at the two boys and made her way over, instantly asking them about their classes and how they were doing. Elliot sneered at Harry and Dean before leaning against one of the walls to wait for the two professors. Rachel looked amused at Elliot’s attitude though she simply remained silent and settled in to wait as well.

At five o’clock on the dot Harry, Dean and Elliot were shocked when a door suddenly appeared on the wall across from a tapestry of a Wizard attempting to teach Trolls how to dance. The door opened and Severus stepped through, his onyx eyes showing no emotion as he looked at them. Nodding, he stepped aside and beckoned them into the room. Walking through the door, the three First Years were in awe of the massive room. However, they were slightly confused at the sight of nothing in the room except for Professor McGonagall. They also noticed that both professors weren’t dressed in their teaching robes; rather they wore the customary Assassin uniform. Professor McGonagall’s coat was a deep green lined in black while Professor Snape’s coat was a blue/black with the faintest hints of crimson.

“Welcome to the Room of Requirement. This room is perhaps one of the most magical rooms here in Hogwarts. This room can form and shape any environment you so desire; including a rain forest, beach and a mountain. Everything is life-like and can change and alter even when you are inside the room. Every weekend we will meet here for your training. Because of the age difference this year, Miss Tonks and Miss Davidson shall be taught by myself while Mister Potter-Othello, Mister Thomas-Woods and Mister Masters will be taught by Master Snape. Today and tomorrow we shall judge you and where you stand with your training before designing a routine based on what you need to improve on and what you need to learn.” Minerva said, the trainees listening intently.

“You shall treat us with the same respect you have given your former trainers. Just because we are professors here at the school does not mean we will allow you to slack off in your manners. We are both Master Assassins and have earned that title. Now, we will begin with a mile run and then split up.” Severus said, the room blurring around them.

The students watched as the room came back into focus, though this time there was a track around the edges of the room. After going through a few stretches, they all took off at a steady pace around the track. Harry and Dean happily talked with Tonks as they jogged; in which they also noticed that Elliot was, rather quickly, beginning to slow down and lose his breath. Minerva and Severus, who were also jogging ahead of the group, glanced at each other and Minerva nodded in acknowledgement. Slowing down, she allowed the other trainees to pass her until she was jogging
alongside Elliot.

“Mister Masters, have you not been keeping up with your training?” She asked, raising an eyebrow as the boy flushed.

“I wasn’t aware that-“

“You should always be keeping up with your training; even if it means you’re simply going on runs in the morning. I know for a fact that Miss Tonks and Misters Potter-Othello and Thomas-Woods go on runs every morning. Miss Davidson often goes on runs in the evening after dinner.” Minerva interrupted, watching as Elliot scowled as his face burned with shame and embarrassment.

“I expect your training habits to improve, Mister Masters. If they do not then I will report to Master Othello and your father about your seeming lack of interest in continuing your training.” She said, the boy nodding sharply before she picked up her pace once more.

After four laps around the track, the group took a short break to catch their breaths and have some water and a light snack. The room blurred around them and became sectioned. Against the right wall was a huge climbing wall with sections which jutted out sharply or dipped inwards. There was an area which looked like an abandoned town with several buildings near the back of the room and to the left was a desert-like area. In the center of the room was a padded dueling ring for hand-to-hand combat or even for magical combat. Minerva led the two Seventh Years to the desert area; already going over what she’d be looking for as she closed her coat and pulled up her hood. Severus, meanwhile, looked at the three First Years before turning sharply and leading them to the climbing wall. Soon enough, Elliot was beginning to climb up the wall. However, the foot and handholds were charmed to constantly appear and disappear at random.

Harry and Dean studied the wall carefully; their eyes narrowing as they watched the hand and footholds disappear. Sure enough, there was no pattern to which ones disappeared. They winced when Elliot lost his grip and fell; thankful that the floor was padded. Harry went next and he moved quickly as he climbed the wall, though at a few points he had to leap up to the next handhold in order to keep his grip. He managed to make it halfway up the wall before he lost his grip and fell. He managed to land in a crouch, wincing as his legs absorbed the impact. Straightening, he grinned when he got a nod of approval from Severus. Dean stepped up and approached the wall much like Harry had; leaping when need-be and climbing quickly. He made it up a little further than Harry before his handholds disappeared and he fell to the ground. Severus, again, gave a nod of approval before stepping up and scaling the wall himself.

The three trainees were in awe as the thin, pale man quickly climbed up the wall. Severus jumped a few times during his climb though he never fell. There were a few times when he was just holding on by one hand, but he still managed to hang on and continue the climb. He reached the top of the climbing wall rather quickly and tapped the top of the wall with one of his hands. The foot and handholds stopped disappearing and the trio watched as Severus quickly made his way down; sometimes dropping a few feet before grabbing onto another handhold. He finally touched down and dusted off his hands as the trio looked at him with admiration. They tried the climbing wall once more, in which they all made it a little further before they fell. Severus moved them over to the small mock town where he explained that he wanted them to find and collect all five flags which were in different locations. Dean eagerly stepped forward to go first in which Severus nodded and pulled out a stop-watch.

Meanwhile, Tonks and Rachel struggled to get their breath as they leaned against one of the rock formations in the desert area. It was at times like this when they hated the magic that made up the room. As soon as the stone floor gave way to sand, the temperature rose and it truly became a desert
area. The sudden appearance of a training throwing knife made them vault over the boulder and head towards a few of the sand filled buildings for cover. Tonks was quickly overtaken by Minerva and found herself in a mock battle against the Master Assassin. Rachel joined in after a few minutes and they worked together in an attempt to disarm Minerva and get away from the woman. However, Minerva gained the upper hand by using spells and her animagus form: a tabby cat. It took a few minutes before Rachel and Tonks were tied up and disarmed; including their ‘true’ wand. She walked away, leaving their weapons on the sand nearby and informing them that they could get free themselves. Of course she warned them to be mindful of the quicksand they were on as well.

Instead of struggling, the girls calmed their breathing and kept themselves from panicking. They wiggled slightly, testing the strength of their bonds before looking around for anything they could use nearby. However, it was Rachel who thought of an answer.

“Tonks, see if you can give yourself a more slender figure, at least your wrists. I have a sharp hair pin in my hair.” Rachel said, making Tonks blink before she grinned.

“Great!” She exclaimed, focusing on his wrists and shifting.

Her wrists became slimmer and she was able to slip free of her wrist restraints. Twisting slightly so she could see what she was doing, she quickly found the hairpin in Rachel’s hair and used that to cut through the rope binding Rachel’s hands. They hurriedly, yet calmly, undid the rope around their bodies and Tonks made a lasso on one end. They had already sunk to the beginnings of their waist and didn’t want to risk struggling further which would make them sink faster. Tonks threw the lasso and grinned when it caught a nearby boulder. Rachel reached over and wrapped her arms around Tonks’ waist, gripping onto the other teen tightly before Tonks began pulling both of them out of the quicksand. Tonks grunted softly, though tapped into her magic in order to have the added strength needed to pull them out. Only when they were close to the boulder did Tonks stop and Rachel let go of her waist.

Getting up, they rearmed themselves and cleaned off the quicksand which clung to their outfits. The sound of someone clapping made them whirl around where they spotted Minerva standing on one of the abandoned, ruined buildings.

“Well done you two. Tonks you did well in using your abilities to get out of a trap and you did it in such a way that wouldn’t give your abilities away to an enemy. Miss Davidson you did well in remembering quickly that you had a potential tool that could be used. No one would think to use a hairpin as a way to cut through a rope. You also knew that Tonks has more magical power than you and thus could draw in more strength to pull both of you out of the quicksand. You were both quick, decisive and calm even in the face of danger.” Minerva said, a rare smile on her face as the two girls grinned at each other.

Moving over to the makeshift town, they watched as Severus led the boys over to the sparing area. Minerva got their attention once more and had them hunt down ten flags which were stationed around the ‘town’ in various locations. The boys were put through hand-to-hand combat training in which the terrain changed around them each time they stepped up to the ring with Severus. Severus taunted them; egging them on with choice words as they sparred. They went up against the Master Assassin three times before training dummies appeared and he had them work on combinations and their striking force. Training only ended half an hour before seven when Minerva and Severus called everything to a halt. Severus and Minerva spoke about their progress privately before reminding all of them to keep their training a secret from their friends and those who don’t know about the Brotherhood.

Harry and Dean waited until they were the only ones left in the room with the two professors.
Severus raised an eyebrow when he saw the two boys, but simply walked out when they asked to speak with Minerva.

“Professor McGonagall?” Harry asked, making the stern woman look at him.

“Yes, Mister Potter-Othello?” She asked, leading the way out of the room with the pair following.

“We were wondering if it’d be alright to host Hermione’s birthday party in the Room of Requirement instead of inside a simple empty classroom. We wouldn’t have to do any decorating and it’ll provide exactly what we had in mind for her.” Harry said, making Minerva blink and raise an eyebrow.

“It’ll only be us, Hermione, Eliana, Neville, Jillian, Susan and Hannah. Our parent’s already said that we can call on one of our House Elves to get the food and drink for Hermione’s party.” Dean added, watching the woman carefully.

“Normally, we don’t recommend children using their families House Elves…however I doubt any of the school’s House Elves know how to make pizza and other foods that Miss Granger would like to have.” Minerva mused, the boys nodding lightly.

“We also have no problem in you showing your friends this room so long as the main purpose is kept a secret. Because you have friends in other Houses I do think this would be the best place for you all to spend time together beside the library and outside since it’s beginning to get colder.” Minerva added, a glimmer in her eyes as the boys grinned excitedly.

“Very well. On the evening of Miss Granger’s birthday I will meet you all up here. I shall also inform Professor Sprout where her two students will be for the evening meal.”

“Thank you, Professor!” The pair said, hurrying down the hall towards the Gryffindor Tower.

Harry and Dean hurried up to their dorm room and quickly showered and changed into jeans and normal shirts. Percy had told all of them that the weekends were the two days where they can wear ‘normal’ clothing so to say. After getting dressed, they headed down to the common room where they quietly began planning what they wanted the Room to look like for Hermione’s party. They’ve learned, from Eliana and Jillian, that Hermione’s favorite colors were blues and purples and through different conversations they know that their friend loved going swimming and, if the Room was able to do what Professor McGonagall and Professor Snape said it was able to do, then they should be able to create a beach for them all to enjoy. It’d be a nice surprise for Hermione and it’d give them all a chance to have some fun and goof off like children their age should.

It didn’t take too long before the girls and Neville showed up and they headed down to the Great Hall for breakfast. They hurried through their morning meal since they wanted to get to the hospital wing in time for Hermione to be released. After their meal, they headed down to the hospital wing and smiled when they saw Hermione finishing up her own breakfast. She beamed at them and thanked Jillian when the girl brought out a change of clothes from her bag. Madame Pomfrey walked over and, after reminding Hermione to take it easy with her arm for a few days, drew the curtains around the girl’s bed so she could get dressed in private. Once Hermione stepped out from around the curtains, they headed out of the hospital wing after Hermione thanked the two healers.

“C’mon, there’s something that Dean and I wanna show you.” Harry said, excitement in his voice as the others looked at him.

“What is it?” Hannah asked, tilting her head to the side as the boys grinned.

“You’ll see.” Dean said, making the others look at each other.
Harry showed the others one of the hidden passages, which shocked the others though they all commented on how handy it was. Susan and Hannah were pleased since this meant that they’d be able to get to the seventh floor easily. The others were slightly worried when Harry and Dean led them to a section of a wall which was blank before Harry began pacing back and forth. Susan was just about to comment when all of them gasped as a door magically appeared on the wall. Stepping into the room, Harry grinned when he saw a perfect copy of the living room of his family’s ‘dummy’ house. Dean grinned as he walked inside the room, though the others gasped and stood in the center of the room in awe as they looked around.

“How?!” Susan asked, shock in her voice as the door closed behind them and disappeared.

“This is the Room of Requirement. Dean and I discovered it yesterday morning. It can become any place you want it to become.” Harry explained, the others looking at him in shock.

“Really?” Hermione asked, looking around as the boys nodded.

All of them took turns changing the room. The others would ‘will’ for the person choosing to get what they wished for. Hermione took them to her house and she looked around with a wistful expression on her face as she led them on a tour of her home. Dean took them to a rainforest, which shocked the others since they could feel the humidity in the air and the exotic cries of the various animals which called such a place home. Hannah, Eliana, Jillian, Susan and Neville all showed off their homes before they all focused on a room where they can do their assignments together. The result was a common room with a large stone fireplace which as two bookcases on either side of it. There were a few work tables and study areas along with an arrangement of comfortable armchairs and couches in front of the fireplace. Because they didn’t have their book bags, they all agreed to meet up in the room in a few minutes.

They returned to the corridor outside of the room and Hermione did the honors of opening the room for them. Stepping inside, the girls admitted that they had been worried that the Room was just an illusion so they’re glad that it wasn’t. Settling down at one of the tables, they began work on their assignments. Hermione asked plenty of questions about the classes she missed and thanked Neville again for the copies of his notes. She was greatly interested in Customs of Different Races and asked plenty of questions about what had happened during that class. The others chuckled at her enthusiasm, though they happily told her about their Professor and some of the things they’d be learning during the school year.

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As the students and professors of Hogwarts passed into the second week of the new schoolyear, things began to settle down. Students found a pattern and were beginning to balance out their
responsibilities of classes, assignments, social life and clubs. Harry, Dean, Susan, Hannah, Jillian and Eliana wrote home with their ideas for Hermione’s gifts and were soon receiving packages which were quickly wrapped and stored away in their trunks. The group was also planning out Hermione’s party, in which the girls and Neville were very impressed with the idea of a beach party. Of course they happily agreed, though Neville wasn’t too sure about being around the others in just swimming trunks though all of them explained that it’d be fine and they were still growing which meant their bodies were constantly changing. This also had a rather interesting effect in the blonde boy as Harry and Dean found out four days before Hermione’s party.

“Hey, Harry, Dean, can I talk to you?” Neville asked, watching as the two boys paused in pulling out their uniforms from their trunks.

“What’s up, Nev?” Dean asked, walking over and sitting down on Neville’s bed beside the boy.

“…I…I was wondering if I could join you on your morning runs. I’m tired of being made fun of because I’m…overweight.” Neville muttered.

“Harry and I were actually planning on using the Room to work out in the mornings. We’d be happy to show you how to use different workout equipment. I’m sure it’d work out better for you if we worked out together in the evening. Maybe the girls would like to join us as well.” Harry offered, smiling kindly as Neville blinked before smiling back.

“I’d like that. Thanks.” Neville said, happiness in his voice as his friends grinned.

“No problem. Though, it might be a good idea for you to ask Healer Briggs about a good workout routine and diet that’d be good for you.” Dean suggested, making Neville nod.

“Good idea. I’ll speak with Healer Briggs today.” Neville said, smiling again as Harry and Dean grabbed their uniforms and headed to the bathroom.

The pair went through their morning routine, though both were thinking about how they could help Neville and the girls. They were glad that Neville had seemed almost, relieved, when they suggested working out at a later time during the day and had eagerly accepted that idea. Their morning runs with Tonks and now Rachel were times when they could freely talk about their training and the Brotherhood, something they couldn’t do if any of their friends decided to join them. However, they also agreed with the idea of working out more than once a week which was all that Neville and their friends were getting. Yes, they’ve all used the school pool since they learned about it but it still wasn’t enough to consider a solid workout.

Meeting up with Hermione, Eliana and Jillian in the common room, they all headed down to the Great Hall where they sat at the Hufflepuff table with Susan and Hannah. As they ate, Harry and Dean asked the girls what they thought of the idea of working out after classes and their assignments were finished. The girls were surprised at the idea, but after some discussion, agreed that it would be a good idea. They could even have the Room form a pool for them to use along with changing/shower rooms. They also agreed that they could even set up a kind of shooting range where they would be able to practice their accuracy and casting speed against dummies. After breakfast, they headed off to their first class. Between classes Harry and Dean talked with the others about the various workouts they knew of and the different machines. Hermione and Eliana were all too happy to tell the other girls about Yoga and Gymnastics.

After Charms, Neville made his way to the hospital wing where he spoke with Healer Briggs. The man was surprised when Neville asked him about the best workout routine and diet for losing weight and becoming healthier. However, he was also pleased that Neville had come to him. Neville talked about what he would like to see happen and what Harry and Dean had told him about the various
workouts, along with what he had learned during Physical Education. Healer Briggs confirmed that the preteen would need to change his diet somewhat and the exercise he was already getting from constantly traveling throughout the castle and going up and down stairs would help build his endurance and leg muscle. He soon helped Neville devise a good workout routine that would help the boy lose the excess baby fat and gradually build muscle and strength. Thanking the man, Neville headed out of the hospital wing and rejoined his friends in the Room. The others were rather interested in what Healer Briggs had told him and Harry and Dean nodded in approval of what Neville had been told by the man. They all agreed to begin their workouts after Self-Study; that way they could get their assignments out of the way first.

The day seemed to go by rather quickly for the group and after Self-Study finally finished they headed to the gymnasium to collect their workout clothes. Heading back to the seventh floor they were surprised to see that the door was already there. Upon entering they were surprised to see a room that rivaled the size of the Great Hall. At the back of the room was a shooting gallery style area which had training dummies against the wall. To the right was a gym style area with workout machines while to the left were mats and equipment for gymnastics. Hermione, Eliana and Hannah were very surprised to see a trampoline that was built into the floor. Harry and Dean were already in the center of the room doing stretches and grinning at them.

“Over there are the changing rooms. Go ahead and change.” Dean said, nodding off to the right where there were two doors marking the changing rooms.

The others headed into the changing rooms and stripped out of their uniforms and into their workout clothes. Stepping back into the main room Harry and Dean helped the others perform stretches in order to, hopefully, prevent them from cramping. Harry and Dean then led their friends on a light jog around the room; in which the two boys jogged alongside their friends encouraging them to continue even when they began panting and started to slow down. By the time their jog ended, all of them, bar Harry and Dean, were panting and out of breath. Hermione and Eliana fared slightly better since they had gym before and were used to jogging and running more than the others. The room thankfully provided them with a drinking fountain and Harry and Dean had thoughtfully brought bottles of Gatorade for their friends. Before the others had come into the room they had quickly used their communication mirrors to tell their parents that their friends wanted to work out. Their parents had been happy and rather surprised but had encouraged them to help their friends out.

After regaining their breath and resting for a moment, Hermione and Eliana happily took Jillian, Susan and Hannah over to the gymnastics side while the boys took Neville over to the workout equipment. Harry and Dean showed Neville how to use the different equipment and machines, in which they were glad that the room had made it so the machines ran off of magic instead of normal electricity. Neville explained what Healer Briggs had told him, to which Harry and Dean helped Neville go through the workout routine Healer Briggs had devised for their friend. Meanwhile, Hermione and Eliana smiled and encouraged the other girls on the balance beam and in using the resistance bands. Hermione was happy to find a wireless against one of the walls and soon had music playing in the room for all of them to enjoy. She was rather happy that the Magical world has begun to play Muggle music and songs from Muggle bands instead of playing songs from just Magical bands and singers.

Once six o’clock rolled around, Harry called everyone to the edges of the room and focused on turning the room into a room with a large pool and a hot tub. The room around them became a blur as the others willed for Harry to get what he wanted. After the room came into focus, Harry grinned at the excitement in the others. Heading into the changing rooms they all soon came back out in their swim suits, in which Harry and Dean, again, didn’t notice that the others were looking at them in shock and appreciation. They all happily swam around and played in the pool before relaxing in the hot tub and letting their muscles relax from the workouts. Neville admitted that he would likely be
rather sore tomorrow, in which Harry told him that he could always ask Healer Briggs for a Muscle Relaxant salve. Close to dinner they got out of the hot tub and headed back to the changing rooms to shower and change back into their uniforms. The group split up and put their things away in their trunks before heading to the Great Hall for dinner. After working out and swimming around for so long all of them were starved. Their Housemates were rather surprised on how they practically attacked their evening meal.

“What’s gotten into you?” Lavender asked, sniffing delicately as Eliana piled potatoes, fish and peas onto her plate.

“Working out really helps you build an appetite.” Eliana answered, Jillian nodding her head as Lavender looked at them as if they were insane.

“You actually worked out at the gym?!” Parvati asked, her and Lavender looking at each other in shock.

“Why not? With all of the rich foods we eat we need some kind of workout in order to keep and develop our figures. Having Health and Physical Education once a week isn’t nearly enough.” Jillian said, making the two girls frown lightly.

Neither of them could understand why Eliana, Jillian, Hermione and the three boys would even want to work out. Okay, yes, the idea of a nice figure was appealing especially since it would mean boys would be even more interested in them but still. Running around a room or outside and working up a sweat wasn’t appealing in the slightest. Not only that, but they had enough on their plate in trying to keep up in class and complete their assignments. Yes, yes Hermione had offered to help them on their assignments many times but they didn’t want to admit that they were struggling, especially since Hermione seemed to have such an easy time with the class work. However, the idea of asking Hermione for help was slowly becoming more and more appealing. Ron and Seamus didn’t really pay too much attention in class and she and Parvati struggled to get the pair to focus on their assignments and actually complete them.

“Harry, how often should we work out?” Neville asked, making Lavender look down the table towards the boy.

“At least once a day. However, we can have a day where we don’t have to work out. It’s up to you, honestly, and what you feel comfortable with.” Harry answered, making Lavender look at the boy with a critical eye.

When she first saw Harry, she had been in shock. The boy looked nothing like the stories and rumors that had going around said he’d look like. He didn’t wear glasses, there was no lightning bolt scar on his forehead and his hair wasn’t an unruly mess. Instead, here was this drop-dead gorgeous boy with shaggy black hair streaked with blonde and intensely bright emerald green eyes that have a ring of bright blue on the outer edges. He was tall and obviously muscular underneath his robes and, from the few times she’d seen him take off his school robe in Herbology, he took care of himself and his body. Her father had told her a few years ago that Harry’s adopted parents had refused a betrothal contract between herself and the boy. At the time she hadn’t been too upset but when she first saw Harry her opinion had changed. She’d love to have a chance with Harry; not just because he was the wealthiest boy in the school.

Looking over at Dean, she made the same decision with the other boy as well. Dean was very obviously well built; even more so than Harry. His shoulders were wider and his arms more defined and she had to admit that there was something really attractive about an artist. It was common for Dean and his friends to sit around the fireplace in the common room doing various projects while they talked. Dean often had a sketch book and pencil in hand and Hermione frequently worked on
her knitting. All of them had been surprised when Harry had brought down a guitar; especially when he began playing rather well. Eliana had joined along with his playing and often hummed or sang along with whatever song he played. If Harry wasn’t playing then he had sheet music out and was composing his own songs which he would then test out. It had actually become a common thing for Hermione or Jillian to bring down their violins and play along with Harry. Neville often sat there reading or just listened to the music during his free time.

She and Parvati had often wished to join the group, but they never really got the chance to insert themselves into the group. Even though it was nearing the third week of the schoolyear, the seven had already become a rather close-knit group with only Susan Bones and Hannah Abbott joining them. She had seen Ron’s many attempts to join their group, all of which have been rebuffed. Of course Ron’s attempts included sitting down in the seat next to where Harry normally sat in one of their classes which would mean Dean wouldn’t have a place to sit, along with Ron belittling Neville, Dean and the girls. She didn’t know what else Ron would try, but whenever she, Parvati and Seamus mentioned him giving up on the idea he got really angry and claimed that he was better than all of Harry’s friends and it would simply take some time before Harry realized it and came begging Ron for his friendship.

-Even though it’d be nice to be considered one of Harry’s friends I highly doubt Harry would end his friendship with the others anytime soon.- Lavender mused, turning back to her best friend and listening as Parvati starting talking about some of the latest rumors.

“Did you see Percy and Penelope Clearwater?” Parvati whispered, her dark brown eyes alight with eagerness.

“No, what?! What happened?!”

“Well, from what I’ve heard she’s been getting love letters on her pillow every morning. Some of the older ‘Claws were talking about it.” Parvati whispered, though the soft squeal that Lavender let out made others around them look at them with curiosity.

“Oh my gosh! Does she know who’s sending them?” Lavender asked, nearly bouncing in her seat as Parvati shook her head.

“Only that it’s one of the Prefects and they’re not from Slytherin.”

Nearby, Hermione rolled her eyes as she picked up some of what Parvati and Lavender were gossiping about. Even though it had only been a few weeks the pair already became the gossip queens of their Year. She also noticed that the pair hung around Ron and Seamus and were the ones who really tried to get the two redheads to do their assignments and take notes in class. While Seamus had been a nice guy the first few days, he turned into a real prat since befriending Ronald. There was little doubt in her mind that the pair would continue to cause trouble for her, Harry and the others. It was hard, admittedly, ignoring the jibes and jeers Ron and Seamus sent her way in the hallway. They along with Lavender and Parvati frequently made fun of her hair and her front teeth along with her…eagerness to answer questions in class. Eliana and Jillian were steadily helping her in getting used to not being the first one to answer questions, but she still had this…need to prove herself among the others in her classes.

“You okay, ‘Mione?” Neville asked, making Hermione blink and turn towards him.

“Huh?”

“I asked if you’re okay.” Neville said, watching as the brunette smiled.
“Yeah, I’m okay, Nev. Just thinking about how different everything is.” Hermione said, making her other friends look at her with interest.

“Oh?” Eliana asked, smiling gently as Hermione nodded.

“I didn’t really have any friends in primary school. I just…well I never really understood the appeal of gossiping.” She admitted, watching as Susan, Hannah, Jillian and Eliana looked at each other with a hint of sadness at Hermione’s revelation.

“Well, you’re not the only girl around here now! I think you should get a subscription to Teen Witch Weekly. We’re gonna have some serious girl time from now on.” Jillian said, the other girls nodding as Hermione smiled tearfully at them.

“Thanks.” She sniffled, making her friends smile.

“You hear that, Nev, De? I guess we’ll have to spend those times when they’re off having ‘girl time’ with some guy time.” Harry said, the girls laughing as Dean and Neville grinned.

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September 19th

Hermione yawned as she slowly woke; her mind sluggish to fully leave behind the last dredges of her dreams. However after her mind finally caught up with her she realized that it was her twelfth birthday! With eyes wide with excitement the brunette hurriedly got out of bed and rushed through her morning routine. Thankfully Lavender and Parvati didn’t wake early and Jillie and Eli were slowly waking up by the time she finished getting dressed in her workout clothes. Tying her hair back, she huffed as a few locks instantly escaped, making her friends giggle softly as they got out of their beds.

“It’s not funny!” Hermione hissed, keeping her voice soft so she wouldn’t wake up the two gossip queens.

“Oh don’t worry, ‘Mione.” Eliana said, pulling off her pajamas and digging through her trunk for her workout clothes.

“Happy birthday.” Jillian said, pulling out a beautiful handmade card from her bedside table.

“Yeah, happy birthday!” Eliana added, handing over her own card happily.

Hermione’s eyes widened in surprise before a beautiful smile broke out across her face. She eagerly accepted the cards and read them before hugging her two girlfriends tightly. Her voice was thick with emotion as she thanked them before carefully putting the cards on the built-in shelf on her headboard. Once they were all dressed and had a change of ‘normal’ clothes in their bags, they headed down to the common room where they met up with the boys. Neville, Harry and Dean happily presented Hermione with their own cards, in which the brunette actually cried silently in happiness. Neville hugged Hermione warmly and offered her a handkerchief to dry her eyes and cheeks. She thanked the three boys before they headed to the Room of Requirement for their morning workout. Thankfully Harry and Dean had told Tonks about working out with their friends in the mornings instead. Tonks had understood and had assured them that she and Rachel were now going on their runs together so she wouldn’t be lonely without them there.

Meeting up with Susan and Hannah, Hermione was given two more cards which she thanked the girls for before adding the cards to her bag. Inside the Room, they took it easy with their workouts; mostly using light weights and cardio machines before swimming and relaxing in the hot tub for
longer than normal. The others, besides Harry and Dean, were still sore from working out so much. However, their muscles weren’t nearly as sore as they had been after the first day. Harry and Dean had actually had to help Neville and Jillian down to the infirmary while Hermione and Eliana limped behind them. Healer Briggs and Madame Pomfrey were concerned, especially since Susan and Hannah were already there, though they gently scolded the group for over taxing themselves before giving them muscle relaxers and warning them to take it easy for the rest of the day.

Now, their bodies had gotten used to the work outs thanks to slowly building up their work outs and the routines they developed. They were very pleased with the results since Neville had noticed that he was slowly losing weight and the girls noticed that they were slowly developing some tone and losing some of baby fat that had clung to their bodies as well. Not only that, but their accuracy and speed in spell casting was improving steadily and all of them were becoming faster in their movements. Harry and Dean were proud of their friends and they were also keeping a careful eye on their friends in case any of them showed any potential of being fellow Assassins. They hadn’t spotted anything yet, but they were planning on continuing their surveillance of their friends and any strange abilities their friends might have that were noticeable.

After their workout they group showered and dressed before splitting up to put their things away. They met up in the Great Hall where they had breakfast. Like most Saturdays the Great Hall was mostly empty early in the morning since many students and even some professors took advantage of not having classes and slept in. Breakfast was also made available for a longer period of time, until ten instead of eight like normal. After breakfast, they headed back up to the Room to finish their assignments and just hang out and do some further research in their classes. Hermione and Eliana eagerly spoke about the fieldtrip coming up for their Wizarding Customs class. The class was going to be visiting the Ministry soon to learn more about their government and the different departments. Jillian, Susan and Neville talked about the planned fieldtrip in Muggle Studies to the Prime Minister’s office and Buckingham Palace, which was pretty exciting for them. Harry, Dean and Hannah smiled at that; all of them glad that Hogwarts had the funding needed to allow students to go on such trips.

The day seemed to pass relatively quickly for the group. They spent some time wandering around the castle where Harry finally revealed the map he had of Hogwarts. Hermione, Neville, Eliana, Jillian, Susan and Hannah were shocked when they saw the map and eagerly looked it over while asking questions. Susan explained that the map would be a great security device and asked Harry and Dean about the possibility of Sirius and Remus creating one for the Ministry for the Auror department or even the Minister.

“I don’t think that’d be a good idea. Yes, it’d help ensure security in the Ministry but what would happen if someone learned about the map? Someone who wasn’t so…understanding?” Harry asked, watching as Susan opened her mouth before closing it as understanding dawned on her.

“Auntie and others would be accused of spying and would be forced to resign or even be put in prison.” Susan said, Harry and Dean nodding.

“Exactly. We mostly use it to find the secret passages and to get to the kitchens for a late night snack.” Dean said, the others nodding lightly in understanding.

They continued exploring, though Hermione and Susan kept them far away from the forbidden corridor. Lunch was a calm affair, though Eliana, again, had to deflect Ronald’s poor attempt of convincing her to hang out with him. Thankfully Fred and George managed to get their younger brother away from the group when Ronald began insulting Hermione. Hermione was surprised when the twins wished her a happy birthday though she quickly learned from Katie Bell that Lavender and Parvati had told all of them that it was her birthday because they had seen the cards Eliana and Jillian had given her when they had woken up. Hermione blushed as many of the older students in their
House wished her a happy birthday, though there was no denying the happiness she felt in finally having people who cared.

After lunch they all headed outside to enjoy the last full warm afternoon of the year. Wandering around the grounds, they ran into Hagrid and Professor Hurst. Both of them taught Care of Magical Creatures and Hermione and Eliana were in awe when they saw Hagrid leading two full grown Unicorns out of the Forbidden Forest while Professor Hurst led two Unicorn foals. The two professors led the beautiful, silver/white colored creatures to a corral where they contentedly began grazing. Of course Hagrid and Professor Hurst had no problem with them watching the Unicorns and Hagrid handed them some sugar cubes which the preteens happily held out to the majestic creatures. The girls giggled at the feeling of the Unicorns eating from their hands and Hermione gasped when one of the adult Unicorns nickered at her and nuzzled her cheek.

“He likes you, Miss Granger. Unicorns are rather…picky about humans.” Professor Hurst said, her eyes bright as she looked at the dazed brunette girl.

Even after they left the corral, Hermione continued to lightly touch her cheek where the Unicorn nuzzled her with a beautiful smile on her face. Wandering around, they caught sight of a good number of students using the school’s workout room thanks to the wide windows of the building. They only headed inside as it neared dinner, though all of them agreed that it’d be a good idea to head to their dorms to freshen up after running around and playing outside. Susan and Hannah held back with Harry and promised to head up to the Room with their swim suits after freshening up. Harry hurried up to Gryffindor tower where he packed up his swim trunks and Hermione’s present. Mira happily headed down to the common room with him; perched on his shoulder like normal. Jillian was the first of the girls to join them, in which she hurriedly told Harry, Dean and Neville that she had managed to get Hermione’s swim suit from her trunk.

They waited until Hermione and Eliana joined them before Harry grinned and quickly blindfolded Hermione. The brunette gasped; clutching onto Harry’s arms tightly.

“What’s going on?!” She demanded, scowling as Harry took her hands and held them.

“It’s time for your surprise, of course. We’re not having dinner in the Great Hall tonight.” Harry said, carefully leading Hermione out of the common room with their friends following behind.

Throughout the journey to the Room Hermione kept badgering them with questions about where they were leading her and what was going on. However, much to her frustration, they kept their answers vague and minimal. Reaching the wall that hid the Room, Harry and the others were pleased to see Professor McGonagall walking up just as they reached the hallway. Neville took over in keeping Hermione steady as Harry paced in front of the blank wall and thought of the setting for Hermione’s party. On his third pass, a white door appeared in the wall and Harry grinned as he opened it. Stepping inside, he was pleased to see a white sand beach with various cabanas to relax under. A long table was set up with beach chairs surrounding it while another table stood nearby waiting to be filled with food and drink. Harry called out to Jeeves, the head Potter family Elf. Jeeves appeared in front of him and soon had the second table filled with pans of handmade pizza, chips, dip, various kinds of drinks, hotdogs, hamburgers, corn-on-the-cob and potatoes.

There were also a few changing tents stationed around the cabanas so they could change into their swimsuits when ready to swim. Harry also spotted a small storage shack which, he guessed, was filled with toys and floats they could use in the clear-blue water. Only when the room was ready did he beckon the others inside, in which Hermione stumbled when she stepped onto the sand. Jillian happily whipped off the blindfold from her friend’s face, making Hermione blink rapidly as she held up a hand to shield her eyes from the sunlight. A gasp escaped the girl’s mouth as she stared at the
scene in front of her; her eyes widening in disbelief when she saw balloons tied to the backs of the chairs along with a tiara sitting front of the head of the dining table with the words ‘Birthday Girl’ written on it.

“I-Is this for me?” Hermione whispered, tears gathering in her eyes as the others gently led her towards the table.

“Of course it is. Jillie and Eli told us about the picture of the beach you went to during the summer and how you talked about all the good memories you had with your parents. Jillie also brought your swimsuit for you.” Dean said, grinning as Hermione looked at them with teary eyes.

“Thank you. Thank you so much.” She sniffled, hugging each of them tightly.

Minerva felt a smile threaten to spread across her face as she watched the group. She had loved the idea of a small party for Hermione and had been rather impressed that Harry and Dean had thought of using the Room to create the perfect party room for their friend. She watched as Hermione’s friends urged the girl to the buffet table where Hermione chose some of her favorite dishes. The brunette blushed and complained half-heartedly when she was sat down at the head of the table and the tiara was placed on her head. However, the smile never left her face and her eyes never stopped sparkling. Minerva joined them at the table after getting a small selection of some of the dishes. The preteens happily chatted away and included Minerva in their conversations as well much to the woman’s delight. She was pleased that so many of them asked her questions about class and what they’d be learning in the future.

After dinner, the group hurried into the changing tents and were soon sprinting towards the warm water lapping at the sand. Minerva contented herself by laying back on a padded beach chair with a good book, though she kept a careful eye on the group. If any of the children’s parents found out about the party she could truthfully say that they had adult supervision. There was plenty of laughter and shrieks of delight as the group splashed around, swam and played games in and out of the water. The Room had provided them with a volleyball net and Hermione, Dean, Harry and Eliana had a lot of fun teaching the others how to play. Minerva kindly played the role of referee for them after she ‘learned’ the rules of the game. Hermione’s team won, which generated a lot of cheering and squealing as Harry and Dean chased the girls around and into the water since their team lost. They continued playing for a while longer, in which they even made sand castles and other sand sculptures which was rather entertaining to watch.

It was an hour later when they rinsed off and changed back into their normal clothes. Moving back to the table, Hermione was seated once more before a pile of presents was placed in front of her. She opened Eliana’s gift first and beamed when she saw five new Nancy Drew books neatly stacked in order. Thanking her friend, she pushed the books to the side before grabbing the next gift. Neville grinned when Hermione opened his gift; revealing the two mailboxes. Hermione was in awe over the beautifully made boxes and listened intently as the others explained what the mailboxes did. With tears in her eyes, Hermione tapped her wand against the boxes, activating them. She made a mental note to visit the Owlery in the morning to send off her parent’s new mailbox. Next came Dean and Harry’s present, in which Hermione’s eyes widened in shock as she unwrapped a slender, small jewelry box. Her hands shook as she slowly opened it before she let out an ‘eep’ and dropped the box onto the table.

The girls all crowded around her, gasping and squealing at the sight of a delicate, white gold charm bracelet which had two charms: a book and a wand. Harry and Dean grinned at each other while Neville looked rather surprised though he smiled and nodded in approval. Hermione’s hand shook slightly as she pulled out the bracelet and slipped it onto her left wrist. She gasped softly as the cool metal flashed before shrinking to fit properly on her wrist. Looking up at Harry and Dean, she got up
and hugged them tightly, whispering her thanks to which the pair smile and hugged her back.

“Hermione, that bracelet is charmed to protect you.” Harry said, the brunette looking at him with surprise and confusion.

“It protects you from school level hexes and jinxes. It also vibrates if it detects any harmful potions that might’ve been slipped into your drinks.” Dean added, watching as the other girls looked at him with wide eyes.

“Woah! Hermione, don’t take that off!” Susan said, the other girls nodding in agreement.

“W-Why?” Hermione asked, frowning in confusion as she looked at the three girls.

“Harry, Dean, Neville, Sue and I all have Head of House rings. These rings are enchanted to protect the future and current head of House. Because you don’t belong to a magical family, you don’t have such protections. I’m betting Han’s Heiress ring has some protections as well.” Jillian explained, Hannah nodding as understanding dawned on Eliana and Hermione’s faces.

“We briefly touched on Head of House and Heir/Heiress rings. But isn’t it exp-“

“Don’t focus on the potential price tag, ‘Mione. Harry and Dean went together on this. I wish they would’ve told me since I would’ve helped.” Neville said, glancing at his two friends with a raised eyebrow.

Harry and Dean simply smiled and shrugged before they encouraged Hermione to continue to open her gifts. Hermione gushed over the book series Jillian had gotten her and absolutely loved the children’s books such as Tales of the Beedle and the Bard and a few more. Opening her last gift, Hermione’s eyes watered when she saw the large bottles of shampoo and conditioner. Susan and Hannah explained that the hair products were specially made for her and would help her ‘tame’ her hair. They explained that, because she’s a Witch, normal ways of taming hair wouldn’t work because her body, including her hair, had magic embedded in it. She hugged the two girls tightly, thanking them profusely as tears streamed down her cheeks. Hermione sniffled lightly as she dried her cheeks and gently packed away her new gifts. As she was doing so, Jillian softly explained that Madame Pomfrey or Healer Briggs could actually shrink her teeth for her. All of them had learned that Hermione’s parents were dentists and she that she had been planning on getting braces before her Hogwarts letter came. Sadly, because she was not attending Hogwarts, she wouldn’t be able to get her braces tightened or loosened properly.

Hermione was wide eyed at learning that her teeth could be fixed. When she asked why neither Healer had told her about it, Susan explained that it was against the oath all Healers took. At Hermione’s desperate expression, the other girls all decided to take Hermione down to the hospital wing tomorrow after breakfast. After the wrapping was banished, thanks to Professor McGonagall, a beautiful ice crème cake was brought in by Jeeves and Hermione happily cut into the cake and distributed slices to everyone. Conversation was bright and cheerful as they ate with a wireless playing in the background. Once the cake was finished, they goofed around and played in the water for a little while longer before Professor McGonagall called them in to change and pack up. The Room changed from a beach setting and provided a plain room with changing rooms for them all to use and shower off to get rid of the sea water and sand.

“Now, it’s four minutes to curfew. Head directly to Gryffindor Tower, no wandering or else I shall be deeply disappointed with you. I shall escort Miss Bones and Miss Abbott to their common room.” Minerva said, the preteens nodding in understanding.

“Thank you, Professor.” Hermione said, smiling at the stern woman.
“You’re most welcome, Miss Granger. I was more than happy to supervise you all today. Also happy birthday.” Minerva said, surprising the students by giving the brunette a small smile.

The next morning Hermione woke with a renewed sense of excitement. Grabbing her new hair products, she hurried into the bathroom; thankful that only Jillian and Eliana were waking up. Stepping into one of the shower stalls, Hermione hurriedly undressed and turned on the taps. As she went through her morning routine, she read the directions on the back of the bottles of shampoo and conditioner. She was surprised that she simply had to do the same thing as she normally did. Eliana and Jillian walked into the bathroom, talking softly as they attempted to wake up. They said their good mornings to Hermione when they noticed that she was already in the shower. Finishing up her shower, Hermione dried off and wrapped a towel around herself. She moved to the mirrors, which were charmed not to fog up, and brushed her hair. She used a simple drying spell on herself and her eyes widened when, instead of steadily becoming more bushier, her hair simply became rather curly.

“I’m glad it worked.” Eliana said, smiling as Hermione looked at her friend in the mirror.

“How did Susan and Hannah get the shampoo and conditioner?” Hermione asked, lightly touching the curls in disbelief.

“Jillie and I got the hair needed for the potion masters to make the shampoo and conditioner specifically for you. Normally they’d take a small cutting from the hair underneath the outer layers. However they honestly just need enough to get a magic sample along with a skin and hair sample. We got the hairs from your hairbrush and passed them off to Susan and Hannah.” Eliana answered.

“Thank you.”

The girls finished their morning routines and headed down to the common room together, though not before Lavender and Parvati stared at Hermione in shock. All of them had agreed to hold off on their training until later that day; in which Neville happily agreed much to their amusement. While they hung around the common room waiting for the time for breakfast to come around, many of the older girls in their House approached Hermione and complimented her on her new hair style. Hermione smiled brightly and thanked all of them; though she blushed whenever a male member of their House complimented her as well. When the time for breakfast approached, they headed down to the Great Hall and met up with Susan and Hannah on the ground floor. They sat down at the Slytherin table across from Daphne, Tracy, Millicent and Blaise. The four Snakes were surprised but happily accepted the group and talked with them about their shared classes and assignments. Daphne, Tracy and Millicent gushed over Hermione’s new hairstyle while Blaise smiled at the brunette and complimented her. All of them pointedly ignored Pansy and Sabrina’s snorts at the compliment.

After breakfast, Jillian and Susan took Hermione to the hospital wing to get her teeth seen to while Hannah, Eliana and Neville headed outside to relax. None of them wanted to wander around the castle, which was what Harry and Dean wanted to do. All of them agreed to meet up in the Room after lunch. Harry and Dean set out exploring the school, often ducking into various hidden passages to avoid Filch and his horrid cat Missus Norris. It was during one of their explorations of a hidden passage when the pair found what appeared to be a small box. Looking at each other, they frowned lightly and crouched down beside the box. Their rings weren’t going off which meant that there wasn’t anything harmful inside it. However, before they could open the box, two shadows covered them.

“Well, well, well. What do we have here brother of mine?”

“Looks like two curious Firsties.”
Harry and Dean stood and spun, their eyes widening in surprise when they saw Fred and George grinning at them. The two pranksters didn’t look mad; rather they looked interested and pleased that Harry and Dean were in the passage.

“Let me guess, the box is filled with some of your prank items?” Dean asked, grinning as the twins chuckled.

“Of course!”

“Can’t have Filch discovering where we keep everything.”

“Now, how did you two find this passage?” Fred asked, looking at the pair with interest.

The two younger boys looked at each other, silently debating if they should reveal the map to the twins. Their time working with the Weasley twins at Remus and Sirius’ shop proved that the twins were nothing like their youngest brother or mum. Nodding, Harry pulled out his map and unfolded it, though he blinked when the twins looked at him with shock and confusion before Fred pulled out a similar, though older looking piece of folded parchment from his back pocket.

“How do you have a map?” George asked, glancing at his brother as Fred activated the map.

“Moony and Padfoot made this one for us.” Harry answered, making Fred and George look at him with surprise.

“Where did you find that?” Dean asked, frowning as he looked at the twins.

“We…we nicked it from Filch’s office near the end of last year. Our oldest brother, Bill, uncovered the password. He’s a Curse Breaker, you see—“

“So things like this are child’s play for him.” Fred and George explained, Harry and Dean listening with interest.

“You know, Moony did say he lost his map near the end of his last year.” Dean said, looking at Harry who nodded.

“True. It’s likely that’s the one you two found. Sirius and Remus made this for us to use. We’ve been exploring and wandering around since the second day.” Harry explained, the twins looking at him with interest.

Harry and Dean showed the twins a few features that they hadn’t known about the ‘original’ map that they carried. The twins were shocked and eager to learn about the search feature of the map and followed Ron on the map for a minute before asking more questions. They were in awe over the new map and asked plenty of questions about the new features that Remus and Sirius had added into the new map. Harry and Dean showed the twins some of the features, though they kept others a secret since they didn’t want the twins to know everything. Fred and George happily showed Harry and Dean a few more of their stashes so the boys wouldn’t accidentally run into any of the stashes and destroy them. The two younger boys promised to keep the boxes safe and even asked if they could help the twins with some of their pranks. Fred and George were surprised, but they grinned and eagerly agreed; stating that they and their best friend Lee Jordan could always use some more partners in crime.

The twins happily told the two boys about some of the pranks they had planned, all of which had Harry and Dean laughing. Harry and Dean told the twins about some of their future prank ideas, to which the twins were grinning though they began giving the pair suggestions on how to make their pranks better and ensure that others would have a hard time connecting the pranks to them. Fred and
George took the pair through the castle, explaining a few things that they had learned about the school and the various professors. As they walked, Harry and Dean noticed an odd…flickering in the twins’ eyes at different times. Before exiting one of the hidden doors leading in and out of the passage, the twins waited a few moments, allowing the two First Years to activate their Eagle sight spot Filch passing by slowly. How the twins knew he was there was a mystery, though Harry and Dean were quickly becoming suspicious. Were the twins Assassins? If so, how the bloody hell would they get their training?! There was no way their mum would let them go through training… unless…

There were some Assassins in the Brotherhood who had been trained in secret from their families. It wasn’t the preferred way of doing things but sometimes it needed to happen. It wasn’t too uncommon for some Assassins to come from a family that supported the Templars and their training had to be done in secret. Even though the twins would have to keep their training a secret from their mum and youngest siblings, perhaps Arthur Weasley would be supportive of their twin sons. Looking at each other, Harry and Dean nodded slightly, silently confirming that they would tell Professor McGonagall about their suspicions. It would certainly make things interesting if the twins were Assassins and came to the estate during the holidays for training. Even though they’ve only had limited interactions with the twins, they already considered the pair friends.

In return for showing them their stashes and the original Marauders Map, Harry and Dean showed the twins the Room of Requirement. Fred and George were in awe over the possibilities of the room and eagerly agreed to join the two First Years and their friends in the mornings for their workouts. However, they claimed that they’d be unable to join them during the times when they had practice for Quidditch. While on the topic of the sport, the twins complained about their new Seeker: Cormac McLagan. The Second Year was severely cocky and a horrible team player. However, he was the only one who showed any kind of talent for the position during tryouts and they hadn’t won the Quidditch cup since their older brother Charlie left the team. Dean told the twins about Harry’s uncanny talent as a Seeker, in which the twins bemoaned the fact that First Years couldn’t join the team.

“I’ll try out next year, promise.” Harry said, grinning as the twins beamed at him.

After hanging out with the twins and showing them what they normally did in way of workouts, they all split up to do their own thing. However, Harry and Dean headed to Professor McGonagall’s office. Reaching the door, they knocked a few times before waiting for the woman to answer. When Minerva called out for them to enter, Harry and Dean opened the door and walked inside, closing the door behind them. Minerva looked up from grading Sixth Year papers and instantly saw the serious looks on the two boy’s faces. Pulling out her wand, she flicked it a few times, casting a locking charm on the door along with putting up a privacy ward.

“What is it?” She asked, her voice stern as the boys looked at her.

“Master Assassin McGonagall, we’ve discovered two possible Assassins.” Dean began, making Minerva’s eyes widen.

Instead of answering, she rose from her desk and walked to her fireplace. Tossing a handful of floo powder into the low flames, she knelt and called out for Severus’ private office. After passing a coded message to the man, she stepped back and they only had to wait a few seconds before Professor Snape stepped through the fireplace. The man’s hair is held back in a low ponytail and his sharp eyes took in to the two trainees before he looked to Minerva.

“Who are the two possible Assassins you’ve discovered?” Minerva asked, making Severus look at the pair sharply.
“Fredrick and George Weasley.” Dean answered, watching as the two Master Assassins looked at him in shock.

“Are you sure?” Severus asked, frowning deeply as the boys looked at each other.

“Not long ago we were wandering through some of the hidden passages here in the school. We ran into the twins and we started talking to them. They decided to take us around the school and showed us more of the hidden passages. On two occasions they paused before stepping out into a hallway and their eyes flashed like ours do when we activate our Eagle sight. Dean and I used our sight during the last instance and saw that the twins were waiting for Filch to turn a corner. Mister Filch made no sound that would’ve given away his presence unless the twins had the sight.” Harry explained, the two professors frowning thoughtfully.

“It would explain how they’ve only been caught four times since they’ve come here.” Minerva mused, Severus nodding curtly.

“As much as it pains me to admit: they are much more intelligent than they let on. Their potions are…at a higher level though they’ve begged me to keep their scores low. Apparently Missus Weasley wishes them to join their father in the Ministry which is exactly what they don’t want.” Severus said, his voice soft as Minerva nodded lightly.

“Thank you for alerting us to this. We shall handle it from here and will send you and the other trainees a message should the twins be Assassins.” Severus said, Minerva smiling lightly at the two boys.

“Keep an eye out for any others you might suspect.” She added, the boys nodding before they left the room after Minerva took down the locking charm.

Relocking the door, she turned her attention back to Severus. The young man had a thoughtful look on his face as he looked at the door. She knew that it had been a huge surprise all those years ago when he learned that Lucas and Delilah had taken in the son of his sworn enemy. Yes, James Potter had mellowed out in his Sixth Year and had officially called off targeting Severus and the entire Slytherin House with their pranks in the middle of his Sixth Year but that hadn’t done too much in way of bridging the gap between Houses. Severus had been in love with Lily since they were children and he had been the one who introduced her to the Brotherhood. When she renounced her claim as an Assassin and left the Brotherhood, Severus had been devastated; especially when he learned that she had done it because of her new husband and unborn son. Minerva knew that it had been a tough pill for Severus to swallow when he learned that Harry carried the same abilities as his mother and Lucas and Delilah had spoken with the potions master about his hatred towards James. It had taken some time for Severus to get over his past hatred and his dislike for the one-year-old simply because he was the son of James.

It did help that Harry grew up with none of the arrogance or ego that had been present in his birth father. Harry proved himself to be his own person; not a copy of either of his parents. Yes, he did have Lily’s temper and James’ mischievousness but he was his own person. When Sirius apologized to Severus it had taken awhile for the Slytherin to forgive his former enemy but he eventually buried the hatchet. Minerva knew that it was because Sirius was no longer an ‘egotistical prick’ like he had once been. The war and the death of his friends had finally made Sirius grow up and he was better off because of it.

“Harrison and Dean seem to have a knack for discovering possible Assassins.” Severus said, drawing Minerva out of her thoughts.

“We’ll have to be careful about this. Molly will never accept that two of her sons are Assassins.
She’ll make complaints and spill the word to all the wrong people; including Albus.” Minerva said, Severus nodding in agreement.

“Hold the pair after class and cast the spell. If they are Assassins then we shall pass the news to Lucas and Dellah. We should also tell them about Molly and Arthur. I think Arthur is the more… sensible of the couple and would agree that his son’s need training.” Severus explained, Minerva listening and nodding.

“I’ll let you know about the results.” She said, Severus letting out a faint hum before he stepped back into the floo to head back to his office.

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September 28th

Arthur Weasley was a polite, level-headed and amicable man. Despite being a Pureblood, he had never bought into the whole Pureblood superiority dogma that had dominated their world for so long. He knew all too well that Muggles were intelligent, inventive and creative people. He had always thought that their world would advance much faster if they studied Muggles and learned from them; something that had placed him among the ‘trash’ of their world. When Molly Prewett had come into his life he had fallen in love with the kind young woman. She listened to him, truly listened to him. She hadn’t dismissed his ideals and instead made an attempt to learn more about them. When they were married and he began going to a Muggle university, she would stay up late to see him come home and ensure that he had a good meal and someone to talk to as he studied and did his assignments. Yes, Molly was a very strong opinionated woman, but it had been something that he had loved about her. She wasn’t afraid to let others know what she thought of them.

Okay, yes, it had caused a few arguments between them in the past. However, Molly had never crossed the invisible boundary that he had set on their wedding day. He would allow her to run the house and ensure the children were kept in line; however he would only allow her so much control. He’d had to step in a few times when Molly had pushed too close but his wife had quickly backed down and let him handle things. Things had gotten a lot better for all of them since Minister Matthews pushed through the reforms and gave him a high position with a large pay increase thankfully. Things had gotten easier around the house now that they didn’t have to worry about the possibility of being unable to send one of their children to school and worrying about food and clothes. Molly had certainly been in a much better mood since then and it pleased him to see the worry and stress leave her face.

However, now he had a dilemma on his hands. It was well known to many old Pureblood families that Assassins and Templars existed. Arthur also knew that his own great-great-great-great grandmother had been an Assassin and a very talented one at that. However, no one in his family had ever possessed any of the special qualities that Assassins had. Yes, there had been a few times when he suspected that Bill or Charlie might have the abilities but no one had ever approached him about his eldest sons. Now, he had just received a rather…vague letter from Minerva about Fred and George. Oh he had always suspected that an Assassin would be in Hogwarts to seek out any potential new Assassins among the students and he had always suspected that Minerva was more than what she let on.

Sighing, Arthur knew that he would have to head to Hogwarts on his own. Molly would blow up if their sons are in trouble. Her temper is famous and it took very little to set her off. Standing up, Arthur headed up to the second floor and pulled on a robe. Minerva had sent him a letter asking for him to come to the school to discuss something dealing with the twins that evening. He had sent Molly off with Ginny for a girls day out, figuring that his wife and daughter could use some time
together and it would also allow him to meet with Minerva without bringing his wife with him. Walking back down the stairs, Arthur walked to the fireplace and, after adding the Floo powder, flooed directly to the Deputy Headmistress’s office. His mind was a whirl of thoughts as he watched the various fireplaces and exits flash by before the spinning began to slow down. As he came to a stop, Arthur ducked and stepped out, pulling his wand from a wand holster and banishing the soot and ash from his robe and thinning hair.

“Thank you for coming so quickly, Lord Weasley.” Minerva said, rising from behind her desk and walking over to shake the man’s hand.

“It was no trouble Professor.” Arthur said, realizing that this must be a serious discussion for Minerva to use his title.

They were soon seated and a House Elf brought a tea service for them. With cups of tea in hand, Arthur settled fully into the chair and looked at Minerva as she slowly stirred her tea.

“Let me begin by saying that Percival, Fredrick and George are doing well in their classes. Percival has been doing an outstanding job in his role as Prefect. The First and Second Years look up to him for guidance in getting around the school and he seems to greatly enjoy helping them out. I can easily see him becoming Head Boy in his Seventh Year. He is currently one of the top three students of his year.” Minerva began, watching as Arthur smiled warmly.

“Percy has always tried to do his best. We encourage him at home and I believe he’ll be looking for a clerking job in the Ministry come summer.” He mused.

“Fredrick and George, while being troublemakers, have been doing rather well in Ancient Runes and Arithmancy. However…I fear that they are…‘fudging’ their results in their other classes to make it seem like they’re average students.” Minerva said, making the Weasley patriarch blink and look down at his cup thoughtfully.

“While I don’t care for discussing…familial problems with others, I believe I know why my boys are doing this. My wife is…outspoken when it comes to her wishes for our children. It’s no secret at home that she wants all of our children to have solid jobs in the Ministry. That Bill and Charlie didn’t and actually moved out of the country upset her. Percy seems content and even eager with acquiring a position in the Ministry. I believe he might try to get into the Department of Research and Development or my own department. The twins, however, have set their sights on owning a joke shop. I have to admit that I’ve seen some of their work and it’s…very impressive. However my wife gets angered at the idea and puts the twins down whenever they even hint at becoming shop owners.

“She doesn’t think that it’s a respectable job. I had to overstep her when the twins asked to work for Lord Black and Mister Lupin during the summers. Myself and my oldest boys encourage the twins, though I’m constantly getting after them for teasing Percy and Ron.” Arthur explained, a fond smile on his face as Minerva chuckled softly.

“Now…as for Ronald.” Minerva began, her tone making Arthur dread what she was about to say.

“Ronald is proving to be a…worrying case for us professors. He hardly pays attention in class and when he does turn in assignments they’re barely at a passing level. He has also taken to verbally harassing Misters Longbottom, Thomas-Woods and Potter-Othello along with Misses Granger, Michaels and Grace. Miss Michaels and Miss Grace are of different races Lord Weasley. Miss Michaels is the daughter of Lord Gary Michaels and the Immortal Vampire Lady Evangeline Michaels nee Dracula. I believe I don’t have to go into Miss Grace’s parentage to impress upon you the danger your youngest son faces if he continues to harass the others.” Minerva said, watching as Arthur paled before he cleared his throat.
“No, no you don’t.”

“So far Ronald has been given three detentions because of his behavior. Not only that, but his friends: Mister Finnigan and Misses Brown and Patil, have taken to teasing Mister Potter-Othello and his friends as well. However, Misses Brown and Patil have slowly begun to back off after having gotten detention. The young girls have also been seen trying to encourage Ronald and Mister Finnigan to study more and pay more attention in class. Sadly, should Ronald’s grades fail to improve over the rest of the year he will find himself having to repeat his First Year.” Minerva explained, watching as Arthur sighed and shook his head.

“I shall talk to Ron. There has never been a Weasley who has needed to repeat a school year. Should he fail this year I might just keep him home and have him home schooled. The fact that he’s disrupting others and causing them discomfort and even emotional pain is…concerning.” Arthur said, Minerva nodding lightly.

“Now, something else has been brought to my attention Lord Weasley. However, I must ask you to take an oath to not speak of what I am about to tell you to anyone besides Fredrick and George. If the…wrong people were to learn this then it could spell disaster.” Minerva said, making Arthur look at her sharply with a frown.

Arthur looked at Minerva in silence for a minute; wondering what this was about. However, the wording and the way she had asked for secrecy set his heart racing. Releasing his wand into his hand, he held it up and slightly pointed towards his chest. He made an oath, swearing to not reveal whatever was said in Minerva’s office without her express permission to do so otherwise. Minerva watched as Arthur’s body flashed as his magic recognized the oath before the man sent out a few sparks from the tip of his wand. Nodding, she relaxed slightly and took a drink of her tea before getting down to business. Because Arthur was a Pureblood she didn’t have a need to tell the man that Assassins and Templars were very real. Rather, all she had to do was explain that his twin sons both have the abilities to become Assassins.

“Arthur, it was recently brought to my attention that your twin sons both have the necessary abilities to become Assassins. I am an Assassin myself, a Master at that. I was given permission from the leader of the Magical Brotherhood to seek out possible new Assassins and train those who are here in Hogwarts. Myself and another Master Assassin have kept a watchful eye for new trainees and it came as a shock when one of our pupils brought your sons to our attention. I have already spoken with Fred and George and have casted a simple spell that let me know if they were Assassins or not.” She explained, watching as Arthur looked at her with shock.

“And the…results?”

“They are both Assassins, Arthur. After careful consideration it began to make sense. Your twin sons are highly skilled in seemingly ‘vanishing’ whenever trouble is around and it’s becoming increasingly difficult to pin any kind of trouble or pranks on them. Of course there are times when they happily take the blame for certain pranks.” She answered, watching as the man snorted softly with laughter.

Arthur’s hand shook slightly as he refilled his cup. He had always figured that one of his children might be an Assassin and, honestly, deep down he figured that one or both of the twins ‘fit the bill’ as Muggles would say. There was no doubt that what Minerva said was true. However, now there was the problem of keeping this from his wife and other children. He knew that he was told because he’s the more…level headed of him and his wife. Molly would’ve exploded or even demanded that all of her children receive training from the Assassin’s which wasn’t possible. He didn’t want to keep the twins from their rightful place and wanted them to make the decision of if they wanted to begin training or not. Looking at Minerva, he saw the understanding in her eyes as he sat there.
Fredrick and George will be given the option of beginning their training along with their fellow trainee’s. During the holidays it would be ideal if they visited the…complex to get more training though they can visit for a few hours a day instead of simply staying there for a period of time, unless you’d like that instead. You’ll have a special Knowledge Fidelius charm placed on you to protect the knowledge that your sons are Assassins.” Minerva explained, Arthur nodding his head.

“I know it wouldn’t be…wise to have my wife and youngest know about the Brotherhood. Molly would be…irate to put it nicely.” Arthur said, Minerva humming faintly as she watched the man.

“Go ahead and bring my boys in. I had always figured that one of my children might carry on the Weasley legacy of being an Assassin. It’s in our blood.” Arthur said, smiling ruefully as Minerva raised an eyebrow.

“What do you mean?”

“My four times great-grandmother: Rosalie Weasley; had been an Assassin. It’s not very well known, but I found some of her journals in the family vault. My Occlumency shields are strong and I’ve locked away her journals deep in the vault. Molly has her own vault so she doesn’t know about the journals and other…things I’ve found that belonged to Rosalie. All of those are safely stored in a multi-compartment trunk under a Stasis charm.” Arthur explained, Minerva’s eyes widening in great interest and surprise.

“I never knew your family had an Assassin bloodline. However, it does explain a few things. I’ll summon the twins up. I’ve already spoken to the leader of the Brotherhood and they’ve confirmed I can tell the twins.” Minerva said, Arthur nodding in understanding.

Minerva summoned a House Elf wearing the McGonagall clan tartan which alerted him that she was using a personal Elf instead of a Hogwarts Elf. They made small talk while they waited for Fred and George to come up. Minerva, again, expressed her concern about Ron’s behavior and Arthur promised to speak with his youngest after speaking with the twins. He didn’t need Harrison or anyone else to write to their parents/guardian and express their displeasure with Ron. It could cause trouble for their family and could create a feud between them and the family that was offended. Thankfully, Molly would hopefully agree with him and would understand the trouble that their youngest son was causing them. While she didn’t conform to many of the Pureblood dogma and teachings, she did understand the politics and dangers in insulting others; especially other Purebloods. They couldn’t afford having to pay a fine to another family; their wealth was slowly increasing thanks to his job but it’ll take much longer before they’re back to where the Weasley fortune had been before his older brothers had gambled it all away.

A knock at the door made him jerk slightly and he watched as Fred and George were called into the office. Smiling at his twin sons, Arthur set down his cup and stood; pulling the twins into a warm hug. Fred and George were shocked to see their dad, but they smiled brightly and returned the hug.

“Is everything okay?”

“Did something happen at home?”

“Everything’s fine, boys. Your mum and sister are perfectly well.” Arthur soothed, watching as the twins nodded before they sat down in the two chairs Minerva conjured for them.

Fred and George sat down and gladly accepted a cup of tea. After all of them were settled with drinks and ‘nibbles’ Minerva began telling the twins about Assassins and Templars. The twins, of course, knew about the two ‘groups’ though they were still in awe as they listened to what their Head of House told them. When she explained that she, herself, was an Assassin, they didn’t seem
too surprised though they both exclaimed that it was cool. However, when Minerva told them about a trainee’s suspicions about them and further explained that she had performed a simple spell on them that confirmed that they were, indeed, Assassins themselves; they were shocked. Minerva told them about some of the abilities that Assassins had, to which the twins gained a look of understanding and acceptance. The pair admitted that they used their Eagle sight to detect anyone coming upon them while they were setting up their pranks and even used the sight during Quidditch since the Bludgers turn a different color as do the members of the opposing team.

Minerva told them about the training that would be offered to them should they wish to become full Assassins. She also told them that they’d be expected to train at the complex during the holidays by either visiting during the mornings every day or by staying there for a few weeks. After explaining what they’d be learning from her and the other Master Assassin in the school, she left her office through a door to the left in order to give the boys and their dad time to talk and discuss what they wanted to do.

“What do you think, Dad?” Fred asked, turning to look at Arthur.

“Honestly, I think it’s a good idea. Yes, you’ll have to keep this a secret from your other siblings and from your mother, but it’ll be good for you. I know there are likely some children of Templars here at the school and if they discover your abilities before you train then that could spell disaster for you and the Brotherhood. Besides, I have a feeling that you’ll make more friends that you’ll get along with better.” Arthur explained, smiling as his sons looked at each other.

Fred and George were silent as they looked at each other. Like many twins around the world, they seemed to be able to communicate with each other without uttering a single word. The idea of helping others and meeting people who understood their abilities was highly appealing. Training sounded rather exhausting, but after all that Wood puts them through for Quidditch training and with their workouts for Physical Education they wouldn’t be too bad off. Besides, any chance to get away from the Burrow during the holidays was a good thing. Their mum was overbearing when it came to chores and they got tired of listening to her complain and harp about their grades. Being a part of the Brotherhood could open doors for them and would greatly help them in the long run. Besides, it seemed like being an Assassin ran in the family from what their Dad had said and they’d like to help continue that line. Nodding to each other they watched as their dad knocked on the door and Minerva walked back inside. She retook her seat and looked at the twins, watching as they grinned at her.

“We’ll join!”

Over the next few days, Fred and George were introduced to the other trainees and to Severus as a Master Assassin. They weren’t too shocked in learning that Severus was an Assassin given the man’s history, though they were surprised in learning who the other trainees were. Both of them chose the first language they wanted to learn; in which Fred chose German while George chose Italian and attended daily lessons where they learned history and etiquette. Yes, they were late to the game in their training, but they worked harder than normal in order to try and catch up with others in their age group. Harry and Dean were a great help; even more so when the boys welcomed them into their group of friends and they were able the Room freely with the others.

It was Hermione, Jillian and Harry who convinced the twins to stop fudging their results. Both boys were ingenious at potions, arithmancy and ancient runes. They used their talents to develop prank items and had even begun expanding on items that Remus and Sirius created. Harry convinced the twins to get in contact with his uncle and godfather, to which the twins did so and told the two men...
about some of the changes and improvements they had made or thought of on the men’s products. Sirius and Remus were shocked, but were also greatly impressed and promised to give the twins a share of the profit made from the improved products. Remus also hinted at future jobs with their company so long as the twins continued to do well and continue to find inspiration to improve and create. The twins were overjoyed and, after sending word to their dad, signed a contract with Sirius and Remus to become employees/partners with the two men. Arthur happily set up a vault for the twins, pleased that they’ll be getting money doing what they loved.

Meanwhile, Minerva and Severus found themselves becoming increasingly suspicious of Albus. During every meal Albus carefully watched Harry and those he interacted with. He also asked questions about how the boy was doing in his classes and, when told that he and his friends were at the top of their classes, expressed concern of all things. Severus, of course, was privy to the Headmaster’s plans for Harry and knew that the old Wizard had hoped that Harry would be an average student; never mind that James and Lily had been two of the smartest of their age. Severus continued to keep up appearances that he despised Harry and the other Gryffindors though he quietly passed Minerva the House Points book at the end of the day so she could slip the points back that he had taken from her House that didn’t have a valid reason. Severus also found out that Albus was still trying to come up with any plan possible to remove Harry from the Othello family.

“The man is getting desperate, Minerva.” Severus said, running a long finger along the rim of his glass of Firewhiskey as he sat in the older woman’s office.

“He cannot lawfully remove Harry from the Othello’s. All of the students undergo heath checks every month and Poppy and Aaron report any signs of abuse to the Heads of House and the Headmaster. Both of them also keep their files heavily warded.” Minerva said, watching as Severus shook his head.

“His obsession with that damnable prophecy is…unsettling.” He muttered, his colleague nodding.

“I know but there’s nothing we can do about it, Severus. He’s like a starved dog with a bone when he’s set his sights on something. So long as he doesn’t learn about Harry’s true powers it should be okay. Albus would…well there’s no telling what he’d do if he learned that Harry is a trainee Assassin.” Minerva said, watching as the man sighed and nodded.

On the second of October, Minerva was rather concerned when Albus asked her to bring Harry to his office so he could speak with the boy. When she asked him for his reasoning behind wanting to speak with Harry, he had just smiled and gave her a vague answer. After lunch, Minerva approached Harry before he could leave the Great Hall and asked him to follow her. His friends looked at him and Minerva with concern, but promised to see him after his meeting. Harry handed Dean his bag before following Minerva out of the Great Hall and towards the staircases.

“Professor?” Harry asked, looking up at the stern woman.

“Headmaster Dumbledore has asked to speak with you.” Minerva explained, glancing down and watching as Harry’s brow furrowed.

“I haven’t done anything wrong, have I?”

“No, Mister Potter-Othello, you haven’t.” She said, a faint grin on her face as Harry raised an eyebrow.

“Have my grades dropped?”

“No. You and your friends are still at the top of your year.”
Harry’s frown deepened, though he instantly understood that this ‘meeting’ would likely be about his home life. While the headmaster could ask about a student’s home life, it was normally only if the student had shown signs of having been abused at home. He already knew of three First Years who wouldn’t be returning home because of their parent(s). He also knew that a few of the older students in Gryffindor lived in the orphanage and in the homeless shelter because of problems with their family. Yes, he had been warned that Headmaster Dumbledore would take an…unhealthy interest in him but his parents, Sirius and Remus had prepared him for these encounters.

“Remember your training. If you feel a Legilimency probe call Albus out on it. Severus is there as well on Albus’ wishes. Even though Albus will expect me to leave, I won’t. It’s against the rules for a student to be meeting with the Headmaster without their Head of House present. Lord Othello has told me that you do know about your Aunt so feel free to tell Albus about them should he attempt to claim that you would’ve been well off with her and her family.” Minerva explained, Harry nodding as he listened to her advice.

Reaching the stone gargoyle that stood guard in front of the Headmaster’s office, Minerva gave the password to the statue which caused it to jump aside. Stepping onto the staircase, Harry shifted slightly as the stairs moved on their own. Reaching the top, Minerva didn’t even have to knock before the Headmaster called them to come in. Opening the door, Harry stepped into the office and looked around with interest. The office was circular with two rather large windows looking out over the grounds. In the center of the room was the Headmaster’s desk which was rather large and ornate. On the walls behind the Headmaster were moving portraits of the school’s previous Headmasters and Headmistresses. There were curved bookshelves to the left and right, filled with odd little trinkets which spun, smoked and whistled along with thick and rather old looking books of various sizes. A wooden perch sat near the Headmaster’s desk where a beautiful red colored phoenix was perched.

Albus sat behind his desk and Severus was seated on a chair to the man’s left and slightly behind. Severus scowled something fierce at Harry, though the boy knew it was all an act. Instead, he focused on Albus; ensuring that he was looking either slightly above or below the Headmaster’s eyes to avoid direct eye contact.

“Ah, Harry, thank you for coming my boy. Minerva, thank you for escorting Mister Potter; you may leave.” Albus said, smiling as Harry sat down in a chair in front of his desk.

“Headmaster, you seem to have forgotten one of the rules in the school’s charter. No student shall be in a meeting with the headmaster/mistress without their Head of House present. I shall be staying.” Minerva said, inwardly smirking as the twinkle in Albus’ eyes disappeared for a moment.

“Ah, yes…” He said, watching as Minerva sat down beside Harry in the other chair.

“Now, Harry-“

“Excuse me, Headmaster. I don’t believe I’ve given you leave to be so familiar with me. I don’t know you and I’ve never met with you before. Besides, my last name is not just Potter. It’s Potter-Othello, Sir.” Harry interrupted, mentally smirking at the surprise in Albus’ eyes.

“Yes…well I apologize for the error on your last name H-Mister Potter-Othello. I was good friends with your parents and I’ve known you since you were an infant.” Albus said, watching as Harry raised an eyebrow.

“Yes… I haven’t seen me since I was an infant.” Harry said, fighting down his laughter at the slight frown on the Headmaster’s face.

Albus cleared his throat lightly and shifted to make himself more comfortable. Looking at Harry, he
fought down his frustration when the boy refused to meet his gaze. It made him wonder just what his…’parents’ had told him. Again, it angered him that all of his plans for the last ten years had fallen and shattered around him. He had hoped, with Harry away from his new family, the lad would be easy to mold and shape. He had hoped that Ronald would have already integrated himself with Harry’s circle of friends. Instead the redhead appeared to be pushing Harry and his friends away with his constant jibes and teasing. It’s also concerning that the boy had made friends with Miss Bones and Mister Longbottom. Both of those families were firmly out of his line of influence since the war. However, he had noticed that Harry and his friends seem to have included the Weasley twins into their circle. Perhaps all hope wasn’t lost.

“How are things at home, Mister Potter-Othello?” Albus asked, his voice holding some concern as Harry blinked and raised an eyebrow.

“Things are great at home. I have a little sister and my parents are wonderful. I also have an adopted uncle in Remus Lupin and I see my godfather weekly.” Harry said, happiness in his voice even though Albus sighed.

“I still worry for your safety, Mister Potter-Othello. I had placed you with your Aunt and Uncle for your safety. There are still many people who would wish you harm.” Albus said, watching as Harry finally looked into his eyes and frowned.

“My Mum and Dad had gone to Petunia Dursley’s residence a few days after they adopted me. They told Petunia about her sister’s death and do you know what she said?”

Albus blinked in shock, surprised by the venom in the voice of someone so young.

“Petunia was happy that her younger sister was dead. Said that the ‘freak’ deserved it for marrying another freak and abandoning her ‘normal’ life. When my Mum explained that I was alive, Petunia snapped and said that if I was ever dropped at her house then she’d either drop me off at the nearest orphanage or in an alley and let the rats take care of me.” Harry hissed, his eyes glowing in anger as Albus listened in horror.

“My parents have kept me safe, Headmaster. All incoming mail is screened and any portkeys and harmful substances contained within letters were and still are sent to the D.M.L.E. so they can handle it. You can find records in their offices with all of the things they’ve handled. If I had been placed with my…aunt I would have been oblivious to my heritage and likely would’ve been abused mentally and physically. I’m healthy, I’m strong and I know my future place in our society. Not only that, but I know my birth parents; I’ve grown up on stories about them and I know what they would’ve wanted for me.” Harry said, watching as the aged Wizard in front of him bowed his head slightly.

“I never thought that Petunia felt that way about her sister.” He muttered, blinking when Harry scoffed lightly.

“Because it’s not your place to know, Headmaster. What happens outside of the school isn’t under your control. It only is when a student has shown signs of abuse. If I did then Madame Pomfrey and Healer Briggs would’ve brought it to your attention.” Harry snapped, struggling to contain his anger.

Harry scowled something fierce when he felt the Legilimency probe and quickly batted it away, making the Headmaster wince slightly.

“Stay out of my head.” Harry hissed, his eyes flashing as Albus cleared his throat.

“Yes, well, I do believe you need some time to calm down. We shall talk sometime later.” Albus
said, Harry scoffing as he stood and walked to the door.

Minerva glared at Albus as she stood. Walking to the door, she opened it and followed Harry out of the man’s office. Severus shook his head as the headmaster closed the door with a flick of his wand. He honestly couldn’t believe that Albus had tried to convince Harry that he would’ve been safer with his aunt and uncle. He remembered Petunia from his childhood and how she had teased and bullied Lily as a little girl because of her powers. Obviously Albus hadn’t thought that Petunia would be so heartless and would’ve taken in the boy without question. Albus still struggled with the fact that there are so many students who had been abused and were now in the orphanages.

“Were you able to get anything from him, Severus?” Albus asked, drawing the man from his thoughts.

“No, Albus. He batted away my probe without a thought. His mind is fully shielded.” Severus said, watching as Albus sighed and lightly pinched the bridge of his nose.

“Would…would Petunia really have done what she had threatened?” Albus asked, a desperate note in his voice as he looked at his Potions Master.

“Petunia was always jealous of Lily; her intelligence, beauty and her zest for life. When Lily began displaying accidental magic Petunia became afraid of her younger sister. That fear turned to hatred and loathing. When their parents died in Lily’s Fifth Year, Petunia blamed her sister and flat out said that she wished that Lily had died instead. I have no doubt that Petunia and her husband would’ve abused Potter or would’ve abandoned him.” Severus said, watching as Albus sighed.

“How could she even think of doing that to blood?”

“Albus, you’ve always told me to be honest with you. You ask that question and yet there are constant displays that blood means nothing. Black was kicked out by his own mother. I have three Slytherin students who are in an orphanage because their parent abused them.” Severus snapped, making the aged man nod absentmindedly.

Albus shortly dismissed Severus, making the man roll his eyes and mentally scoff. He was mildly impressed with on how Harry had handled his first meeting with the Headmaster though. Harry had shown that he was knowledgeable about the school charter and about his aunt. He was respectful, even when he lost his temper at the old Wizard. He wasn’t too surprised that the boy had lost his temper. Albus had practically stated that Lord and Lady Othello were unable to keep Harry safe. He had been very tempted to speak out, but that would’ve blown his cover. Walking out of the Headmaster’s office, he walked through the hallways and down the stairs. No doubt Albus would try and speak with Harry again; likely about who he’d made friends with or about where he would be going for the holidays. He already knew that Albus would try to refuse Harry from going home on Halloween, even though other students had been allowed to leave the school to grieve for their lost family members. However, knowing Minerva, she wouldn’t alert the Headmaster to Harry leaving until a few minutes before the boy would actually be leaving.

-He won’t know what hit him.- Severus thought, a faint smirk on his face as he thought of Albus going up against Lucas or Delilah.

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As the tenth of October neared, Harry, Hermione, Neville, Jillian, Susan, Hannah and the twins...
began talking about what to get for Dean’s birthday. Of course all of them knew that Dean was a huge football fan and lately they’ve begun playing small games during their free time in between training and studying. Then there’s the fact that Dean also loved and had an amazing talent for drawing. Harry and Hermione were planning on going in together to get Dean a professional artists’ kit and drawing pads since their friend tended to go through them quickly. The twins, Susan and Hannah decided to pool their money together to get Dean a magical artists’ kit, including canvas’ and ‘drawing’ parchment. Jillian decided to get Dean a few books on a couple famous Quidditch teams since the boy had also gotten into Quidditch while Eliana did the same only for famous Football teams along with Dean’s favorite team. All of them were attempting to decide on the ‘setting’ for Dean’s party.

“I think Dean would love to have his birthday in Emirates Stadium. He’s a huge Arsenal fan and has been to several games.” Harry said, the others listening with interest.

Sure enough, on the tenth the group led Dean up to the Room where the Room had changed into a perfect replica of Emirates Stadium. Professor McGonagall was rather interested in the stadium, in which Harry, Hermione, Dean and Eliana happily told their Head of House about Football and the stadium. Dean loved the fact that his party took place in the field of the stadium and they spent a good amount of time playing Football and just running around and goofing off. The twins, Susan, Hannah and Jillian were still getting used to the concept of the game, though Susan was getting quite good at dodging and had a wicked kick. The food was good, in which McGonagall got to try her first hotdog after Hermione, Harry and Dean all assured her that the name didn’t mean that the actual food was made from dogs. After eating dinner, they ran around or, after the Room provided them with brooms, flew around the stadium.

It took some coaxing, but Neville and Hermione soon joined the others in the air and were flying gently around under the watchful gaze of Professor McGonagall. Minerva watched the group closely and was simply shocked at what she saw. Harry and Dean were pushing the brooms to their limits in speed and in stunts. Both boys were pulling stunts that professional Quidditch players used during games and it made her mind reel. Both boys would be great assets to the Gryffindor Quidditch team; however there wasn’t open spot for the year now that tryouts had been completed. However, she made a mental note to pass word to Oliver Wood about Harry and Dean’s abilities on the brooms and in the air. The friends flew around for a while before landing and claiming that it was time for Dean to open his presents. Dean didn’t mind that he wasn’t given too many gifts; rather he loved what they had given him and didn’t blame them for going together for some of them since the kits were rather expensive.

Dean was enthralled with the magical drawing and painting kits; admitting that he had thought of trying to enchant some of his drawings and paintings but hadn’t gotten around to doing so. He loved the books on Quidditch and Football, especially the book on Arsenal. After opening all of the gifts and thanking his friends, Dean cut into the cake, which looked like a football, and divided up the pieces between everyone. They all happily chose from a wide selection of ice cream and spent the rest of the evening just talking and spending more time together. The twins happily told the others what it was like living with a family of nine with three older brothers.

Of course they talked about how their mum ran the house with an iron fist and that she often talked to them about possible jobs in the Ministry much to their dismay. They talked about how much fun they had playing Quidditch in their orchard in which they used apples as balls. Of course they also talked about their siblings and how Charlie was now in Romania working with Dragons while Bill was in Egypt working for Gringotts finding old tombs and ruins of ancient Wizarding civilizations. Jillian talked about her family, in which her mother was actually a descendant of Dracula which shocked the others. She talked about what it was like living with a rather large Vampire coven which also had humans and magicals mixed as a way of donors and mates. Eliana also talked about her
home life, in which she and her parents lived near the ocean. She talked about some of the other Sirens who live near her and her family, including Pansy’s friend: Sabrina. They continued talking for a while longer before Professor McGonagall told them that it was time to head back before curfew arrived.

With the twins joining Harry, Dean, Elliot and the others for Assassin training, things got pretty interesting. The twins certainly made training fun, especially when they cracked jokes to cover up their exhaustion. Harry and Dean worked alongside the twins since the pair were new to the training and the ‘life style’. Tonks happily offered the twins some advice and helped them get through some of the roughest times they had after training. Of course with the twins now joining them for their group studies, the twins were more than willing to help all of them with their assignments. The twins were a great help in Charms, Potions and Transfiguration though they also greatly helped in Herbology as well. The twins also knew more about what they’d be learning in future years so they were better able to help the group with their extra studies and help them figure out what they might want to take in their Third Year and up.

It was during the second week of October when Hermione came down with a rather nasty cold. It had started out as a simple case of the sniffles and she had dismissed it instantly as the last of her allergies hanging around. However, the next morning she had a rather nasty cough and a sore throat. Jillian took one look at her and demanded that she go to the hospital wing. Hermione had protested but Eliana, Jillian and even Lavender and Parvati convinced the brunette that she was really sick. Jillian and Eliana managed to help Hermione take a shower and get dressed in lose clothing, though Hermione was practically unable to stand with how weak she was. Jillian finally carried Hermione down from their dorm room on her back, to which Harry, Dean and Neville instantly surrounded their friend in concern. Dean took Hermione from Jillian and carried the brunette in his arms bridal-style, much to Hermione’s embarrassment while Eliana ran back up to their dorm room and got a few books for Hermione to read while she rested and healed.

Hermione hid her face against Dean’s shoulder as students looked at them in the hallways. They made it to the ground floor just as Healer Briggs was entering the Great Hall for breakfast. He stopped in his tracks when he saw the group and hurried over, his wand appearing in his hand.

“What’s happened?” He asked, concern in his voice as Dean looked up at the man.

“She’s come down with a cold or something, Sir. She had the sniffles all yesterday and today it’s gotten worse. She can hardly stand.” Dean explained, Healer Briggs frowning as he looked down at the girl.

“Come with me. Poppy is watching over two others.” He said, turning and leading the group down the halls and towards the hospital wing.

Entering the large room, Poppy looked up from her desk and hurried over as Healer Briggs had Dean set Hermione down on one of the beds near the back of the room. Dean and the others backed away as the two healers checked Hermione over. The girl told them what hurt and told them about any allergies she had before Madame Pomfrey called a House Elf and asked for a series of potions from her stock.

“Well, Miss Granger, you’ve come down with a nasty cold. We’ll keep you here overnight and see how you’re doing tomorrow. I take it you haven’t had anything to eat?” Madame Pomfrey asked, Hermione shaking her head.

“No, ma’am.” She rasped, grimacing as her throat protested the action.

“Well, I’ll assist you in changing into something more suitable and get you some broth with a
Nutrition Potion mixed in. Then you’re to take all of the potions I want you to.” Madame Pomfrey said, her voice stern as the brunette nodded meekly.

“Here, ‘Mione. Some books so you don’t get bored.” Eliana said, handing Hermione her bag which made the girl smile.

“Thanks.”

“Alright you lot, out. Miss Granger needs to get changed and rest. You can visit her after your morning classes.” Madame Pomfrey said, turning towards the group and ushering them towards the doors.

“See you later, Mia.” Harry said, smiling encouragingly at their friend.

Madame Pomfrey pulled the curtains around Hermione’s bed and helped the girl get dressed into a pair of thin pants and a lose shirt before having her sit up in bed. Under the woman’s watchful eye Hermione drank down a bowl of broth laced with Nutrition Potion before she was given four different potions which would help her rest easier and get rid of most of her discomfort. Poppy then sent Aaron to the Great Hall where he informed Minerva that Hermione wouldn’t be attending her classes for the day. Minerva was concerned in learning that Hermione was sick, though she agreed to pass on the message to the rest of Hermione’s Professors. Looking down at the House tables, she spotted Hermione’s friends at the Gryffindor table where all of them were looking worried about their friend. Admittedly it was strange seeing the group without Miss Granger. However, from where she was seated, Minerva watched as Ronald Weasley approached the group and proceeded to make a fool of himself once more.

“Finally decided to ditch the bossy bookworm, eh, Harry? It’s about time you came around.” Ron said, smirking as Harry mentally groaned.

“Go away, Weasley.” Harry drawled, not even turning to look at the redheaded prat.

“For your information, Weasley, Hermione is in the hospital wing with a cold. So no, we didn’t ‘ditch’ her.” Dean said, fighting down a smirk as Ron’s face slowly turned red.

“No one asked you, Thomas.” He snapped, making Dean roll his eyes as the others scoffed at Ron.

“Look, Weasley, just go away; before you drive our appetites away.” Harry drawled, the others nodding as Ron glared at him.

“I challenge you to a Wizards Duel! Of course seconds are allowed. Tonight at midnight in the trophy room on the third floor.” Ron snapped, spinning around and stalking off down the table to where Seamus was watching.

“Does he really expect me to fall for that?” Harry asked, surprise in his voice as he looked down the table towards the redhead menace.

“Obviously he does.” Jillian said, shaking her head as she took a bite of her eggs.

“Are you going to go?” Eliana asked, worry in her voice as Harry scoffed.

“Merlin no. We haven’t even learned any curses or jinxes. How the bloody hell does he expect us to duel? It’d likely turn into a scuffle and I don’t want to get blood on my clothes.” Harry said, smirking as Dean snickered.

“Good. Besides, the trophy room is close to the forbidden corridor. There’s no need for you to get
The rest of the day passed with little incident. Hermione slept at random points during the day and Madame Pomfrey and Healer Briggs often checked on her and helped her to get to the bathroom to take care of her needs. Of course her friends visited her after their morning classes and brought her the notes to copy from. She smiled and giggled at what she was missing and couldn’t believe that Ronald wanted to attempt to have a Wizards Duel against Harry. She was very relieved when Harry explained that he wasn’t going to go and take Weasley up on his offer. Hermione was rather touched when the twins visited her, and they had her in stitches as they told her jokes and the various pranks they’ve played over their three years of being students at the school. Hermione was also rather touched when Hagrid surprised her with a visit. The gentle man happily sat down on a reinforced stool and told her about the various creatures he’s tended to and what his job as Grounds Keeper entailed. She asked him plenty of questions and found the man rather intelligent though not all that good with words.

Hagrid left her after an hour of pleasant conversation and Madame Pomfrey brought her lunch which consisted of oatmeal and fresh fruit. Her friends visited once more after the end of their afternoon classes, armed with notes and what their assignments were. They worked together for a few hours on their assignments since Hermione didn’t want to fall behind in class just because of a little cold. Madame Pomfrey finally shooed the others away for dinner and checked Hermione over again. She was pleased with Hermione’s recovery and explained that the twelve year-old should be able to leave tomorrow morning if she continued to improve over the night. Sadly visiting hours ended after dinner was finished so Hermione wasn’t able to have any of her friends visit her for the rest of the evening. She managed to finish her assignments and read for a little while before she took the last of her potions and fell asleep rather quickly afterwards.

It was around two in the morning when Hermione was woken by whispers coming from the other side of the curtains that surrounded her bed. She could make out to tall figures and two smaller figures on the other side.

“Honestly Mister Weasley, of all the foolish, stupid things…What were you thinking?!” Professor McGonagall hissed, making Hermione frown.

“Potter and I were supposed to meet up.” Ronald whined, Hermione blinking in surprise before she quickly realized what had happened.

Something had happened to where Ronald had gotten caught out of the tower after curfew. She had no doubt that Ronald had gone to the trophy room expecting Harry to be there and the prat had panicked when someone had come into the trophy room. It was likely Filch or one of the Prefects who had caused the redhead to flee. Listening to the soft conversation, she learned that Ron and Seamus had been brought in because they had been wounded by whatever it was that was kept hidden in the forbidden corridor. Professor McGonagall made the boys take an oath to never discuss what they had seen to others. The boys quickly made the oath, which surprised Hermione. She remained silent as Madame Pomfrey and Healer Briggs healed the two boys while Professor McGonagall took twenty points from each of them along with issuing them detentions. Only when the adults left did Hermione learn what happened.

“I can’t believe Potter chickened out.” Ronald muttered, shifting in his bed.

“I don’t think he planned on going anyway, Ron.”

“He must’ve tipped Filch off about where we were. He’s nothing by a pansy.” Ronald snapped, making Hermione scowl something fierce.
“I’m more concerned about that bloody cerberus! Why the bloody hell would the professors keep a thing like that in a school?!” Seamus hissed, Hermione’s eyes widening in shock at the information.

“Fred and George had said that there was something big behind that locked door. I didn’t believe them though.” Ronald mused, making Hermione swallow silently in shock and growing worry.

“Do you think it was guarding something?”

“What makes you say that, mate?”

“Well, I saw a trapdoor underneath it before it swiped at us. Do you think it’s guarding something important?” Seamus asked, Hermione tilting her head to the side as she listened.

“Probably. Anyway, we’d better be quiet. Granger’s still here.”

“Right. The know-it-all might hear us.”

Hermione huffed softly and shook her head, though she did settle back down in her bed. The news that there was a Cerberus in the school was…horrifying to say the least. However, there wasn’t much she could do though she had every intention of warning her friends about the danger that was lurking behind the door in the forbidden third floor corridor.

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Hermione was released before breakfast the next morning completely healed and feeling better than ever. Jillian and Eliana had brought Hermione a change of clothes, her toiletries and her makeup kit since Madame Pomfrey let her use the Hospital Wing bathroom to shower and get ready. After a quick shower, which made Hermione feel even better since she had sweated a lot during the night, she was dressed and ready to fully start her day. Hermione dropped off her clothes and effects off in her dorm room before grabbing her school bag and meeting her friends in the Great Hall. Ron and Seamus were already at the table and she hurriedly ducked her head when they looked at her with some suspicion. Sitting with her friends at the Hufflepuff table, she smiled and listened as they told her about some of the excitement that she had missed in class. She asked plenty of questions before explaining that she had to talk to all of them in private as soon as they had a break. Harry went over to the Gryffindor table and muttered the same message to the twins. While he did so, he noticed the dirty looks Ronald and Seamus shot him. Instead of saying something to the prats, he just smirked at them which made them even angrier.

Classes went on as normal, well, as normal as a school which taught magic could. All of them only managed to meet up in the Room after Self-Study, which was a relief since the twins had just finished a double period of Arithmancy. As soon as the door closed and disappeared behind the twins, they all looked at Hermione as she shifted in her armchair.

“I overheard Ronald and Seamus talking last night in the infirmary. They had gotten injured last night and had been brought down by Filch and Professor McGonagall.” Hermione said, watching as the others looked at her in shock.

“What happened?” Fred asked, concern in his voice for his youngest brother.

“Apparently Ronald and Seamus went to the trophy room for the Wizards Duel Ronald challenged Harry to. However, Filch showed up and they had to run. They headed further down the corridor and managed to unlock the door leading to a room which was guarded by a Cerberus. Before they had gotten hurt, Seamus noticed a trapdoor beneath the Cerberus and they’ve been speculating that it is guarding something. They had to take an oath not to talk about it with anyone else.” Hermione
explained, the others listening with shock and concern.

“A Cerberus?! Do you know how dangerous those are?” Susan cried, fear in her voice as the others looked at her.

“Calm down, Sue. It only attacked when someone entered the room. I think the professors are using it as a guardian; like they’re trained for.” Harry soothed, wrapping an arm around the redhead.

“Still…” Susan muttered, frowning fiercely at the thought of such a dangerous creature in the school.

The twins, however, appeared slightly worried but didn’t seem very surprised in learning that there was a large, dangerous creature in the school. Their silence instantly made the others look at them; figuring that the twins knew something.

“We explored the corridor soon after the year started.” Fred began, George nodding as the others looked at them in surprise.

“Music sooths the savage beast-“

“And through the trapdoor is a nest of Devil’s Snare. Light will cause it to retreat.”

“Though we haven’t yet figured out what is beyond the room of flying keys.”

The First Years stared at the twins in shock; their minds reeling at the information provided to them. Susan and Hannah instantly rounded on the twins; scolding them for doing something so dangerous. Hermione wrote down what the twins had just told them while Harry and Dean looked at each other in surprise and curiosity. Jillian, Eliana and Neville just looked nervous though Neville quietly explained more about Devil’s Snare and how to combat it. The twins promised to keep from going back since they had no idea what other dangerous traps lay in wait. Fred and George explained that the room was rather easy to get into since all it required was the First Year unlocking charm. This confused the others, especially since Headmaster Dumbledore had claimed that the corridor wasn’t safe and the fact that there are obviously traps beyond the door.

“Why don’t they just take whatever is being guarded and put it into Gringotts?” Eliana asked, distress in her voice as the others shifted.

“Because of the break-in!” Hermione gasped, making her friends look at her.

“Huh?” Jillian asked, frowning lightly as Hermione looked at them.

“Remember? There was a break-in at Gringotts near the beginning of the school year. What if the object had been removed from the bank to here for safe keeping? After all, who would expect a priceless object to be kept in a school?” Hermione asked, the others staring at her in shock.

“Still, the professors and Headmaster are taking a risk with having such dangerous creatures in the school; especially since it’s only behind a simple locked door.” Jillian said, frowning as her friends nodded.

“We’ll tell the others Hermione’s theory, spread it around and make sure no one tries to go any further.” George said, smiling gently as Hermione looked at him gratefully.

Thankfully they moved on from the rumors and focused on their assignments and classwork. The twins helped the group progress in their assignments and explained a few things that the First Years were struggling with. Hermione happily browsed through a few of the twins’ course books, The twins happily helped tutor the First Years in Defense and what they had been taught by the last
Defense Professor who had been a former, retired Auror. Sadly the man had only wanted some pocket change besides what he got for retirement which was why he only stayed a year. They had just finished mastering the knock-back jinx under the tutelage of the twins when they noticed the time and hurried down to the Great Hall in time for dinner. There, Fred and George headed to the Gryffindor table while Harry and the others headed to the Slytherin table where they sat next to Millicent and across from Daphne, Tracy and Blaise. The foursome was surprised but pleased and happily engaged the Hufflepuffs and Gryffindors in conversation.

Daphne and Tracy asked plenty of questions, especially about Harry’s adopted parents since the Othello’s were still considered an enigma to others. Many other Slytherins looked at the group with mixed reactions. Some were pleased to see others from different Houses interacting with their younger House members, some were indifferent about it while many weren’t too pleased. Draco was openly sneering at Harry and his friends while Theo, Draco’s friend, was glaring at the group. However, when Pansy and Sabrina walked in, the pair stopped when they saw the others and Pansy sniffed delicately before tossing her head back and stalking past the group with Sabrina following and sneering down at the group of friends.

Pansy sat down next to her betrothed and pressed a light kiss to his cheek; making Draco struggle to keep from rolling his eyes.

“Isn’t there anything you can do, Dray? I mean, it’s hard to properly partake in the evening meal when such filth is sitting nearby.” Pansy simpered, glaring down at the group.

“Miss Parkinson you’ll mind your tongue. The school charter allows students from any House to sit at any other House table during any meal so long as it is not a feast.” An upper classman said, making Pansy frown at the older female.

“But-“

“It doesn’t matter what family the person comes from. Now be silent. If you antagonize others then you’ll lose us points.” The girl said, narrowing her eyes as Pansy snapped her mouth shut and glared down at her plate.

Harry caught the eye of the older girl and nodded slightly, silently thanking her for her interference. The girl nodded curtly back before turning back to her friends and meal. Thankfully the rest of the meal continued without a hitch besides getting a few dirty looks from Draco and his ilk. After dinner the Gryffindor’s had an hour to do what they wanted before heading off to Astronomy. Harry, Hermione, Dean, Eliana and Jillian hung out in the Gryffindor common room. They happily chatted and talked with some of their Housemates. Of course they spotted Oliver sitting at one of the tables with a miniature of the Quidditch pitch while mumbling to himself and moving figures around. This had become a pretty normal sight since Quidditch tryouts had finished and practices were set up. Apparently, Oliver was a fanatic Quidditch fan/player and had been trying to win the Quidditch cup for their House, which hadn’t happened since Charlie Weasley graduated.

The sudden sound of shrieks coming from the opposite side of the common room had everyone alert and watching in surprise and concern. Angelina, Katie, Alicia and a number of older girls are now supporting multicolored hair and skin. A plate of seemingly innocent looking pieces of fudge rested on the table they had been sitting around. The rest of the House instantly knew that the twins had struck once more; especially when the girls took off after said redheaded boys as Fred and George dashed towards the portrait hole while cackling in glee and high-fiving each other. It took only a minute before the others started chuckling, though Hermione, Jillian and Eliana rolled their eyes and lightly scolded the others for laughing.

“That worked better than I thought it would.” Dean said, smirking as Harry nodded.
“Ah, but that’s the beauty of it!” Harry exclaimed, making the others look at them with wide eyes.

“Wait, did you two help Fred and George?” Neville asked, his eyes wide as Harry and Dean looked at each other before grinning.

“Well, I’m not the godson of a known prankster for nothing. Dean and I have been known to play pranks on others. Who do you think turned Draco’s hair pink last week?” Harry asked, Dean laughing as the others looked at him in shock.

“You did?!” Eliana asked, her eyes wide as Harry and Dean nodded.

“How?!” Hermione asked, eagerness in her voice at the idea of learning a new spell.

“Well, it’s a pretty advanced spell. My godfather taught it to us after we had gotten our wands. We can teach it to you. It’ll let you change other people’s hair for a few hours.” Harry explained, the others listening intently.

“Why are you able to do magic outside of school but Muggleborn’s like me, aren’t?” Hermione asked, frowning lightly as she thought of all Harry and the others had told her.

“Well, we’re not supposed to do magic outside of school. However, some summer assignments ask that you learn charm or something similar—”

“The Ministry of Magic has a net tag over the countries that it monitors. The net tag detects magic both underage and performed by adults. In households that have more than one Witch or Wizard that net tag only registers that someone used magic. That’s how children who belong to a magical household are able to use magic when those who live in a non-magical household cannot.” Percy explained, having overheard the conversation.

“How is that fair?! So long as we know not to show our relatives and those who aren’t in know we should be allowed to use magic to keep up with our studies.” Hermione said, frowning as the others listened.

“You do have a point.” Percy mused, blinking when the others in the common room nodded.

“It has been bloody hard keeping up with my summer assignments without being able to practice the spells we’re supposed to learn. Not only that but we could make potions on the stove if we were allowed to. Think on how many times we could help our close family who know about magic with a simple Fever Reducer.” Prudence Whittaker said, her friend nodding in agreement.

“I’ll send a letter to my Dad about it. He might not be in the Department of Education but he’s a department head.” Percy said, Neville nodding in agreement.

“And I’ll send a letter to my gran. She’s a very influential member of the Advisory Board for the school.” He added, the others smiling at him.

“We should tell Hannah and Susan. Hannah’s dad is in the Department of Education and Susan’s aunt is in the Department of Magical Law Enforcement.” Eliana explained, excitement in her voice as her friends looked at her.

As the First Year Gryffindor’s headed out to go to their Astronomy class, Percy pulled out a sheet of parchment and a self-inking fountain pen as he sat down at one of the desks. He knew that his dad would take his words to heart and get the ball rolling into seeing if something could be changed so Muggleborns and those raised in the Muggle world would be able to safely practice magic without exposing Muggles and those not in the know to magic.
Dad,

A few Muggleborns in my House were talking about how those raised in a magical house are able to perform magic without getting caught by the Ministry. I explained the net tag though even I have to admit that it’s unfair to those who are assigned classwork for the holidays and yet they aren’t able to fully complete the assignments because of the restrictions. Do you know if you could speak with the head of the Department of Education about a way for those raised in a Muggle household could perform magic around those ‘in the know’?

You have to admit, Dad, it is rather unfair. Even you and mum allow me and the others to perform school spells during the summer and even some household charms. Miss Granger and her friends plan on speaking with Miss Hannah Abbott and Miss Susan Bones about speaking to their guardians/family about this matter to see if something can be done. Not only that, but Mister Neville Longbottom plans on writing his grandmother about the matter to see if she has any ideas.

The twins are still causing trouble, as always, and I’ve been spending an hour with Ron every day after classes to ensure his assignments are getting done. His friends have been cracking down a little more since you’ve visited and talked with Ron. It appears that he’s taking your threat of pulling him out of Hogwarts to be home schooled by Aunt Muriel rather seriously for the time being. I can only hope he continues in this pattern when I have to dedicate more time to my own studies; this is my O.W.L. year, after all. I’ll speak with the twins to see if they can take over for when I have to begin studying for my tests. None of us want to see a Weasley fail and have to repeat a year.

Your son,

Percy.

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October 28th

“Hey, Dean, do you know what’s wrong with Harry?” Hermione asked, her voice soft as she looked at her friend.

Dean blinked and looked up from his assignment to look at his brunette friend. All of them were in the library working on their assignments. Ever since Monday rolled around there had been a noticeable drop in Harry’s mood. He’d been rather quiet and reserved and had often been caught just wandering around by himself or looking out the window with a reserved look on his face. Of course Dean knew what was wrong with his best friend and he had a good idea that Neville knew as well since the other boy had often glanced at Harry with sympathy and understanding.

“Hermione, Halloween is coming up.” Dean said, making the girl frown in confusion.

“Yeah..?”

“What does Halloween mean for the Wizarding World?” He asked, making Hermione tilt her head to the side as the others looked over.

“We celebrate the night that You-Know-Who was…” Susan trailed off, her eyes widening in horror as she realized what was wrong with Harry.
“Oh Merlin!” Jillian gasped, horror in her voice as she covered her mouth with her hand.

“I-It’s the anniversary of Harry’s parents’ deaths.” Dean said, her voice soft as the others flinched and looked down in shame.

“Oh my!” Hermione gasped, tears filling her eyes as Dean nodded gently.

“Harry is going to be leaving tomorrow after classes end. He’ll be spending the weekend with his family, godfather and uncle. I think he’ll be coming back on Tuesday afternoon. Just…don’t bring it up with him, okay? It’s a really sensitive subject for him.” Dean urged, the others nodding in understanding and agreement.

When Harry returned to their table after having found the book he’d been looking for, he was rather surprised when the girls suddenly hugged him. However, upon looking to Dean and Neville, he understood that the girls must’ve realized why he’s been ‘out of sorts’ lately. He simply hugged them back; grateful that they weren’t saying anything but were still offering their silent support. When he had gone to Professor McGonagall about being away from the castle for three days she had instantly understood and had assured him that she wouldn’t be informing the other staff until half an hour before he’d be leaving. That way, she explained, Albus wouldn’t be able to stick his nose in and try to stop Harry from properly grieving his parents’ deaths. She knew that Albus would attempt to claim that was too dangerous for Harry to leave the school, ignoring the fact that the lad would be with his parents, godfather and uncle. She also made Harry aware that Neville would be leaving as well. Even though his parents hadn’t been attacked until three days after Halloween, he and his grandmother still visited every Halloween because of the significance of the holiday.

The rest of the day passed by with little incident besides Harry and Neville turning in earlier than normal. It was Hermione who told the others about Neville and they understandably gave both boys their space. Friday arrived and both Harry and Neville were even more withdrawn. Their professors noticed but didn’t say anything, though they did go to Minerva with their concerns. She only had to remind them of the dates for them to understand what was wrong. After classes were done, Harry and Neville headed up to their dorm room and packed their bags for the weekend. Heading out of the tower, they walked down to the main floor and stood near the main doors. Their friends arrived a minute later to wish them a good holiday and reminded them to write while they’re away. Professor McGonagall walked up a minute later and waited with the group for the adults to arrive.

Augusta was the first to arrive and she thanked Minerva before turning to ask Neville if he had everything. Neville introduced his friends to his grandmother before saying his goodbyes, in which Augusta smiled softly at the others and thanked Minerva for letting her grandson out of school for the weekend and Monday. The pair headed out of the castle and across the laws of the school towards the gate. On their way, they passed Sirius and Remus, both of whom smiled softly at the pair as they headed towards the school to collect Harry. Once Augusta and Neville were clear of the Hogwarts wards, Neville gripped onto his grandmother’s arm and held on tight as she apparated them away. Meanwhile, Harry talked softly with his friends about their classes before he noticed his godfather and honorary uncle heading towards them. He was surprised to see them instead of his parents but figured that they and Eliza were likely busy and hadn’t been able to make it.

“Sirius, Remus, good to see you again.” Minerva said, smiling lightly as the two men nodded.

“Same to you, Minerva.” Remus said, looking at the group of children rallied around his cub in support.

Harry, like Neville, introduced his friends to Remus and Sirius before they had to leave. Hermione, Jillian, Eliana, Susan and Hannah hugged Harry tightly; making him promise to stay out of trouble before they released him. Dean smiled sadly at his friend and clapped Harry on the back, silently
telling Harry to tell his mum and siblings that he said hi. Harry nodded and followed Remus and Sirius out of the school and across the grounds. Minerva watched the trio leave before pulling out her wand and closing the doors. Turning, she ushered the group into the Great Hall for the evening meal which was just about to begin. As she walked up to the first head table, she mentally rolled her eyes when she noticed the look of disapproval on Albus’ face. The man had been most...upset when she informed him that both Neville and Harry would be leaving for the weekend and Monday. He had tried to overrule her approval for the two boys to be gone for so long but she firmly reminded him that he allowed other students and even staff to leave the school in similar situations.

Meanwhile, Harry walked across the grounds between Sirius and Remus silently. He was glad that Professor McGonagall had allowed him to go home for Halloween and allowed him to stay for a day after. Hagrid smiled sadly as they passed his hut and even Fang whined softly as if he understood why Harry was leaving for the weekend. When they reached the gates they headed through them before stopping. Sirius pulled out a small hoop and held it out. Remus and Harry grabbed the hoop and Sirius gave the activation phrase. All of them felt the customary ‘hook around the navel’ feeling that came from using a portkey. The world dissolved into a swirl of colors as the trio were taken away from Hogwarts and to Othello Estate. As they neared their destination, Harry bent his legs slightly and, upon landing, managed to remain standing.

“Harry!”

Harry looked up and smiled as Eliza barreled down the stairs and towards him. Bracing himself, he laughed as his sister slammed into him and swept her into his arms. Eliza clung tightly to him, drawing in the feeling of love and safety that she always felt around her big brother. Mira rumbled in happiness, rubbing her head along Eliza’s cheek happily; she had missed her human’s sibling. Eliza pulled back slightly and gently rubbed Mira’s head, giggling as the Fire Lizard lightly licked her hand. Looking around, Harry frowned lightly when his parents didn’t come into the entrance hall.

“They’re on a mission at the moment, Prongslet. Don’t worry, though, they’ll be back tomorrow morning.” Sirius said, smiling gently as Harry nodded.

“It’s good to see you, Harry.” Kano said, smiling as she walked out of the double doors leading to the library.

“It’s nice to be back, Sensei.” Harry said, setting his sister down and bowing to the woman.

“No need to stand on formality, Harry. I’ve received word from Minerva and Severus that you and Dean have found two new Assassins; Fredrick and George Weasley, correct?” Kano asked, causing Sirius, Remus and Eliza to look at the teen in surprise.

“Yes. It was a surprise to us but Professor McGonagall explained that apparently Lord Weasley’s ancestors had, at one point, been Assassins. He wasn’t too surprised that one of his children would carry on the line though it was a shock that both twins are. He’s keeping it a secret from his wife of course.” Harry said, Remus and Sirius nodding in understanding and agreement.

“Molly is a shrew; pardon my bluntness. She also rules her home with an iron fist and tries to control her children’s lives. From what I heard the two eldest actually fled the country to get away from her. If she learned that Fred and George are Assassins then she’ll likely forbid them from training or would demand her youngest two receive the same training.” Sirius said, Kano shaking her head.

“I will never understand some people. Anyway, go up and settle in. Dinner is being prepared by the Elves as we speak. I know the others will want to see you after dinner. Dean’s siblings and Cassie are eager to hear about Hogwarts so they will be joining us.” Remus said, smiling as Harry nodded and headed upstairs with Eliza hurrying after him while Mira flew alongside.
“According to Minerva’s reports, Harry and his group of friends are already at the top of their year. Not only that, but Miss Granger seems to be set on setting the highest marks ever in the school.” Kano said, leading to the two men to the parlor.

“I remember Lily was at the top of her year throughout her entire time at Hogwarts. Moony was right behind her with James and I joining in around our Fifth Year.” Sirius said, grinning as his friend rolled his eyes.

“Thanks to Lily and I, of course. We finally got you two to crack down on your grades. It’s a good thing to or else you never would’ve made it into the Auror academy.” Remus said, Sirius smiling sheepishly as he rubbed the back of his head.

Upstairs, Harry smiled as Eliza plopped down on his bed and watched as he unpacked some of the clothes he brought with him along with his school books and assignments.

“So?! How’s school going? What’s Hogwarts like?!” She asked, nearly bouncing on her brother’s bed as Harry chuckled.

“Calm down, Lizzy. You’ll hear most of what I have to say at dinner. Dean’s sisters will likely ask the same thing.” Harry said, making his sister roll her eyes.

“So? Megan is doing a little better. She’s brought up her grades somewhat though she still hanging around the ‘popular’ girls and causing trouble. I don’t think Auntie Cassie will let her go to Hogwarts next year.” Eliza said, watching as Harry shook his head.

“I’ll never understand why girls do that. Elliot has been causing trouble along with Draco Malfoy and his goons.” Harry said, his sister listening with rapt attention.

Before he could say anything else, Sasha and Jessica sprinted into the room with Sam following close behind. All three of them pounced on Harry, knocking the young preteen down to the ground as they eagerly greeted him. Eliza laughed as Mira flew around the pile of bodies, rumbling in laughter. The trio rapid fired questions at Harry as they hugged him, though Harry finally managed to untangle himself and stand up after a few minutes. He smiled warmly at the sight of Sam, shocked on how much the seven year-old had changed. Sam, like Dean, was certainly taller than many other boys his age and was already as tall as Sasha, which was rather surprising to be honest. Unlike his older brother, however, Sam’s hair was cropped close while Dean’s hair was longer and slightly shaggy. Sasha and Jessica had changed as well; both of them were turning into rather beautiful young girls. Harry already knew that Dean would have his hands full in keeping any future boyfriends of his sisters’ in line.

“Enough questions! I’ll answer it all during dinner.” Harry cried, causing the group to fall silent as they looked at him.

“Well then…let’s go!” Jessica exclaimed, grabbing Harry’s hand and dragging him out of his bedroom with the others laughing as they followed.

Heading through the hallway, they all made their way downstairs where they met Cassie and Megan. Cassie smiled and hugged Harry warmly; telling him that it was good to see him again before she remarked that he’d already filled out more. Megan stiffly hugged Harry; knowing that her siblings likely told him about her…attitude. However, she relaxed slightly when Harry hugged her back. Cassie led them into the informal dining room which was actually inside the kitchen. Harry was nearly salivating at the scents of the meal the House Elves created for them. Yes, the Hogwarts Elves were very talented and he certainly didn’t starve at school; but nothing compared to the Othello and Potter House Elves and their skills in cooking. Sitting down, Harry found himself bracketed between
Eliza and Remus. Helping themselves to the various dishes, Harry asked plenty of questions about what had been happening with the Brotherhood and everyone else. Dean’s siblings happily talked about their classes and friends; though Harry certainly wasn’t too happy in hearing that Megan was still making fun of other schoolmates.

Harry talked about his training under Severus and Minerva and how he and Dean discovered that Fred and George were Assassins. He happily talked about his classes and about the rather hilarious time when Professor Frost took all the First Years out to the Forbidden Forest where they spent a weekend with the Centaurs. Madame Hooch and Hagrid had gone with them in order to help keep watch over the forty First Years. Needless to say, it had been rather hilarious when the ‘prissy’ students found out they were to sleep in tents. Each House had their own wizarding tent to sleep in, though they were encouraged to sleep in sleeping bags with the herd. It had been fascinating learning and living among the Centaurs. The women helped gather supplies and raise the young though they also learned how to hunt and fight. The men mostly did the hunting and building; acting as protectors and guides. It had been a very interesting experience living with the Centaurs. Harry and his friends had actually slept outside the tents and were eventually invited inside one of the huts that the Centaurs lived in. Hermione had found a kindred spirit in a female Centaur named Primrose. They had bonded through their love of knowledge and learning and Hermione was often found walking alongside the female; even after the trip had ended.

“Of course Draco nearly mucked everything up.” Harry said, shaking his head as he remembered the blonde insulting the leader of the herd.

“What happened?” Sirius asked, frowning as Harry sighed.

“Draco insulted the leader: Rowan. Professor Frost took eighty points from Slytherin and he was given a zero for the time. Hagrid had to escort Draco out of the camp and back to the castle. He was given a weeks’ worth of detention.” Harry explained, the others scoffing.

“Elliot nearly insulted a few of the females, though he thankfully had enough sense to shut his gob.” He added, the others staring at him in disbelief.

“I swear that boy has no sense.” Kano muttered, everyone voicing their agreements.

“Alright, tell us about your other classes!” Jessica said, happily cutting into her steak as she looked at Harry.

“Well Potions…”

Harry looked around the street with vague interest. His parents had woken him up early that morning and he had been very happy to see them doing so well. He had been all too eager to answer their inquiries about school and his friends, in which Delilah and Lucas were glad that their son had made friends with so many people. After breakfast, they had explained that they were to meet with the leader of the Non-Magical Assassin’s Brotherhood leader: Andrew Hastings. He hadn’t been told what the meeting was about, though he figured that it was about the Templars and their current movements. Eliza had stayed home, not wanting to go to a boring meeting and claiming that she still had work she needed to do. Their parents, of course, had already told Harry about Andrew Hastings and his family. Apparently none of Andrew’s family knew that he was the leader of the Brotherhood here in England and he planned on keeping that part of his life away from them. Harry had been given the job of keeping Andrew’s son: Shaun, occupied while their parents were in their ‘business’ meeting.
“Come on, Harrison.” Delilah called, making her son turn and hurry towards them.

Walking to the large business building, they headed to the receptionist who asked for their names and what business they had there. The woman’s eyes widened when Lucas asked to speak with Andrew though after a quick call to the man she instructed them to head up to the fifth floor. Stepping into the lifts, they waited until the doors closed and they began moving.

“Keep Shaun away from the office until we’re finished with the meeting. If you two decide to explore the building keep on guard. This building is mostly employed with other Assassins but there are a few…unknown.” Lucas instructed, Harry listening intently.

“Just do not leave the building. You and Shaun are very tempting targets for-“

“For the Templars, I know. I’ll make sure we don’t go outside. I’m sure we’ll have enough fun just wandering around.” Harry said, his parents nodding.

Their conversation ended when the lift stopped on the third floor and a few people walked in. Greetings were curt and stilted as they began moving once more. Reaching the fifth floor, Harry walked out of the lifts with his parents and they were quickly directed to the correct office by a few employees. Mister Hastings’ secretary, a pretty redhead by the name of Amy, knocked on her boss’ door and stepped inside after they approached her. She walked out a few moments later and smiled at them, gesturing them to head inside. Stepping into the spacious office, Harry blinked as he looked around. The office was rather large with a desk, a bookcase behind that, several metal filing cabinets and a small seating arrangement nearby. Windows nearly covered one of the walls and looked out over the bustling city. A middle-aged man with dark brown hair and brown eyes, dressed in a smart grey business suit sat behind the desk while a young boy, around six years-old sat reading on one of the couches.

“Ah! Mister and Missus Othello! Please come in.” The man said, looking up from his computer with a kind smile.

“Hello, Mister Hastings. Thank you for seeing us.” Lucas said, shaking the man’s hand as they walked over to the desk.

“Please, call me Andrew. This is my son: Shaun. Shaun, this is Mister and Missus Othello and their eldest child: Harrison.” Andrew said, his son looking up at the trio with slight hesitation.

“Hello.” Shaun muttered, shifting lightly as his eyes strayed to Harry.

“Shaun, why don’t you and Harrison go play? I’ll page for you when we’re done with our meeting.” Andrew said, his son looking at him with a small frown.

“…Okay, Dad.” Shaun said, marking his place in his book before setting it down and sliding off of his chair.

Looking up at Harry, the two boys shared a smile before Harry followed Shaun to the door and they headed out of the office. As the door closed behind them, Lucas flicked his hand a few times, adding wards to the room to ensure their privacy. Andrew watched with avid interest, though knew not to ask what wards had been put up. He trusted the two Magicals; which was saying something.

“Shaun sure is getting big.” Delilah said, smiling as Andrew led them over to the small seating arrangement.

“Yes, he’s certainly shooting up. He’s actually two years ahead in his school. I believe he has an eidetic memory. Some of the things he’s able to remember are…well startling.” Andrew said,
pouring all of them some tea.

“Does Shaun have any of our gifts?” Lucas asked, watching as the other man hummed faintly.

“I believe so. I’ve begun introducing him to the training routines and he’s begun jogging and working out. I haven’t fully told him the reasoning, though. I would…appreciate it if you would perform the spell to confirm if he is or is not an Assassin.” Andrew answered, Lucas and Delilah looking on with understanding.

“Of course.” She said, smiling gently in understanding.

“Harrison is growing up to be a rather handsome young lad.” Andrew said, smiling as Delilah and Lucas beamed.

“He’s excelling in his training and in his studies. He and his friends are at the top of their year in school and he has already found two other trainees.” Delilah explained, Andrew listening with interest.

They moved on from talking about their children and soon got down to business. Andrew talked about the Templar movements and his concern that the Magical Templar branch was beginning to assist their Non-Magical counterparts. While they talked, Harry and Shaun wandered around the office building. Shaun proudly showed Harry around, talking about some of the things he’d already learned thanks to spending time with his dad there. Harry was amused by what the younger boy was telling him, though he was greatly interested in learning about how smart Shaun was. Shaun happily told his new friend about school and his workouts, which Harry quickly realized that Shaun was just beginning his training. It made him wonder how Shaun’s dad knew that his son was an Assassin. He knew that it was much harder for Non-Magicals to identify other Assassins, which made it even harder for recruitment.

Walking around the office building, they headed down to the second floor and Shaun happily prattled about what the business did and what that floor was used for. The employees looked rather amused as they watched Shaun lead the older boy around, though some looked rather surprised to see Harry. Harry only had to glance at those few people to identify them as some of the members of the Magical Brotherhood. He grinned faintly at them and nodded, to which the others flushed slightly though relaxed. They continued wandering around and exploring the different floors of the building.

On the first floor, Harry felt the hairs on the back of his neck rise. While listening to Shaun prattle on about something, he glanced around quickly. He swallowed heavily when he saw a middle-aged man with dark hair and eyes watching them. It was the sheer concentration in the man’s gaze that set the alarm bells in Harry’s mind off. He shifted closer to Shaun while mentally praying that the man wouldn’t decide to follow them. Wandering around the floor, Harry kept a sharp eye on their surroundings and took notice of a few people who kept reappearing in various hallways and in different common areas. Harry was surprised that Shaun didn’t seem to notice, though, after a few minutes, the young boy finally seemed to catch on that something wasn’t exactly normal. They had just entered the main public cafeteria when a young woman dressed in a smart business suit walked over and smiled warmly at them.

“Shaun, you should head up to your father’s office.” She said, making the young boy frown.

“But my dad said he’d page for me.” He said, making Harry shift as the woman looked at him sharply.

“Come on, Shaun.” Harry said, taking the boy’s hand and leading him towards the lifts.
“Take the stairs.” The woman said, her voice sharp as Harry nodded before turning in the direction of the stairs.

Shaun was deeply confused, but could sense the urgency in a few people around them. He and Harry hurried through the first floor and finally pushed open the door to the stairwell. As the large, heavy metal door closed behind them, Shaun’s eyes widened when he saw a few employees moving to confront an older man who was still staring at them. The coldness in the man’s eyes sent a shiver of dread down Shaun’s spine. Propelled by his fear, Shaun hurried up the stairs with Harry beside him. When Shaun began slowing down, Harry pressed a hand against the younger boy’s back and propelled him up the last two flights of stairs before they hurried out of the stairwell and in the main hallway of the fifth floor. Many of the employees, which were the managers and executives of the business and their sectaries, looked at them with concern and worry. Amy walked over and crouched down, concern on her face.

“What’s wrong?” She asked, her voice soft as she looked at the two boys.

“S-Someone was acting strange on the first floor.” Shaun said, worry and fear in his voice as Amy’s gaze sharpened.

“We headed back up here as soon as we could.” Harry said, his voice steady as Amy looked at him.

“Why don’t you two head to the break room down the hallway. Here’s some money for the vending machines.” Amy said, pulling out a few pounds for the boys.

“Thank you, Amy.” Harry said, accepting the bills before leading Shaun down the hall towards the break room.

“What the heck was that about?!” Shaun demanded, glaring up at Harry when the older boy hesitated.

“I’m not sure, Shaun. But whatever it was it’ll be handled by security and your dad.” Harry said, glancing down at Shaun and noticing that the boy didn’t seem to really believe him.

Inside the breakroom, they both quickly got a can of soda from one of the machines before buying some snacks. They moved onto the subject of school and their classes; in which Harry told Shaun about his private school and his friends, in which Shaun happily talked about his own classes and a few friends that he has managed to find and keep. Harry felt sad for the younger boy; Shaun was much like Hermione in that his intelligence often isolated him from his fellow classmates and made him a prime target for bullies. He also discovered that Shaun had a real talent for technology and history, which could prove useful later in life. They happily talked for a while longer as various employees came in and out of the room to get drinks and a snack to eat at their desks.

“Harrison.”

Harry and Shaun looked up and watched as Delilah walked into the room. She may have been smiling, but Harry could see that something was bothering his mum. The boys finished up the last of their snacks and drinks before they threw the empty bags and cans into the rubbish bin. Following Delilah out of the break room, they headed back to Andrew’s office and were rather surprised to see a few other employees there as well. They were soon told that the employee who had been watching and attempting to follow them had been fired and escorted out of the building. Shaun was shocked in learning this, though his father explained that the employee had already been on watch because of… issues in the workplace. Harry, however, had a good notion that the man had been a Templar and had realized who and ‘what’ he and Shaun were. No doubt the man was now locked away or on route to a secure location where he’d be interrogated.
They all talked for a little while longer before Delilah and Lucas said their goodbyes to Andrew while Harry promised to send Shaun letters. Heading out of the building, Harry allowed his parents to move him between them in order to offer him more protection. Yes, it was a rather risky move that the man had pulled in attempting to follow Harry and Shaun in a building filled with Assassins, but they didn’t want to take any chances of an ambush. Inside the car, his parents grilled him for more information; information that Harry was all too willing to give them. Harry talked about how he had been on guard as soon as they had gotten onto the first floor and had noticed the man first. Shaun hadn’t noticed and had been oblivious until they were told to head back up to the fifth floor by way of the stairs. Only then did Shaun realize that something was wrong and hurried to do as instructed.

“You both did the right thing. That man was a Templar and he’s going to be questioned. It’s not public knowledge who leads the Non-Magical and Magical brotherhoods. If our positions have been compromised then we’ll need to do a sweep of our ranks.” Lucas said, his voice stern and filled with stress and some anger at the idea of a spy among their ranks.

“Like Mister Delacour found the spy in his ranks?” Harry asked, his voice soft as his mum turned her head to look at him.

“Exactly.”

It seemed so long ago since that night at the Delacour manor where the ball had been held. Harry had heard from Fleur a week after the ball and the letter she had sent him told of a spy that had been found in the French Brotherhood. The spy was a Master Assassin who had been recruited by the Templars. Of course she hadn’t been told as to why the man had become a spy, but it had been a rather frightening thought that someone they all trusted could be telling their enemies their plans and every move. Things like that were, sadly, common in the Brotherhood. Part of his history lesson had covered famous Assassins who had turned out to be spies for Templars or vice-versa. He knew that his parents required all new trainees to take an oath of loyalty which would prevent them from defecting to the Templars and betraying them. Since then there hadn’t been any news of betrayals from Assassins…though sadly that wasn’t the case with their member’s families and friends.

Delilah moved on from what had happened and turned the conversation to what they were going to be doing tomorrow. Harry was rather eager to visit his parent’s graves the next day and tell them about what’s happened since the last time he visited. Yes, it might be considered silly or foolish to others should they happen upon a group of people talking to two headstones, but it was one of the ways he was able to feel close to his birth parents. He honestly thought that they were listening and had no doubt that they appreciated his attempts to keep them informed about his life. Sirius and Remus would be joining them tomorrow morning for breakfast and they’d stay for the entire day; joining them on their visit to Godric’s Hallow. Harry smiled softly as he looked out the window and watched as London flashed by.

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Halloween, Hogwarts.

Hermione sighed softly as she waited in the common room for the others to wake and join her. It’s been odd, really, not having Neville and Harry with them. Their group of friends was missing two of its members and it felt…wrong to walk around, do their assignments or talk about classes and their schoolmates without Harry and Neville around. It also pointed out a few things to her that she’d heard other students talk about behind their backs. Harry truly was their unofficial ‘leader’. Yes, all of them had a say in what they do and it wasn’t like Harry made their decisions for them or anything, but Harry was one of the main ones who kept them together and kept the mood up. He was also one of the ones who you could go to for any reason at all. Neville, meanwhile, had become the quiet
voice of reason in their group. Whenever Neville spoke, all of them tended to stop and listen to his advice and it was usually so insightful that it left them surprised and thoughtful after the quiet boy had finished speaking.

Dean was basically the second-in-command of their group and was Harry’s right-hand man. There was no doubt that Dean was Harry’s most trusted friend and the one Harry confided in the most. Eliana, Jillian and Hannah were great sources for different ideas and were often the sources of sound advice. Susan was the one of their group who was a fountain of information when it came to the laws and regulations of the world they’re in and she was quickly becoming a voice of reason alongside Neville. She wasn’t too sure where she fell in when it came to the group dynamics though she’d like to think of herself as the planner. So far, she’s loved her school experience; even more so since she now had the friends she’d always longed to have. Honestly, on the train to Hogwarts she had seriously been thinking that she had made a mistake. Those older Slytherin girls had really put a dent in her mood. She had foolishly thought that everyone would be accepting of her because she was a Witch just like them. That thought had been knocked out of her mind as soon as those girls had looked at her.

When she had found the compartment with Dean, Neville and Harry, she had thought that perhaps she might have found a few new friends. However, that thought had nearly vanished when Malfoy had come into the compartment and Harry verbally destroyed the blonde ponce. She had been shocked to learn that all three boys were basically considered royalty and there she was: the daughter of two dentists. Imagine her surprise when the trio happily accepted her into their small group of friendship and gladly brought her into it. Now, she has four female friends; two of whom she considered best friends. Her letters she had gotten from her parents expressed their surprise and delight that she had finally found her place. Yes, there had been some concern when she told them about Jillian and Eliana not being human, but after explaining a few things her parents, especially her mother, were more than happy to accept her new friends.

“Hey, Mia.” Dean said, smiling as he walked in from his morning run.

“You never quit, do you?” Hermione asked, a teasing smile on her face as Dean grinned.

“Naw. Why should I? It’s still warm enough to enjoy running outside and besides, Tonks joins me.” Dean said, heading towards the stairs to the boys’ dorm.

Hermione shook her head fondly as Dean disappeared. She had to admit though, since she’d begun working out she’s been noticing a change in herself. Since working out, she’s had more energy, been more focused and her figure had begun developing. Yes, she and the other girls of their year have gotten the ‘Talk’ from Madame Pomfrey and she had been shocked and yet very happy for a little pink potion called Witch’s Relief which got rid of the pain of cramps along with bloating. It had been Jillian and Susan who had told her and Eliana about that little potion, to which the girls had been surprised and relieved to discover that Madame Pomfrey had a small stock of them for First Years who weren’t able to purchase it themselves.

“Hey, Mione.” Eliana said, yawning as she walked down the stairs.

“Morning, Elli.” Hermione said, smiling at her friend.

“So, what’s on the agenda today?” Eliana asked, running her fingers through her hair to spike it slightly.

“Well, today is the only day that First and Second Years are allowed in Hogsmeade. I’m surprised that Hogwarts is doing trick-or-treating.” Hermione said, Eliana nodding her head in agreement.
“So, we head to the village, buy any last minute touches for costumes or costumes in general and then around five we head back to the village for an hour or two of trick-or-treating and to visit the ‘haunted’ attractions.” Eliana explained, excitement in her voice as Hermione giggled.

“There’s also the feast at eight.” Jillian added, joining her friends as she pulled her hair back into a bun.

“The higher years are lucky…” Hermione sighed, glancing towards Fred and George as the two pranksters talked with Alicia and Katie near the fireplace.

“A costume ball for Fourth through Seventh Years starting around four and ending at eight when it’s time for the feast.” Dean said, pulling on his belt as he walked down the stairs.

“Though it is kind of nice that the younger students can attend if an older student asks them to the ball.” Jillian said, smiling as they all headed toward the entrance of the common room.

Before they could manage to leave the common room, however, someone called out to Eliana. All of them stopped and turned, watching as Daniel Harper; a Fourth Year, hurried over. Eliana raised an eyebrow as the older student flushed and cleared his throat before stammering through his attempt to ask her to the costume ball. Hermione and Jillian stifled their giggles while the others who were in the common room watched the poor attempt with great humor. Eliana gently turned Daniel down; explaining that she’d much rather go trick-or-treating with her friends than going to a costume ball with someone she hardly knew. Daniel’s face turned red and he hurriedly made his exit; hardly able to believe that a First Year had the nerve to turn him down. Eliana shook her head and giggled with the other girls as Dean rolled his eyes and muttered about girls being insane and guys not knowing their limits.

Heading down to the Great Hall, all of them had a great time discussing what they wanted to be for trick-or-treating. There was also a noticeable air of excitement that the First Years would finally be able to see Hogsmeade and buy some of the wares. Hermione was very happy that her parents had been thoughtful enough to give her money for spending. Of course some of that money had already been spent on getting more parchment and quills. The older students in their House were more than happy to pick up supplies for First and Second Years so long as they gave them the funds to do so. Of course, the Prefects were in charge of a special fund that was run by the Head of their House. That fund as to help supply those students who weren’t…flush, with supplies and perhaps a Christmas or birthday present. Those funds brought a lot of relief to those students and the students were more than grateful for the help.

After breakfast, the group hurried back to the common room and collected their bags so they’d be able to carry anything they might get from the village. They also bundled up for the cooler weather before heading down to the entrance hall where they met up with Susan, Hannah and, surprisingly, Millicent. The group was more than happy to welcome the Slytherin and they all headed outside and followed the various groups of students towards the line of carriages which looked as if they were pulled by some kind of invisible creature. However, Dean and Jillian were able to see what creatures actually pulled the carriages.

Huge winged horses with skeletal bodies covered in black hair pulled the carriages. Their eyes were pure white and their manes and tails looked rather limp compared to normal horses. Their heads look more Dragonish than anything else and they seemed to radiate an air of dread. Dean was surprised to see that the school used Thestrals to pull the carriages but it also made sense in a way. It also explained why there were no drivers for the carriages. Thestrals had an amazing sense of direction so know instantly where to pick up and drop off the students. Dean led the way over to one of the carriages and helped the girls get inside before climbing in himself. As soon as they were all seated,
the carriage began moving and they happily chatted about what they hoped to get in the village. The group of friends were surprised when Millicent didn’t ask where Harry and Neville were, though they were surprised when she voiced the answer to their unasked question.

“While many see this as a day of celebration, some of us do remember that Harry lost his birth parents today. I certainly don’t blame him for spending the weekend with his family. I don’t blame Neville either. Daphne, Tracy and Blaise know as well and Blaise has already punched Malfoy for his remarks about Neville and Harry’s parents. According to him the detention tomorrow evening is well worth standing up for two Year mates and for seeing Malfoy supporting a black eye.” She explained, smiling as the others looked at her with shock.

Reaching Hogsmeade, the First and Second Years looked around with wonder and excitement. The entire village was festooned with jack ‘o lanterns, moving and talking skeletons, bats which actually soared around and scared students and other decorations. Streamers of black and orange hung from the lamp posts and lined signs, doorways and windowsills. They instantly headed to Gladrags, though made a note to visit Madame Malkin’s before finalizing their choices for their costumes. All of their older Housemates had explained that the village had expanded greatly over the years; especially since Gringotts opened their second branch here. Madame Malkin’s was one of three shops whose origins were in Diagon Alley but decided to open a second or even a third branch there in the village. Wandering through the village, they were surprised to see an empty building with a large sign in both of the front windows proclaiming:

**Coming soon! P&M Jokes and Games!**

“I had no idea Sirius and Remus had bought a place here!” Dean said, surprise in his voice as he looked at the shop.

“They’ll really give Zonko’s a run for their money. Zonko’s only specializes in prank and joke items while P&M have a huge verity.” Millicent said, Dean nodding his head as he grinned.

Stopping in Gladrags, they found a small section purely devoted to Halloween costumes. Many students were already browsing the racks and taking their selections to the dressing rooms to try them on. Hermione, Eliana and Hannah were rather surprised to see some Muggle costumes such as Belle from Beauty and the Beast, the Phantom and Christine from Phantom of the Opera and even the Muggle ‘versions’ of Vampires, Werewolves, Witches and Wizards. Wandering through the section, Hermione found a rather nice cat costume that wasn’t so…showy. Yes the body suit would still show off her curves, but it had fake fur around her wrists, ankles, waist and neck. She was greatly interested in the fact that the ears and tail were enchanted to move and twitch as if she were a real cat.

Selecting a costume in a dark brown which would match her hair closely, she carried the costume to the changing room to try it on. Susan was right behind Hermione with a bunny costume in hand. Jillian decided to go as a female version of the Phantom, in which she was very glad that they had such a costume on hand. Hannah chose Belle from Beauty and the Beast while the others decided to look through the selection at Madame Malkin’s first. After trying on their costumes, Hermione, Susan, Jillian and Hannah decided to purchase their choices; all of them more than happy that they had found something so quickly. Across the street at Madame Malkin’s, the store boasted a wider selection and it was there that Dean decided to go as a Knight complete with armor and a helmet. He was thankful that the armor was lightweight and didn’t hinder his movements. Millicent surprised them all by going with a gypsy costume. Once more, everyone was under the same impression that Hogwarts robes weren’t flattering at all. Eliana decided to go as a fairy, complete with beautiful wings which actually fluttered and shimmered in the low light.

“Alright Dean, go run off. Us girls are going to Roxana’s Spa.” Jillian said, making the other girls
look at her before smiling brightly.

“Okay, okay! I’ll wander around. Want me to pick you girls up anything?” Dean asked, blinking when Hermione hurriedly wrote down a small list and handed it to him.

The girls quickly supplied Dean with the funds needed to get what they asked for before pushing him off down the street. Hermione and Eliana hooked their arms through Millicent’s and led the way towards the spa. With a little waxing, some styling and some light makeup, Millicent had the real potential to become a true beauty. Entering the large reception room of the massive building saw them helped by one of the assistants. Meanwhile, Dean wandered throughout the village; just exploring and looking around. He did go through the list and got what the girls asked for and even picked up a few things that he thought they’d might like. He happily stopped at Quality Quidditch Supplies where he looked at the pamphlet for the new, upcoming Nimbus two-thousand and one. After looking through the store, he headed back out and stopped at Honeydukes in order to stock up on some sweets for himself, Harry and Neville.

He ended his little trip about an hour after the girls headed to the spa. Moving to The Three Broomsticks, he secured a table in the busy pub/inn and ordered himself a Butterbeer. It was after Madame Rosmerta handed him a bottle did he finally spot the girls. Calling them over, he grinned as they wound their way through the crowds and slid into the booth. It was very noticeable that employees at the spa had worked wonders. All the girls had a rather healthy sheen to their skin and any signs of acne they had begun developing was gone. Hermione and Susan had their hair trimmed and styled while Jillian and Eliana had some different colored streaks added to their hair. Millicent, though, had the most work done from the looks of it. Her eyebrows had been neatly trimmed and waxed while her hair had been trimmed and styled like the others. The light makeup she wore highlighted her dark blue eyes. Her black hair had also gained golden brown highlights which suited her.

“You look great, Millie.” Dean said, smiling as the tall Slytherin blushed but beamed at him.

The girls ordered their own drinks and Dean happily handed them their packages he had picked up. All of them were very touched by the extra things he had picked up for them and thanked him profusely. Once they finished their drinks, they headed to the Dragon’s Nest which was a new popular restaurant which offered food from both the Magical and the Muggle world. There, they had lunch before wandering around for an hour longer. After that, they headed back to the carriages and chatted on the ride back to the castle. Splitting up, they promised to meet up in the library to finish the last of their assignments together once they finished putting their things away. Inside their dorm rooms, the First, Second and Third Years smiled when they saw empty pillow cases with their names on them. Many instantly made the connection that the pillow cases will be used to hold any candy they get though some had to have the reasoning explained to them by others.

In the library, Millicent smiled softly when she was warmly called over to the group’s study table. Sitting down, she pulled out her Charms homework and began writing her essay, though she eagerly participated in the conversations going around the table. She told the others about Pansy and how the ‘princess’ had complained that she was expected to be involved in a ‘stupid’ Muggle tradition such as trick-or-treating. She further explained that, while Daphne and Tracy would be trick-or-treating and attending the feast, they had already created small alters on their bedside tables to celebrate and honor their deceased ancestors. Hermione and Eliana were greatly interested in learning more and Millicent, Susan and Jillian explained that many Purebloods and even some Halfbloods were Pagan or Wiccan.

“Sadly many Purebloods blame Muggleborns for the ‘losses’ of our old traditions. Others have simply adapted and changed their traditions or have taken on both such as Halloween and Samhain.”
Jillian said, her voice soft as Hermione shook her head.

“Harry’s family celebrates both, though uses the practices for Samhain more than Halloween. They also celebrate Yule and Christmas. There are a lot of similarities between the two which made it easier for me and my family to understand.” Dean explained, the others listening with rapt attention.

“There are a few books you can read, Hermione.” Hannah offered, giggling as both Hermione and Eliana eagerly confirmed that they wanted to read about the different celebrations.

Hogwarts was buzzing with excitement as students hurried to get ready for trick-or-treating or the costume ball. The doors to the Great Hall were closed as the professors got the room ready for the ball while the students changed and applied the perfect touches or alterations to their costumes. The older students all had unique masks that they wore along with their costumes which added an air of mystery to the impending ball. The younger students were excited to be outside at dark and the chance to see what the Magical world did in way of scary houses and attractions. Hermione and Eliana helped each other with their new appendages, to which Hermione found it very strange since she was able to control her new cat ears and tail with her muscles and a simple thought. Eliana was in a similar situation with her wings though she lamented that she wouldn’t actually be able to fly with them. Parvati and Lavender were going as princesses, which didn’t really surprise Hermione and Eliana. All of them were stunned when Jillian came out wearing her costume; she could easily pass as a boy thanks to the charms that were built into the costume.

Heading down to the common room, they laughed when they saw Dean waiting for them with his helmet tucked underneath one of his arms while his free hand rested on a fake sword. The common room was a riot of different colors and characters as their Housemates came down from their dorm rooms and began heading down to the entrance hall. The group decided to head down as well and soon met up with Susan and Hannah. Susan was nervously stroking her new ears, to which Hermione and Eliana giggled and managed to reassure the blonde that they looked fine and made her rather cute. However, the biggest surprise was when Millicent finally joined them. Her corset and the white top she wore certainly highlighted the fact that she was all female. It was also rather interesting seeing her wearing something other than Slytherin colors.

After gathering their thoughts they headed out and got into a carriage once more. Once inside Hogsmeade, they were in awe over the changes that had occurred just because night had fallen. Everything was certainly spookier and there were tightly packed groups of students and young children who lived in the village wandering the streets. Shop owners and adults sat outside their shops or houses with bowls of candy, pastries and other goodies which were happily given out to the children and young teens. The air was filled with laughter, shrieks and conversations as everyone had a great time just wandering around and enjoying a break from their normal school routine. It was Dean who spotted the first ‘haunted’ house and eagerly led the group to the attraction. It was certainly scary as all the girls shrieked and flinched from the various ‘monsters’ that sprang at them. Dean found himself having a girl on each arm as the others clung to each other or grabbed onto his back and shoulders in fright. However, when they finally exited the attraction, they were all laughing and smiling even though they had been terrified.

Millicent got them to go into a haunted corn maze, which was even more terrifying since all they had was a map and lanterns in order to get through the maze while ‘monsters’ jumped out and scared them or even chased them for a while. It was finally Hannah and Eliana who managed to get them through the maze after they had run into plenty of dead-ends or had gone in complete circles. They never even noticed how quickly time passed until they began noticing that all of the adults were closing up their stations and turning off their lights. A few professors who had been supervising all of
them called everyone back to the carriages which prompted plenty of groans of disappointment. Back at the castle, everyone headed back to their dorms to change out of their costumes. The younger students were listening with rapt attention as their older Housemates talked about the ball and the fun they had. Of course the younger years also gloated about the haunted attractions and all of the candy they managed to acquire.

Dean, Hermione, Jillian, Hannah, Susan, Eliana and Millicent all decided to pool their candy together and make two more piles: one for Harry and one for Neville. They didn’t want their friends to feel left out because they had chosen to go home instead of hanging around the school; not that they blamed their friends for wanting to go home. Fred and George even stepped forward and gave up some of their candy for the two First Years. After changing into their semi-formal wear, all of them headed down to the Great Hall which was decorated in orange and black banners, floating jack-o-lanterns and skeletons along with live bats which flew around near the ceiling. After everyone was seated, Headmaster Dumbledore stood and said a few words about never forgetting those they’ve lost and carrying on their memories in their hearts. The food only appeared once he retook his seat.

Like all of Hogwarts’ feasts, this had five courses and the food was, as always, delicious. Surprisingly the conversation was muted as many people reflected on family member’s they had lost. Hermione talked softly with her friends; listening as they shared stories about some of their family members and telling her own stories about an aunt she lost to cancer. While it was painful to talk about their lost loved ones, it also brought a sense of happiness at the fond memories they shared and helped eased the pain of said loss. However, all of that was interrupted during the main course when Professor Quirrell suddenly sprinted into the Great Hall; his face white in fright and his eyes wide in terror.

“Troll! Troll in the dungeons!” He cried, everyone falling silent in shock and rising horror as the other professors stood.

“Thought you’d want to know.” He gasped, his eyes rolling into the back of his head as he slumped to the ground in a faint.

It seemed to take a full minute as everyone registered what the Defense professor had just uttered; all of them too terrified and shocked to fully comprehend it right away. However, when it did hit, the students began screaming in terror; some of them crying in fear as they began to panic and rise to their feet. All of them fell dead silent when what sounded like a cannon blast rocked through the air; their heads whipping around to look at the head tables.

“Prefects, please lead your Houses to your Dormitories. The school will be in lockdown until the issue has been dealt with. No student is allowed in the hallways until your Head of House comes and gives you the all clear.” Professor Dumbledore said, the staff and students looking at him with wide eyes.

As the various Prefects rose to do as the headmaster told them to Hermione instantly spotted the error that the headmaster had made. Both the Hufflepuff and Slytherin Houses were located in the dungeons and could they honestly believe that the troll was still in the dungeons? Not only that, but how would Prefects, who were still students themselves, be able to protect them should they come across the troll while heading to their Houses?

“Headmaster, we should all stay here.” Hermione called, causing the rising noise of conversations to die off instantly.

“Miss Granger?” Professor Dumbledore asked, frowning as he looked down at the First Year.
“She’s right, Albus. My Slytherin’s are located in the dungeons and so are the Hufflepuffs.” Severus said, having quickly caught on to what Hermione was trying to say.

“The Prefects are still children, Albus. We would struggle against a Troll ourselves which means a student, no matter their age, wouldn’t stand a chance.” Martha Winters said, her lilac colored eyes gleaming as she looked at the headmaster.

Albus frowned as the students instantly retook their seats, though he could certainly see reason. It would be a gamble sending the students out into the halls and he certainly didn’t want to have to explain to parents as to why their children had gotten hurt. Poppy soon had Professor Quirrell awake and practically force fed him a Calming Draught, though the man protested and struggled against it. Albus had Professors Winters, Harper, Jackson, Stone, Gallagher, Babbling and Vector stand guard outside the doors of the Great Hall. The others were divided up into teams to search through the school for the troll and subdue it. As the professors raced out of the Great Hall and closed the doors behind them, the Prefects and Head Boy and Girl soon had order restored inside the Great Hall. None of the students had the appetite to finish the feast and many were quietly sobbing in fear.

Hermione blinked when Millicent, Daphne, Tracy and Blaise made their way over to her and thanked her for stopping the Headmaster from ordering them out of the Great Hall. Susan and Hannah were quick to join their friends at the Gryffindor table where they too thanked Hermione for her quick actions. A few of the other Hufflepuffs and Slytherins walked over and thanked Hermione as well, making the girl blush and smiled shyly as she simply said it had made sense to keep them all here where they could be protected by the professors and wouldn’t run the risk of accidentally running into the Troll. The entire hall fell silent as a loud booming sound shook the castle, causing many to scream in fright and the crying to begin anew. Madame Pomfrey, who had remained inside the Great Hall, struggled to get everyone to calm down and the sounds of what seemed like a titanic battle taking place somewhere in the castle certainly didn’t help matters any. Only when the sounds ended did the students slowly quiet down and turn their attention back to the doors.

A few minutes passed before the doors opened and Professor McGonagall walked into the Great Hall. All of the students stared at her in shock. Her hair, which was normally pulled back in a tight bun, had come loose and her robes showed signs of a battle from the smudges of dirt and even had a few rips. However, she looked relieved in seeing them all waiting for her and uninjured.

“Aurors are on their way to remove the Troll. It has been subdued and no longer poses any threat. Your Head of House shall lead you back to your Houses for the night. Prefect and Head Boy and Girl patrols have been canceled for the night. Everyone is to remain in their dorms for the remainder of the night. The House Elves shall provide snacks and drinks for any who might still be hungry.” She explained, the other professors slowly filing back into the Great Hall.

Table by table the students were gathered by the Prefects and their Head of House led them back to their Houses. The Gryffindors and Ravenclaws were shocked to see the downed body of a massive Mountain Troll near the bathrooms on the third floor. It only compounded the fact that any one of them could’ve been severely hurt or even killed by the creature if Hermione hadn’t spoken up. Reaching Gryffindor Tower, the students headed through the portrait hole and discovered a buffet table which had light snacks and bottles of pumpkin juice, milk, water and fruit punch. While the fact that there had been a Mountain Troll in the school had terrified them, many of the students wandered over to the table and grabbed a few more things to eat. However, all of them were wondering how the heck a Mountain Troll of all things had gotten into the school. Surely one just didn’t wander in!

“Do you think someone let it in?” Fred asked, concern in his voice as he stood with Hermione, Jillian, Eliana, Dean and George.
“It’s the only way one could’ve gotten in.” Jillian said, frowning lightly as the others shifted.

“That’s one dangerous prank…” George muttered, though deep down he knew that someone had intended one or more of them to get hurt.

“If it was a prank then I hope whoever ‘pulled’ it gets punished. That Troll could’ve killed someone if Professor Quirrell hadn’t alerted us!” Hermione said, worry and anger in her voice as she huddled closer to Eliana and Jillian.

“I don’t know about you lot but I’m gonna head up to bed to relax and unwind. We have classes tomorrow and ‘Ry and Nev will be back.” Dean said, the others nodding and wishing him a goodnight.

Heading upstairs, Dean hurried through a quick shower and changed into a pair of boxers and sleeping pants. Moving to his bed, he pulled the curtains around his bed and casted a privacy charm on the curtains along with a sticking charm. He had taught the charm to Neville as well since Ron and Seamus snored like chainsaws and made it rather hard to sleep at night. He pulled out his communications mirror from underneath his pillow once he was settled in bed. Flipping it open, he held it close and whispered his friend’s name into the mirror’s surface. It took a few minutes before his reflection seemed to ripple and changed so he was looking at a small version of his Harry’s face.

“Dean? What’s up? You look shaken.” Harry said, frowning as Dean sighed.

“A Mountain Troll got into the school.”

“What?!” Harry cried, sitting up and looking at his friend in shock and disbelief.

“Yeah. Professor Quirrell ran into the Great Hall towards the end of the feast. He told us that a Troll was in the dungeons before fainting. Headmaster Dumbledore wanted all of us to go back to our dorms-“

“Is the man insane?! The Slytherin’s and Hufflepuff’s dorms are in the dungeons!” Harry ranted, struggling to reign in his temper as Dean raised an eyebrow at him.

“Mia pointed that out to our esteemed headmaster and Professors Winters and Snape agreed with her; as did the other professors. They soon had a guard standing outside of the Great Hall while the Headmaster and the others went through the school. The Troll was subdued and the Aurors were called in to remove the body and ensure that it wouldn’t be able to find its way back. No one knows who brought it inside yet, though.” Dean said, watching as his friend huffed and ran a hand through his hair.

Harry and Dean were silent for a while, both of them trying to figure out what the bloody hell was going on in the school. Both of them took a wild guess that there was something incredibly valuable hidden beneath the trapdoor. However, that meant that someone, likely a professor, wanted to get at whatever was hidden. But there were so many professors employed at the school that it was impossible to tell which one of them was attempting to get beneath the trapdoor.

“Did Professor Snape or Professor McGonagall say anything?” Harry asked, Dean sighing as he shook his head.

“No. They never got the chance. I’m hoping that they might during training this coming weekend.” Dean explained, Harry nodding lightly.

“I’ll pass the message to my parents. I doubt they’ll know anything but they might have more ideas.” Harry mused, his friend voicing his agreement.
“How was the cemetery?”

“It was alright. Some of the headstones had been vandalized so we repaired them and cleaned it up. Apparently the caretaker passed a few months ago and the city hasn’t found anyone to take over. It’s rather…sad actually. In other news, Potter Cottage has been completely restored and my dad said that the Ministry has…reluctantly handed it back over to me. Minister Matthews was disgusted to find out that the Ministry never asked me or my parents if they could turn it into a museum. The money they were supposed to be paying me never actually made it to my vaults but they’ve finally manned up and gave me the money I should’ve been getting from them.” Harry explained, causing his friend to snort softly and shake his head.

“At least our Minister is a good man. Things are so much better now.” Dean said, Harry nodding in agreement.

Dean looked up when he heard something fall onto the ground. Undoing the charms on his curtains, he stuck his head out and sighed when he saw Ricki staring at him innocently from Neville’s bedside table where he had knocked over a small vase holding a few flowers. Groaning, he said goodbye to Harry and ended the connection before getting up and scooping up his familiar.

“Ricki, what have I told you about knocking things over?! You’re like a cat.” He scolded, the kit letting out a small bark.

“I swear you go looking for trouble. First you terrorized Ron’s rat Nibbles and then you went chasing after Susan’s rabbit. I don’t even want to know how you managed to get into that suit of armor last week.” He muttered, setting Ricki on his bed before fixing the vase and taking it to the bathroom to refill it with water.

As he filled it up, he heard another dull thump from the room. Walking back out, he groaned and hung his head when he saw a stack of Ron’s comic books scattered on the floor whereas they had been stacked on the shelf built into the redhead’s headboard.

“Ricki…”

-XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX-

Earlier that same day: Longbottom Manor

Neville sighed as he wiped the sweat from his forehead; leaning back on his knees, he took a look around the old greenhouse. Since his arrival, his gran had talked about some of the outer buildings on their property. She had done her best to keep up the manor though she’d closed off a lot of the bedrooms and such since they didn’t often have guests. Of the outer buildings, they mostly used the stables which had two horses; one of which belongs to him while the other belongs to his gran. He always had a real knack for herbology but his gran hadn’t liked him spending so much time in the old greenhouses even with a House Elf watching him. However, he hoped that he could get the greenhouses up and running during the holidays; they could become a great asset to the family.

“Young Master, Mistress is looking for you.”

Neville blinked and looked towards the female Elf. Unlike many House Elves who were dressed in rags and pillow cases, the Longbottom Elves were dressed in uniforms. A white shirt with the Longbottom crest and dark blue pants or a skirt adorned their Elves. Thanking the small creature, he stood and walked to a sink to rinse his hands and wash his face. After drying off, he walked out of the greenhouse and headed down the worn path back to the manor. The manor was rather large with wide windows and elegant gardens surrounding either side. His gran had often boasted about it being
a Tudor style home, which to him didn’t mean much but it often impressed some of the female guests.

Heading through the back door, he removed his robe and handed it to a waiting House Elf before making his way through the large entrance hall and down another hallway. Walking into the main parlor, he found his gran and...his great-uncle Algie. Algernon Longbottom was a rather stern looking, pudgy man with beady dark blue eyes and thinning grey hair. He had been the bane of Neville’s existence since he was a toddler and loved picking on the boy. However, if it hadn’t been for his great-uncle hanging him out a window and losing focus; thus dropping him and causing him to bounce instead of get injured, he was sure his gran wouldn’t have sent him to Hogwarts and he would’ve been deemed a Squib.

“Oh, Neville, there you are.” Augusta said, watching as her grandson walked over and kissed her cheek.

“Sorry, Grandmother, I was in one of the greenhouses.” Neville explained, bowing his head to Algernon in greeting.

“What were you doing out there, boy?” Algernon asked, raising an eyebrow as he took in the young boy.

He was shocked to see that most of the baby fat that had clung to his great-nephew had vanished instead was replaced by the beginnings of muscle. Neville also held himself with a confidence that he had never seen in the boy before. Neville had always been a shy and very timid boy; more prone to hiding out in the gardens or in his room whenever guests were around. The changes in Neville were there, though not so extreme as to cause concern.

“I was looking over everything and seeing what needed to be changed or bought in order to get things growing in there. I’m thinking of having one greenhouse dedicated to growing fruits and vegetables for our use and then the other greenhouses could be used to grow potion ingredients that we could sell after they were harvested.” Neville explained, his grandmother looking at him in surprise and thoughtfulness.

“It would certainly be a good idea…I’ll think on it.” Augusta said, watching as her grandson seemed to sit straighter in pride.

“So, Neville, how are your classes? Haven’t needed to be in a remedial class yet, have you?” Algernon asked, his eyes glittering as a faint smirk graced his lips.

Normally, Neville would’ve remained quiet or he would’ve started crying. However, that Neville had existed before he had good friends like Harry, Dean and the others. Glancing at his grandmother, Neville was pleased to see the anger in her eyes as she glared at her brother. He knew that she had never liked her brother and the way Algernon treated him. However, now he had the confidence and backing to finally stand up to his great uncle.

“No, actually, I’m currently one of the top students in my House. My friends and I have been helping each other. My friend, Hermione Granger, is already the top student in our year.” Neville said, pride in his voice as Augusta smiled while Algernon looked at him in surprise.

“Neville’s magic has been getting more and more powerful thanks to his new wand.” Augusta said, pride in her voice as her brother nearly rolled his eyes.

“So your father’s wand wasn’t good enough for you?”
“It wasn’t the right wand for him, no. I made that mistake in trying to make Neville fit in his parent’s footsteps. I took him to Ollivander’s and he was fitted with a wand that suits him. Professor McGonagall is very pleased with his improvement in his classes.” Augusta said, offering her grandson a warm smile.

Algernon made a soft sound and glanced towards the fireplace. Alice’s wand was on a special display and it was obviously well cared for and cleaned. He was surprised to see Frank’s wand beside his wife’s, the dark wood gleaming under the lights thanks to being lovingly polished and cared for. He was honestly surprised that his great-nephew was apparently doing so well in school and that Augusta had gotten the boy a new wand. Honestly, he thought that Augusta should’ve let the boy go to someone else. Neither of them had been ready to raise a child, especially Frank and Alice’s son. Augusta had been hurting deeply because of the fate of her son and daughter-in-law and he knew that, in a way, she resented Neville for remaining unharmed and perfectly safe. Of course she had finally moved past that and did dot on her grandson. He knew that she had coddled him and honestly, he thought that the boy could use someone in his life to make things hard which was where he came in.

He was glad that Neville appeared to have made some good friends and, listening as Neville talked about his time in Hogwarts, he was surprised that the boy had made friends with the Harry Potter. Not only that, but he had made some rather smart friends it seemed and had made friends with some rather influential heirs and heiresses of Most Ancient and Noble families. It seems like his great-nephew has made some connections that’ll do him well in life. He made a mental note to talk to Augusta about taking Neville to the Magical Menagerie to find his true familiar instead of having just Trevor.

-It had been cruel to give him a toad of all things.- He thought, listening as Neville talked about his friends and classes.

Algernon visited for lunch before departing; though he did tell Neville that he was proud of him and how things were going so far. Neville was shocked that his great-uncle complimented him, though he beamed and happily accepted the praise. Heading up to his room, Neville changed into nicer clothes and pulled on a semi-formal robe before joining his grandmother in the parlor once more. She had changed as well and there was a noticeable change in her demeanor. Tossing in a handful of floo powder, they both flooed to St. Mungo’s and checked in with the Welcome Witch. Heading through the hallways and using the lifts, both Augusta and Neville become more and more somber. Upon reaching the correct ward, they headed down the hallway and came to the room they were looking for.

Neville swallowed heavily before following his grandmother into the room. There were two beds in the room though instead of being on opposite sides of the room they had been pushed together. Each bed had a single bedside table that had a vase of flowers on them. A wide window allowed plenty of natural light inside the room and Augusta was pleased that curtains were open and the window was slightly cracked to allow in a gentle breeze. A man sat down on the side of one of the beds. His hair was thin and his face slightly drawn in, highlighting his bone structure. Dark blue eyes stared unseeingly at the window; vacant and devoid of any kind of inner spark. He was dressed in a loose shirt and comfortable sweat pants along with a sleeping robe over that. A woman was seated at the small table in the room. She had wispy, greying blonde hair and dazed hazel eyes. Like the man, her skin was drawn in and pale. She was dressed similarly like the man, though instead of being barefoot she is wearing a pair of worn, blue slippers.

“Alice, Frank, we’ve come to visit you.” Augusta said, walking over to the man and bending slightly to kiss his forehead.

“Hi Mum, hi Dad.” Neville said, his voice soft as he walked over to his mum and hugged her gently.
Like always, Frank and Alice didn’t respond to either of their family members. Augusta sighed softly as Neville sat down across from his mother and started talking about his time in Hogwarts, his new friends and the professors. It pained her seeing her grandson like this, though it pained her even more knowing that her son and daughter-in-law weren’t really comprehending what their son was saying to them. The Healers had tried everything in their knowledge to find a cure for Frank and Alice; especially given who they were and what they had done in the war. However, no one had been able to find a way to bring Frank and Alice out of their dazed like state. A few Muggleborn Healers had suggested taking them to a Muggle hospital for scans of their brains. She had been hesitant about it, but after their assurances that no harm would come to her son and daughter-in-law she had agreed. Sadly, those scans didn’t reveal anything new to them.

Her hopes of getting her children back weren’t very high, though she still kept up the pretense of hope for Neville. She knew it was hard on him to come here every month and see his parents while knowing that they most likely don’t even know who he was. However, there was no doubt in her mind that her grandson was a very brave boy. He knew what to expect and yet he had constantly come here with the mindset that his parents might have improved and might have begun to remember them. Over the years, some Healers had explained that it might be…merciful if she would allow Frank and Alice to be…released from their torment but she didn’t have the strength or heart to allow her son and his wife to be killed. Her grandson would never forgive her if she did something like that and she would hate herself for having given up on her children. While it was still very faint, she still had a small spark of hope that their condition may improve one day and a cure would be found.

Neville finished talking with his mother and moved over to his father; sitting down beside Frank on the bed. He struck up the same conversation he had with his mum, though he did apologize for using his wand and that his wand hadn’t been a proper match. Neville watched as his grandmother stepped out of the room when the Healer came by, though he continued with the conversation until he finished it. After he finished the conversation he noticed his grandmother standing near the door. She nodded her head which made him sigh and stand. Saying his goodbyes, he hugged his parents once more before stepping out and into the hallway while Augusta said her goodbyes as well. Once that was done, they headed back down to the reception room and flooed back to the manor once more. However, instead of heading back to their rooms, Augusta took Neville’s hand and side-apparated him out of the manor. They appeared in the middle of a deserted cemetery, in front of a well-kept but rather worn and weathered stone mausoleum.

Above the double doors was the Longbottom family crest with their last name underneath it. On either side of the door were rearing horses, their hooves seeming to gleam in the light of the sun. Neville followed his grandmother up the few steps and watched as she pulled out her wand and unlocked the doors. They walked inside and torches lit up the marble room. Plagues lined the walls; each one naming a deceased member of the Longbottom family and their lifespan. Some had faded pictures attached beside their names while others had personal engravings. Augusta flicked her wand a few times while muttering cleaning charms; getting rid of the dust and cobwebs which had gathered since last Halloween. Making their way through the room, Neville looked at the various names of his ancestors; silently wishing them peace and happiness in the afterlife. He stopped walking once Augusta came to the plague which belonged to her husband: Leon.

Leon had died while Frank had been in his Seventh Year at Hogwarts. He had been killed during an attack on Diagon Alley when he had thrown himself in front of a young mother and her baby; protecting them from a blood boiling hex. Sadly, the Aurors hadn’t gotten there in time to save him and Augusta never really got to say her goodbyes. She hadn’t learned of his death until two hours after the attack because there had been so many causalities. It had devastated her and Frank; especially since they knew that Leon had been in absolute agony during his last moments of life. However, that woman and her family had been so grateful that they had gladly allied their House with the Longbottoms and had paid for Leon’s cremation. Augusta hadn’t had the heart to be angry
at the young woman; rather she had been proud that her husband had so selflessly defended another.

Neville had tears in his eyes as Augusta spoke with her husband; telling him about anything and everything that had happened over the year since they last visited. When she became too overwhelmed; her normal stoic façade cracking, Neville stepped forward and began speaking as well. He talked about everything that had happened; including some of his ideas to help restore the Longbottom wealth to what it had once been. While they weren’t as bad off as the Bones family, their wealth had seriously dropped due to bad stock selections and having lost money to the war. The treatment of his parents and their continual stay at St. Mungo’s wasn’t exactly cheap either which meant that their fortune took even more of a hit every year. Thankfully Augusta had been speaking with their Account Manager and he was advising them in what stocks they should invest in and she’s managed to call in some of the debts owed to their family.

They visited the mausoleum for a few more minutes before finally leaving and apparating back home. Neville headed up to his room to change back into more comfortable clothing while his grandmother went to the kitchen to ensure the House Elves were preparing for their customary Halloween dinner. In his room, Neville sighed as he sat down at his desk and began working on finishing up his last assignment. While he liked getting to visit his parents and knew that it was only right to visit the family mausoleum; he really wished that he had one of his new friends with him. His grandmother never really showed too much emotion, though when she did he wasn’t sure how to handle it and comfort her. She wasn’t the type of woman to give or receive hugs and right now he could really use one of Hermione’s hugs. Looking out his window, he sighed once more as his thoughts returned to his friends.

“At least I’ll see them again soon.” He muttered, turning his attention back to his assignment.

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Draco, Hagrid’s Familiar, An Interesting Mirror, Molly’s Plans

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Harry Potter and co. don’t belong to me. Assassin’s Creed and co. don’t belong to me. I’m just taking some credit for the plot and original characters. Fire Lizards belong to the talented Anne McCaffrey. In no way, shape or form am I making money from this.

Main Story Warnings: A.U.-severe-, characters are OOC, canon is only a minor guideline, crossover, swearing, violence, gore, character death, Light Grey!Harry, Assassin!Harry, modern technology, OC’s abound, Ron!Molly!Ginny!Bashing, Dumbledore!Bashing

Pairings: James/Lily, Sirius/OFC, Remus/Surprise, Harry/Luna, Neville/Hermione, Dean/Millicent, others to be decided

Author’s Note: Alrightie, so I feel I should reiterate this statement: I am using the events of the books as a guideline. In all actuality, nothing too eventful happened in the school between the events of the Quidditch match where Harry caught the snitch in his mouth and when McGonagall begins taking down names for those who are staying at the castle for Christmas. I simply couldn’t have this happen so I’m changing things and making things happen sooner than they took place in the books. I have plenty of ideas about the holidays and how things are progressing in this year. I shall tell you this: I don’t think any of you will expect what I have in store for the Christmas holidays. Anyway! I hope you enjoy and let me know what you think!

Challenge: DZ2’s Way of the Warrior challenge. For more information look to the first chapter or DZ2’s forums.

Dedication: I am officially dedicating this story to DZ2 for his continued support of this story. Without his challenge I wouldn’t have even begun to even think of an idea like this. This story has blossomed into something I’m so proud of and has gotten me back into my stride with Harry Potter based stories.

[Parseltongue]

[Telepathic Speech]

Emphasis on words/Spells

Text

-XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX-

Tuesday morning saw Harry and Neville flooing back to Hogwarts and into Professor McGonagall’s
office. She didn’t ask them how they were; knowing that both of them were likely still recovering from their time at home. Thanking their Head of House, the two boys walked out of the office and headed up to Gryffindor tower. Harry told Neville about his time away; talking about his family and how his sister had ambushed him with questions about Hogwarts and how she bemoaned the fact that she still has two years until she can attend. He talked about how his parents, godfather and uncle were enthralled with his stories of his classes and how they’re all glad that Hogwarts has gotten better over the years.

“My parents are rather eager to meet everyone.” He explained, smiling as he thought of how his parents had already begun trying to plan for his friends visiting over the holidays.

Neville chuckled softly and began talking about his own time at home. He explained his surprise at his great-uncle’s attitude adjustment towards him. Harry was confused at that so Neville further explained that his great-uncle had been the one to give him Trevor and had been the one who questioned his magical ability the most. Harry frowned at hearing that, though he was glad that his friend was doing much better now that his great-uncle knows how wrong he had been. They continued talking as they reached Gryffindor tower and gave the new password that Professor McGonagall had given them. Stepping into the common room, they were suddenly assaulted by someone squealing their names. A brunette blur crashed into Harry, causing him to stumble and he would’ve fallen if Neville hadn’t been slightly behind him and had reached out and steadied him.

“Harry! Neville! It’s good to see you!” Hermione cried, hugging Harry tightly before she suddenly pounced on Neville and hugged him as well.

“It’s good to see you too, Mione.” Neville said, smiling as he hugged the girl back before releasing her.

“Oh, Merlin, so much has happened while you were gone!” Hermione gushed, though there was worry in her eyes which made Neville frown.

Harry instantly knew what Hermione wanted to tell them, though he managed to fend Hermione off by reminding her that he and Neville have to change into their uniforms and get their things ready for class. That made Hermione back off real quick and she watched as the two headed up the stairs and to the First Year boy’s dorm. Inside, they unpacked their bags and changed into their uniforms. Seamus was still asleep, though Ronald was slowly waking up. Just as they finished dressing, Dean walked out of the bathroom and paused when he saw his two friends packing their school bags.

“Nev, Ry! I was wondering when you two would be back.” He said, grinning as he walked over and clapped both boys on the back.

“Hermione said things were interesting.” Neville said, raising an eyebrow when Dean snorted.

“That’s putting it lightly.”

“Well, c’mon. We should go get breakfast and see what’s happened.” Harry pointed out, the other two nodding and following him down to the common room.

Not only were they set upon by Jillian and Eliana, but Fred, George and a few others who they were close with. Neville and Harry were rather touched that so many people came over to make sure they were okay and asked about their time away from the school. Heading down to the Great Hall, Neville and Harry learned what had happened in the school while they were gone. Neville was shocked and horrified in learning about the Troll and Harry managed to act surprised about it as well. It wasn’t too hard since the fact that a Troll had been released really was shocking. His parents, Remus and Sirius had been shocked and rather angry when he informed them of the fact and he
wouldn’t be surprised if the story broke out into the Daily Prophet.

“Apparently Professor McGonagall had to fight with Professor Dumbledore to get him to call the Aurors.” Fred said, his voice hushed as they sat down at their House table.

Susan and Hannah were quickly waved down and hurried over, to which they hugged Neville and Harry as well. They settled in eating their breakfast and Harry and Neville listened to their friends gush about Hogsmeade and their costumes. Harry and Neville were thankful for the copies of their notes from what they had missed yesterday. Both boys were touched that their friends had pooled all their candy together so they could both have some; Neville almost looked close to tears at learning that. However, their breakfast was interrupted by the morning post, in which Fred and George both received the Daily Prophet.

“Well, the news has come out.” George said, setting down the paper in the center of the table where they could all see it.

_Hogwarts Halloween Interrupted by Mountain Troll!

“Bloody hell, and it’s written by that hag Skeeter.” Jillian muttered, scowling down at the front page article.

“Skeeter?” Hermione asked, frowning lightly as she quickly scanned the article.

“Skeeter’s little more than a gossip writer. She takes some information, pretends to interview people in order to learn more about the subject then writes whatever the bloody hell she feels like. She’s ruined more than one person’s reputation doing so. She used to work for Witch Weekly but has moved onto the main Daily Prophet.” Harry explained, shaking his head as the others nodded while Hermione and Eliana looked shocked.

“How is that possible?! Aren’t there laws to prevent that sort of thing?” Eliana asked, looking at her friends in confusion and shock.

“The Ministry has only so many arms at the moment. Articles in the Daily Prophet aren’t the top of their priority right now though this article will certainly draw some attention. More than half of the members of the Wizengamot have children or relatives going to school here. It’s not surprising that Professor Dumbledore isn’t here this morning.” Susan said, nodding towards the furthest head table.

Sure enough the golden throne like chair which was always occupied by their headmaster is vacant. Hermione looked concerned, though Hannah and the others were quick to reassure her that the school won’t close. They continued their meal while chatting about different topics. Fred and George were complaining about Oliver’s strict training regimen when it came to Quidditch, in which their first game is set for the ninth and is against Slytherin. Yes, they did understand that Oliver wanted them to be ready for the Slytherin’s underhanded tactics, but they would still like to be able to have a bit of a lie-in.

“As if you Gryffindorks would stand a chance against us.”

Harry mentally groaned as he heard the much loathed voice of Draco Malfoy. The blonde has already tried targeting him and his friends multiple times so far though Hermione and the girls were often able to keep him and Dean from lashing out at the blonde. Turning his head, he saw Draco standing nearby with a smug look on his face while Crabb and Goyal stood on either side of him.

“What do you want, Malfoy?” He drawled, turning his head and cutting into his pancakes.

“I’m surprised to see you two back, Potter. In fact, I’m surprised that they’re still allowing the Squib
to keep his wand and remain here.” Draco said, smirking as Neville’s face turned red in anger and embarrassment.

“Neville has more magical talent than you could dream of, Malfoy.” Jillian snapped, her eyes glinting in anger as Draco sneered at her.

“Shut up, half-breed. I’m amazed you even have the intelligence to come here.” He said, his eyes widening when Harry, Dean and Neville suddenly shot to their feet.

The sudden movement drew the attention of the staff. Professors McGonagall and Snape quickly made their way over as Hermione and Susan attempted to hold Harry, Dean and Neville back.

“Take it back you prat!” Harry snarled, anger blazing in his eyes as Draco smirked.

“Why should I? This place has gone downhill ever since they’ve begun accepting beasts and half-breds as students and—”

“Mister Malfoy!”

Draco paled and flinched at the sound of Professor McGonagall’s voice, his eyes widening when he realized that she had heard what he was saying. Whirling around, he nearly stepped back at the thunderous look on McGonagall’s face and the look of disapproval on the face of his godfather. Vincent and Gregory quickly stepped back as McGonagall and Snape reached them and Professor McGonagall took his arm.

“You will come to me to my office, Mister Malfoy.” She snapped, her voice filled with disgust and anger at what she had heard.

“My—”

“If you say one word about your mother then you can be sure I’ll have her here and she’ll hear exactly what you called your fellow schoolmates and your professors.” Minerva snapped, making Draco wince and glare at the ground.

“I’ll take him.” Severus said, Minerva nodding sharply and nearly pushing the blonde towards the Potions Master.

“Now, tell me what happened.” She said, turning her attention towards the others as Draco was marched out of the Great Hall and Vincent and Gregory hurried back to their table.

Hermione and Eliana hurriedly explained everything to their Head of House. McGonagall became increasingly angrier the more she learned about what had happened. While Jillian wasn’t too upset about having been called a half-breed, she was still offended. Sadly, Minerva wasn’t that surprised that Draco had insulted Jillian and, but extension, the other students and staff who were different races. She clearly remembered Narcissa’s rant at her and the headmaster about the school accepting Veela, Vampires, Werewolves and others. Of course there were always people who weren’t accepting of their ‘open door’ policy but so many other schools were accepting of other races that it was only common sense that they should be as well. She had told Narcissa that she could always enroll Draco in another school like Durmstrang but the woman had quickly shut up about that.

It’s well known that Durmstrang encourages fighting in the halls, duels, and they openly taught Dark Arts. Minerva had always suspected that Narcissa didn’t enroll her son into that school because he is too dependent of his family name and fortune; something that wouldn’t mean anything in Durmstrang. After the group told her everything, she reprimanded Harry, Dean and Neville for nearly losing their tempers but didn’t take points or assign any detentions. The boys watched as she
walked away before sitting back down. Harry was impressed that Professor Snape managed to get Draco out of there without falling into his ‘snarky bastard’ persona which he had to use when around others who weren’t in ‘the know’ about his true loyalties. Harry and Dean had been sure the man would’ve snapped at them and take points out for threatening darling Draco, but then again perhaps the interference of Professor McGonagall stopped him.

“I can’t believe his nerve.” Hermione huffed, scowling as she viciously speared a piece of sausage.

“You have to think, ‘Mione, Malfoy’s been raised on hearing about how great Purebloods are and how they’re superior to all others. His father and later his mother probably gloat about their wealth and ‘status’. Lady Malfoy was likely complaining and telling her son how the Ministry is run by fools and they ‘wrongfully’ imprisoned his father and stole from them. She’ll also be telling him how Muggleborns and other races are destroying their way of life and stealing jobs and money from them.” Dean explained, causing Hermione to frown as she thoughtfully bit into her meal.

“Now he’s in Hogwarts and he’s realizing that things aren’t like he thought they would be. He is being force to take a class on the Muggle world and there are even some ‘beasts’ in Slytherin. Blaise and Sabrina are both different races. Not only that, but all these influential families are ignoring him because of who his father is and the fact that Lord Malfoy has been arrested for being a Death Eater. Malfoy thought he’d be worshiped and would be able to strut around the school as if he owned it but this has been a harsh slap in the face to him; especially since none of our professors are willing to let the ponce walk all over them.” Harry added, Susan and the others nodding in understanding and agreement.

“I bet he was also expecting to become friends with you or draw you to his way of thinking.” Neville said, looking at Harry which made his friend tilt his head in thought.

“...It would make sense in a way. Though you’d think that Lady Malfoy would’ve made an approach earlier.” Harry mused, the others looking thoughtful.

“She could’ve wanted her spawn to do it away from the influence of your family.” Hannah suggested, Susan nodding in agreement.

“But why go through all that trouble of waiting?” Hermione asked, frowning lightly as Susan smiled faintly.

“Hogwarts is considered a very important part of a child’s life; and not just because of the education. Here, you’re making friends; friends which may have very powerful and influential connections. It’s a hope that these friendships and connections will last past your time in school. Parents rely on their children creating new connections and gaining influence without them. With these new alliances, it’ll hopefully bring more wealth and influence to the entire family.” Susan explained, seeing that Hermione and Eliana looked surprised.

“Say the Potter and Bones family didn’t have an existing alliance. By becoming friends with Susan and that friendship lasting through all seven years here, it would be hopeful and almost expected of us to form an alliance between our Houses. This alliance will ensure that the Potters and Bones’ will help each other out in times of need; political or otherwise.” Harry added, Susan, Hannah, Dean, Neville and Jillian nodding in agreement.

“So even school is filled with politics…” Eliana sighed, shaking her head as she took a sip of water.

“It’s nearly impossible for there not to be some kind of political tone here in Hogwarts. Though the level of politics depends on the House. You’ve already seen how other Gryffindor’s react to any political influence in the common room; it’s not tolerated.” Dean commented, Susan and Hannah
“Same in Hufflepuff; though there are often people who go out of the den for ‘discussions’. I’m not sure about Ravenclaw though.” Hannah said, glancing over at the table of Snakes.

“The snake pit is likely filled with political undertones.” Eliana said, shuddering at the thought.

“Well, it’s something that we don’t have to worry about until our last few years.” Neville said, the others smiling and nodding.

“Let’s talk about something else.” Jillian said, relieved that everyone agreed with her.

November 10th

Over the course of the next week and a half, the group celebrated Susan’s twelfth birthday in the Room of Requirement, though this time it was styled to resemble a lavish ballroom and the group had a fun time with it. Susan was nearly squealing in excitement when she saw the ballroom; even more so when she realized that the room had provided changing rooms so they could all change into lavish ball gowns and tuxedos. The normally shy ‘Puff was overjoyed with her birthday and loved her gifts, which included her own charm bracelet from Harry and Dean. Of course she told her aunt all about her lovely birthday party and Amelia had written Harry and Dean; thanking them in one paragraph for the added protections that bracelet gave her niece while scolding them for buying Susan such an expensive gift. Harry and Dean wrote back and explained that they didn’t know what protections Susan’s Head of House ring gave her so they had just wanted to ensure her safety like they were doing for all their other friends; something that Amelia agreed with.

Their classes plodded along as normal and they continued to blaze through their assignments and their extra defense work that they were doing on the side. Harry, Dean and the twins were constantly bringing more and more ideas from their training over to their extra defense lessons. Hermione loved the extra work and was rather enthusiastic about the idea of being more than ready for the end of the year exams thanks to this extra work. Sadly, one of the things they noticed was during the evenings when Hermione normally went over her mail and wrote letters to her parents. They were communicating nearly every few days and were benefiting greatly from the mailboxes. However, lately they’ve been noticing that Hermione seems…frustrated or even exasperated as she read some of the letters. It was hard for them not to ask her about it, but they eventually decided to ask her when she balled one of the letters up and tossed it into the common room fireplace.

“Mia? What’s wrong?” Eliana asked, sitting down beside her friend.

“Oh…it’s just my dad…” Hermione sighed, rubbing her forehead as she felt the beginnings of a headache coming on.

“Oh?” Harry asked, his voice soft as Hermione nodded.

“My dad…he didn’t really take the news of me being a Witch very well…He-He was furious actually. My mum forced him to listen to Professor McGonagall when she visited and explained everything. With both of us pushing for me to come to Hogwarts my dad had no choice but to give in and let me come. My parents had been thinking of sending me to a private school so it’s not like they can’t afford me coming here. My mum was very happy for me and she loved reading my books and learning more about magic. My dad, however, hated it. He kept ranting and raving that this is all a waste of money and I should be looking for a ‘proper’ education so I can get a real job. He keeps asking me when I’ll come home and begin my true education and if I’m ready to stop wasting my
“I’m sorry, Hermione.” Eliana said, hugging her friend tightly.

“My mum is so happy though. She’s glad that I’ve made so many friends and that I’ve finally found my place. I never really fit in at primary school and I was often bullied for my intelligence and because I love reading and learning. I know things aren’t perfect and it’s hard being away from my parents for so long but I had hoped that my dad would’ve been more accepting after all my letters telling about how much happier I am here.” Hermione whispered, tears in her eyes as Jillian rushed over and hugged her as well.

Harry opened his mouth to say something when the common room door opened and Professor McGonagall stepped through. Everyone fell silent as the woman looked around before spotting Harry and his friends. Walking over, she beckoned to Harry, making the boy frown but he stood and walked over to his Head of House.

“Headmaster Dumbledore has granted permission for Hagrid, Professor Hurst and yourself to head into the Forbidden Forest and seek out the small group of Fire Lizards. They were spotted by a few Centaurs and the Acromantulas are slowly posing a threat to them. They’re hoping that your familiar can convince the Fire Lizards to move closer to the school and away from the Acromantulas.” She explained, Harry’s eyes widening.

“Sure. When do they want me to go?” He asked, reaching up and lightly petting Mira’s head.

“Right now, if you’re able.”

“Alright. Let me tell the others and grab my cloak.” Harry said, turning and hurrying towards his friends as Minerva nodded.

Harry hurriedly told his friends what was going on, to which they were shocked and slightly concerned. Harry reassured them that he’ll be fine since he’ll be with two professors and Hagrid. Heading upstairs, he quickly pulled on a thick robe, his scarf and gloves since the nights have been getting colder and colder lately. Mira rumbled softly, asking Harry various questions as to what he wanted to do. As he headed back downstairs with Mira on his shoulders, Harry explained that he wants her to do the talking to the Fire Lizards since he wants to keep his ability to speak Parseltongue a secret; especially since Dumbledore will be there. In the common room, the eleven year-old joined Professor McGonagall and followed her outside of the common room and through the school towards the main floor.

“Albus will be going with you because since Fire Lizards are still rather rare. He has plans to inform the Ministry that they’re residing in the forest so no one can claim that he’s hiding something.” Minerva said, her voice soft as Harry looked at her.

“I’ve already told Mira that she can do the talking. I plan on having her fly ahead to scout out the location. Though, I am glad that Hagrid will be there.” Harry said, Minerva smiling faintly as she nodded.

“Your parents know already. I told them as soon as Albus requested that I get you. They approve of it and have already spoken with Rashia. She says that a few of the new Fire Lizards are more than welcome to come to the estate and some of her young are more than eager to come here and meet the newly found ones.” Minerva added, making Harry chuckle and nod.

“Good. It’ll strengthen the blood of the Fire Lizards since they’ll be able to breed freely. If the Ministry allows it Mira could see about her siblings and the others spreading out to find more Fire
Lizards in England and the surrounding countries.” He said, Minerva listening thoughtfully.

They fell silent as they reached the entrance hall and saw that Hagrid, Professor Hurst and Headmaster Dumbledore were already waiting. Hagrid looked positively giddy and even Professor Hurst looked rather excited while the headmaster seemed rather serene. Thanking Professor McGonagall, Harry joined the three adults and they all headed outside. Hagrid and Professor Hurst asked Harry plenty of questions about his bond with Mira; in which the boy told them some about her abilities and their bond though he didn’t go too far in depth due to Professor Dumbledore being there. Reaching the edge of the forest, they were greeted by Rowan, the leader of the Centaur tribe. All of the bowed to the proud leader and he bowed back before leading them into the forest.

“We believe there are two mating pairs; both of which have hatchlings.” Rowan explained, Harry and the others listening intently.

“Will they be agreeable to relocating?” Professor Hurst asked, concern in her voice as she thought of the danger the creatures were in.

“The mated pairs will look out for the safety of their young. Even with their abilities and strengths they’re no match for Acromantulas.” Harry answered, Mira nodding her head as she looked around the forest.

Reaching the halfway point, Harry sent Mira on ahead after Rowan pointed her in the direction of the other Fire Lizards. Hagrid looked down at Harry and watched as the lad seemed to gain a faraway look in his eyes. He was startled when Harry’s eyes flashed amber; though he simply rested a large hand on Harry’s shoulder to keep him from stumbling or falling behind. Harry, meanwhile, watched through Mira’s eyes as she flew swiftly through the trees, dodging branches and the occasional bird. She slowed when she heard the chatter of the other Fire Lizards and made her presence known to them by letting out a low roar. She was soon greeted by two males; one jet black and the other a deep red color. They demanded to know what she was doing there and Mira hurriedly explained everything. The two males brought her to their mates and she further explained what was going on. There was concern at the approaching Acromantulas and she eventually got them to agree to speak with Harry through her when he and the others arrived.

Harry pulled back from Mira; surprised to see an understanding look in Rowan’s eyes as the Centaur glanced back at him. Looking up at Hagrid, he offered the gentle man a smile, which made Hagrid relax and smile back. They soon reached the small clearing where the two mated pairs had made their nests. All of them were surprised to see a dozen Fire Lizards wandering around, flying and playing together. Mira flew over to Harry and rested on his shoulders as the four adult Fire Lizards flew over and hovered in front of Harry. Mira began talking to them; Harry using their bond to convey what they were worried about and what they wanted to do to help. Professor Hurst spoke up, with Hagrid chiming in that they could help find the perfect place for the Fire Lizards to settle down. Even Dumbledore explained that they could place wards around the areas to protect the Fire Lizards from adventurous students and potential harmful creatures.

The negotiations were seemingly never ending; though something happened which surprised all of them and made up the minds of the four adults. A small Fire Lizard with scales that reminded Harry of autumn leaves and bright golden eyes flew over to Hagrid and looked at him in wonder. Hagrid smiled gently at the young Fire Lizard, though he stiffened when it suddenly landed on his shoulder and nuzzled against his bearded cheek. When Hagrid reached up to gently pat the Fire Lizard, its head whipped around and bit his palm, taking them all by surprise. Harry, however, grinned when Hagrid’s eyes widened and he gasped in awe.

“I-I can ‘ear ‘im!”
“Congratulations, Hagrid! You just found your familiar.” Harry said, smiling grinning as a bright smile appeared on Hagrid’s face.

“I’m gonna call ‘im…Norbert.” Hagrid proclaimed, his newly bonded familiar rumbling in happiness.

That seemed to make up the minds of the other Fire Lizards and a small group of six of them agreed to ‘warp’ to Othello Estate to live there with the others once winter is over. All of them made their way back towards the entrance of the forest with Rowan leading the way once more. Harry and Hagrid talked, in length about how Hagrid can help Norbert learn different skills that’ll make things easier on both of them. It didn’t seem to take very long before they reached the location where Hagrid and Professor Hurst had found for the Fire Lizards. It’s rather secluded and has an entrance to a cave which is, thankfully, empty. It would provide them with good shelter from the coming winter and they were closer to the lake which meant that they would have an easier time catching fish.

The newly named Norbert left his family with Hagrid after the Fire Lizards were settled and the wards and protections were put in place around the cave and about ten feet stretching out in every direction. Mira promised to return after the snow melts to lead the group to Othello Estate before all of them headed back to the school. Hagrid walked with a noticeable skip in his step as he happily chatted away with his new familiar while Albus and Professor Hurst talked about the various things that the Fire Lizards could help with should they be agreeable. Their scales, tears, claws, blood and venom were all useful in various new potions which were being discovered and altered. At the edge of the forest they all thanked Rowan for being their guide and watched as the Centaur headed back into the forest to rejoin his herd. Hagrid hurried off to his hut introduce Fang to Norbert while Albus headed to the castle to make a few calls to the Ministry.

“Thank you for your help, Mister Potter-Othello.” Professor Hurst said, smiling as she looked down at the boy.

“It was no problem. I know how territorial they can be. Though I’m happy that Hagrid found his familiar.” Harry said, smiling as he watched Fang and Norbert play together with Hagrid watching.

“That was rather…surprising honestly. I know Hagrid has always had a fascination with Dragons and creatures which are normally very dangerous, but I never thought he’d find a familiar in a Fire Lizard.” Professor Hurst admitted, shaking her head fondly as Hagrid sat down on a tree stump and began whittling something.

“He really does care about the different creatures though.”

“That he does. His immense strength and height allow him to keep away the more dangerous creatures. He’s so gentle and is willing to wait for days in order to gain the trust of the various creatures that call the forest home. It’s why I have him help with my classes.” Professor Hurst said, Harry listening intently.

“Professor…why did Hagrid get his wand snapped and a ban on being able to learn magic?” He asked, his voice soft as Professor Hurst tensed before she sighed deeply.

“Hagrid…he was blamed for something that happened many, many years ago. He had nowhere to go so Professor Dumbledore, who was the Transfiguration professor at the time, managed to convince the current headmaster to keep Hagrid as the Grounds Keeper and Keeper of the Keys. Professor Dumbledore has never really gotten the issue resolved, even though we’ve asked him about it. I know that the Ministry will investigate the issue now, but it’s a matter of getting someone to listen.” She answered, Harry frowning lightly as he thought over her words.
“Why not ask Professor Flitwick? I know he and Hagrid are good friends. If Hagrid were to get a lawyer he could get the whole thing investigated and, if he’s found innocent of what had happened, he could get a new wand and could continue his magical education. I think it’s kind of cruel to keep him around a magical school that he was banned from.” Harry said, sadness and anger in his voice.

Professor Hurst looked down at Harry with surprise. Yes, she has heard her colleagues talk about how intelligent Harry and his friends are, but that didn’t mean too much to her. She wouldn’t have much interaction with lad unless he chose to take her class in his Third Year. However, seeing him in action today and listening to him and what he had to say had her agreeing with her colleagues. Harry is a very intelligent and compassionate young boy. His sense of justice seems to be strong, which is evident by his displeasure in learning what had happened to Hagrid. She’s also heard how protective he is towards his friends and how he’s showing a good level of maturity in the face of bullies and others who attempted to force their way into his circle of friends. She has no idea why Albus is so fascinated with the lad, though Albus has often asked his professors about how he’s doing in class specifically. It did raise some red flags in her mind, and she’s sure that the others have asked Albus what his fascination with the lad is but hadn’t been given a clear answer.

-He’d better be careful. From what I’ve heard about the Othello’s, they won’t take his fascination with their son lightly.- She thought, shaking her head lightly.

“I’ll speak with Professor Flitwick about getting a lawyer for Hagrid. You’re right, Mister Potter-Othello; we should be looking out for Hagrid and seeking help for him.” She said, Harry smiling brightly at her.

“I’m sorry if I crossed a line, Professor. It’s just…Hagrid is a great guy and I know what bitterness and jealousy can do to a person. That’s not saying that Hagrid is bitter or angry; it’s just-“

“I understand. This matter should’ve been resolved years ago but no one wanted to admit that they had been wrong.” Professor Hurst interrupted, Harry nodding his head.

Saying their goodbyes, Harry headed back to the castle with Mira on his shoulders while Professor Hurst thoughtfully watched Hagrid for a minute or so. Coming to a decision, she nodded firmly before heading up to the castle herself. She had to speak with Fillius about getting a lawyer for Hagrid. It was time for this issue to be resolved once and for all. Hagrid is such a gentle soul that he won’t press the issue himself. However, she has no doubt that any good, sensible lawyer would happily fight for his right to have a wand once more and to be able to continue the education that had been so wrongly stripped away from him.

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It soon became common knowledge that Hagrid had gained a Fire Lizard as a familiar. At first some of the students were worried about having a Fire Lizard hanging around the half-Giant. However, that was a thing of the past when Norbert proved to be a kind though rather protective familiar. He could often be seen helping Hagrid work around the grounds of the school in keeping things cleaned and in good condition. Fang and Norbert got along very well and could be seen playing together during the times when Hagrid is simply sitting outside his hut working on some small project or just relaxing and enjoying his down time. Harry and his friends were frequent visitors and Mira loved playing with Norbert. Norbert looked up to the older Fire Lizard and Mira often joined him on hunting trips and could be seen flying around the grounds with Norbert following after her. Hagrid was more than happy with having Mira around and was glad that she was so willing to help teach Norbert new things. Harry and he often had lengthy conversations about their familiars and the various creatures that Hagrid has encountered and handled during his many years here at Hogwarts.

An official from the Ministry visited a week after the relocation of the Fire Lizards. He spoke with
Harry and Hagrid about their familiars before he was shown to the new area where the Fire Lizards had made their home. He checked over the health of the Fire Lizards and asked them a few questions; which Harry and Hagrid translated thanks to their familiars. The official took pictures and wrote down the location, number and health of the various creatures before asking that Harry and his parents send a letter when the six head off to Othello Estate so they can make the needed documentation in their records. Harry promised to do so and the official happily left a few hours later after speaking with Professor Dumbledore.

Hermione and the others loved getting a chance to see the other Fire Lizards flying around and growing. Of course all of the students know about the cave where the creatures live. The Professors had warned them to be respectful of the creatures and to only approach them should a Fire Lizard approach them first. Harry spoke with those who were interested in learning about how a Fire Lizard chose someone as their human bonded. Some were concerned about the fact that the Fire Lizard bit them, though Harry calmed them down and explained that, yes, the bite will hurt for a second or two, but it heals instantly and leaves no trace. Oliver Wood was one of the few students who found his familiar in one of the Fire Lizards. A male Fire Lizard with bright red scales and deep blue eyes bonded with the older Gryffindor and could be seen on his shoulders or flying around like Mira did with Harry. Another older student, a Sixth Year female Ravenclaw, was another student who found a familiar in a Fire Lizard.

Surprisingly, Professor Snape was the only professor to gain a Fire Lizard familiar. His familiar was a stunning deep green colored Fire Lizard with near white colored eyes. He named his familiar Sage, and the male Fire Lizard accompanied the quiet man everywhere, including during his patrols at night. A lot of the students quickly discovered that wherever Sage was, Professor Snape was always nearby. Students who would normally be able to hide and get out of being seen wandering around after curfew were soon found and had points taken before being escorted back to their House or were even given detentions for a few nights. Everyone was shocked to see Sage and Mira together at random points, in which the pair seemed to be talking or even just flying around together in silence. Of course Professor Snape scowled whenever he saw this, but he didn’t order his familiar to stay away from Mira.

Much to Harry’s surprise, he had gotten a message from Hagrid a week after the half-Giant had found Norbert. The message explained that Professor Flitwick had gotten a lawyer in investigate into the old matter of Hagrid’s expulsion from Hogwarts. Hagrid thanked the eleven year-old for planting the idea in Professor Hurst’s mind which had put the wheels in motion. Harry was overjoyed for his large friend and had spread the news to his other friends. Hermione and Eliana, who were also very close to Hagrid, were overjoyed and had demanded to visit the gentle man. Sure enough, Hagrid was in high spirits and explained that his lawyer was almost positive that he’ll get the ban revoked and he’d likely get an apology from the Ministry. He admitted that he was rather eager to resume his magical education and Professors Flitwick, McGonagall and Sprout were already trying to come up with times for him to resume his education.

They all remained on top of their assignments and extra defense training. Hermione however, found herself becoming slightly bored by the texts they’re reading. Because of her eidetic memory she remembered every fact that she has read. Lately Harry, Dean and Susan have been teaching her occlumency and it’s only helped to improve her recall. However, that just means she’s becoming even more bored. There are only so many books she can read in the library that won’t repeat itself. Fred and George have even pointed out a few Second Year texts for her to read though she doesn’t want to get too far ahead of the others. Yes, they understand, but still! Eventually, however, she got permission from Professor McGonagall to get into the restricted section for some advance Transfiguration books. Madame Pince studied her and the note she had gotten closely; even going so far as to use her wand to scan the note to ensure it wasn’t a fake.
She was rather insulted that Madame Pince would even think she’d do something like that…but then again she is a First Year who has permission to get a book from the restricted section. After the note stood up to the librarian’s scrutiny, Hermione headed through the aisles until she reached the charmed fence which separated the main part of the library from the restricted section. She reached the gate and tapped the different bars in a certain pattern which unlocked it and allowed her through. Her eyes were wide as she slowly walked through the various aisles of forbidden books. A small part of her was tempted to just pick an aisle and a random book to read but she remained steadfast. The last thing she wanted to do was disappoint Professor McGonagall and get her library privileges revoked…that would possibly be one of the very worst things she could think of right now.

Looking around, Hermione soon found the Transfiguration section and, after spending a few minutes searching for the book her Head of House recommended, she finally found it. Her eyes were bright as she pulled over a footstool and climbed up to reach the higher shelves. Reaching up, a small sound of triumph left her as she snagged the spine of the book she had been assigned. Pulling the book off the shelf, she grinned as she stepped down and looked at the book; her fingers gently caressing the aged leather and the golden letters.

*Advanced Transfiguration for Inquisitive Minds*

Tucking the book under her arm, she pushed the stool back to where she had found it before looking around. One of the drawbacks to where she had found the book was that it had been located near the very back of the restricted section. Many of the walls only had a few portraits or tall and wide windows to let in plenty of natural sunlight. However, Hermione paused when she saw a single door kind of hidden at the very back of the library. Tilting her head to the side, she worried her lip and glanced towards the front of the library. She could slightly make out the sight of the gate leading back to the normal library section but…her interest was piqued…

“Oh Merlin…I blame Harry, Dean and Hannah…” She muttered, mentally cursing her friends as she swiftly made her way towards the door.

Of course the idea of it being an out-of-bounds room crossed her mind. However, she reasoned that if it was, it should be locked…right? The professors and headmaster simply wouldn’t let something that shouldn’t be seen lie in a room with no locks. With that reasoning, Hermione hurried to the door, unable to stop the feeling that she was doing something that was against the rules. Shaking herself, she stopped in front of the door and glanced around; noticing that she’s the only one in this area of the restricted section.

“Ohay Hermione, you can do this. It’s not like you’re breaking any rules. After all, this might just be a study room or even another part of the library with more books. The Headmaster and Professors wouldn’t keep anything harmful behind an unlocked door.” She whispered, swallowing heavily as she stared at the door.

“Please be locked, please be locked…” She chanted, slowly reaching out for the doorknob and grasping it.

Hermione nearly whined when she turned the doorknob and it clicked open. Groaning softly, she closed her eyes and breathed deeply before reopening her eyes and ‘reaching out’ with her magic and senses. She had discovered when she was seven that she can…sense any traps nearby. It had helped her avoid having different pranks pulled on her during her time in primary school; one which would’ve resulted in her having her hair cut really short or even shaved off due to the amount of super glue that would’ve fallen on top of her. Only when she didn’t sense anything lying in wait did she fully open the door and slip inside the room. The lights burst into life as soon as she closed the door behind her; her wand in hand and poised incase she needed to defend herself. The room looks
like an abandoned class room or a former study room with tables pushed against the walls with chairs turned upside down on top of them. A thick layer of dust rested on top of everything; including on the floor. However, her attention was captured by what stood in the center of the room.

In the center of the room is a huge mirror with an ornate golden frame. She couldn’t see any kind of reflection in the mirror though in the dim lights she could pick out something written at the top of the frame.

*Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi*

Hermione frowned at the inscription and her mind rapidly went over what it could possibly be saying. It took her a minute before she realized that the inscription actually reads: I show not your face but your heart’s desire. Her eyes widened upon unscrambling the minor puzzle and she slowly walked forward and moved so she’s standing in front of the tall mirror. A gasp escaped from her when she saw her reflection and her parents standing behind her. Her mum, who looks like an older copy of herself, smiled and nodded while her dad, a rather handsome man with dark brown hair and deep hazel eyes, grinned and wrapped an arm around her mum’s waist. Her eyes watered as a feeling of homesickness washed over her; leaving her wishing that what she’s seeing in the mirror is true. Looking at her dad, she swallowed thickly when she saw pride and happiness in his eyes instead of the frustration and anger that had been in his eyes when he and her mum had dropped her off at King’s Cross.

She saw a few figures move in the background and quickly realized that she’s looking into the faces of her relatives. Smiling longingly, she closed her eyes and fought down her tears. All she ever wanted was to make her parents proud and this mirror is showing her that. Both of her parents looked at her with such pride and happiness that it made her heart ache for it to be real instead of just a piece of enchanted furniture. Rubbing her eyes, she opened them and looked at the mirror again, her eyes widening when her reflection changed and shifted. Now she’s looking at an older version of herself; her hair is longer and she’s gain more curves while growing in height. On her chest is the Head Girl badge while she grinned with confidence and her eyes sparkled with power and intelligence. To Hermione’s shock, a tall boy walked into view and stood beside her, a strong arm wrapping on her waist and pulling her close.

Hermione narrowed her eyes as she peered up at the boy; frustrated when the mirror refused to show the boy’s face or any defining features. All she could see was the red and gold pattern of his tie and the red edging of his robes. However, most of her male friends are in Gryffindor which meant that it could be any of them or, heck, it could even be a student who is ahead of her or even behind her! In the distance of the mirror she could see four small figures running around chasing each other. The sight brought tears to her eyes and made her cover her mouth with her hand. All her childhood she had never had much hope of finding someone who would be able to deal with her studious nature and her tendency to obey rules. Yes, she dreamed of one day finding a man to marry and having a family but she had never thought it would happen honestly. Seeing this just made her heart ache and wish that the years could pass more quickly.

Swallowing thickly, Hermione dried her eyes with the edge of her robe when she realized that she had actually started crying. Deep down she knows that this is just a piece of enchanted furniture showing what she wants deep in her heart. However, that didn’t mean it didn’t hurt any less. Seeing her parents happy and smiling and then seeing her with someone and them actually having a family…it hurt. She knows that things between her parents aren’t the best. Her mum’s pregnancy had been hard and she had suffered through labor and nearly lost her own life along with Hermione if the doctor’s hadn’t acted quickly. After that things had been strained between her parents and she found out that it’s because her mum can’t have any more children less she risk her own life once more. Her dad had always wanted two or three kids so learning that he can only have one child was
Add in the fact that she has an eidetic memory and things were harder. Her parents had struggled in keeping her entertained and occupied due to her memory and then had come her accidental magic which frightened and worried her parents. Now, she’s a Witch and is going to a private school in order to learn how to tame her magic. Her mum had always been more open minded and accepting while her father had been more…straight-laced and believed in what he could see and what has facts behind it. There’s no doubt in her mind that her parents are struggling while she’s here at school. Her mum has been the one who’s mostly been writing back to; telling her about work and about her relatives and what’s been happening around the neighborhood while she’s here at school.

A sudden noise from outside the room made Hermione jump, her eyes wide as she was startled from her thoughts. Glancing at the mirror she forced herself to turn and hurried out of the room. Outside, she discovered that an older student had dropped a few books he had gathered. She flushed slightly and hurried away, heading out of the restricted section and checking out the book she had found there. As she tucked the book into her bag and walked out of the library, Hermione debated on whether or not to tell her friends about the mirror. On one hand she knows how dangerous a mirror like that can be. Already she’s tempted to turn around and go back to it. However, on the other hand her friends might be able to tell her more about it.

Making her way towards the Great Hall for lunch, she was rather surprised when Millicent fell into step beside her. Millicent smiled gently at Hermione, making the brunette blink before smiling back. They walked into the Great Hall together in silence and headed to the Slytherin table where the others were located. Elliana, Jillian, Susan and Hannah were already in a deep conversation with Daphne and Tracy while Harry, Neville and Dean were happily talked with Blaise. Taking their seats, Hermione flushed when the others asked what took her and if she had found the book she had been looking for. Keeping her voice low so the other Slytherin’s wouldn’t overhear, Hermione told them about the restricted section and the mirror she had found in the empty study room. The others were enthralled with what she was saying, though Daphne didn’t look all that surprised.

“It’s called the Mirror of Desire. I had found it when Professor Snape had given me a permission slip to go into the restricted section for a book on potions.” Daphne explained, the others looking at her with interest.

“The mirror shows your inner most desires and dreams. For me it showed my aunt Lucille and my cousin Jasper. They died in the war and I had been very close to them.” She said, sadness in her voice as Tracy lightly touched her arm.

“It showed my mum and dad, happy and proud of me.” Hermione admitted, her voice hardly above a whisper as Neville wrapped an arm around her waist.

Millicent listened with interest as Hermione talked about what she had seen in the mirror. All of them rallied around her and Daphne. She had to admit, it would be nice to at least look at the mirror once. Yes, it sounds rather dangerous, but at the same time the longing to see her parents was nearly overwhelming. Looking at her plate, she debated on perhaps sneaking out and attempting to make her way to the library and look at the mirror.

-Maybe I’ll try it.- She thought, taking a bite of her salad.

Dean tossed and turned in his bed, sighing as he was unable to fall asleep. Ever since Hermione told them about the Mirror of Desire he hasn’t been able to get the idea of seeing the mirror for himself. He already knows what he’ll see in the mirror: his dad and his family; whole and happy and together.
once more. There’s an ache in his heart at the idea of seeing his dad again. If it wasn’t for the photo album his mum has he doubts that he’ll even know his dad’s face. As it stands Jessica and Sam hardly remember anything about their dad; instead they rely on stories that their mum tells to even know the man. It pained him but there’s nothing that can be done about it. Admittedly, there have been many times when he’s been angry that their dad left them so soon. He’s ranted, cried and screamed himself hoarse at times; cursing everything that he could think of for taking their dad away from them. However, there’s nothing he can do to bring their dad back. All he can do is do his best to help their mum and ensure that his siblings are okay and happy.

-Screw it.- Dean thought, sitting up and tossing his blankets back.

Sliding out of bed, he pulled on his sleeping robe and his slippers before snagging his own map of the school. Pulling back his curtains, he winced as the loud snores coming from Ron’s bed assaulted his ears. Shaking himself, he moved over to the foot of Harry’s bed and knelt down; pressing his hand to the blank metal plate which served as the lock. Harry had allowed him access to his trunk and had told him at the beginning of the year that he could use his invisibility cloak whenever he needed to. The trunk unlocked and he opened the third compartment which held his friend’s clothing. He found the small, hidden pouch lining one of the walls of the compartment and pulled out the cloak. Closing the trunk, he listened for it to lock before standing and pulling the cloak on and flipping up the hood. He muttered a silencing charm on himself. While the cloak made him invisible, it didn’t mean he couldn’t be heard.

Making his way out of the dorm room and through the empty common room, Dean slipped out of the tower; the Fat Lady demanding to know who was there since she couldn’t see him. Dean grinned as he hurried away; checking the map every few minutes to make sure that the path to the library was clear. He had to use some of the hidden passages a few times to avoid Filch and Professor Flitwick and he was very happy that Professor Snape and McGonagall weren’t patrolling any of the floors he needed to go on. As he approached the doors of the library, he was surprised to see Millicent hurrying up to the double doors.

“Millie?!” He whispered, canceling the silencing charm and making the girl jump and whip around with her wand in hand.

“It’s me, Dean.” He hissed, flipping down the hood of the cloak as she looked at him.

“Dean?! What are you doing here?” She hissed, her eyes wide as she looked at his ‘floating’ head.

“Same thing as you I think.”

“The Mirror.” She whispered, understanding in her voice as Dean nodded.

“C’mon.” He said, pulling her underneath the cloak and ensuring that they were both hidden underneath it.

Millicent blushed deeply as she found herself pressed against Dean’s side. However, her attention was instantly drawn to his wand as he whispered a silencing charm over them. It made her mentally smack herself for not having thought of that before she had snuck out of the Slytherin common room.

It took a few moments for them both to become accustomed to walking together underneath the cloak, but they made it into the library and to the fence separating the restricted section from the normal section. Millicent reached out and unlocked the gate; holding it open so they could sneak through. The gate closed and locked behind them with a faint creak, making them wince and pick up their pace. Both of them were nearly sprinting through the restricted section as the sense of being watched fell over them. Making it to the door leading to the room with the mirror, Dean reached out and opened it; ushering Millicent through.
Stepping inside himself, he locked the door behind them and pulled off the cloak. Both of them were instantly drawn to the massive mirror in the center of the room. Balling up the cloak, Dean pushed it into one of his pockets before stepping up beside Millicent. She was trembling slightly as she looked at the mirror and Dean gently placed a hand on her shoulder. Instead of urging her to go first, he took a deep breath and stepped up to the mirror. Looking into the surface, his eyes widened and his heart constricted at the sight of his mum, sisters and little brother. However, what brought tears to his eyes was the sight of a tall, handsome man with a darker shade of skin than him and laughing dark brown eyes. The sight of his dad, happy, healthy and looking at him with pride and love nearly made him fall to his knees. Dean swallowed thickly and reached out, lightly touching the surface of the mirror as his dad placed a hand on his shoulder and nodded; tears in his own eyes.

“I miss you dad.” He whispered, nearly choking on the words as Millicent walked up beside him.

She didn’t look at the mirror; rather she drew Dean to her and hugged him. Dean clung to the girl, silently crying as Millicent provided him comfort by just holding him. Dean slowly collected him and straightened, smiling sadly at Millicent when he saw compassion and understanding in her eyes. He dried his eyes and cheeks before stepping away after taking one last look at the mirror and his dad. Instead, he moved to the side so Millicent could look at the mirror for herself. Millicent straightened her back and stepped in front of the mirror, looking at the small group of people who slowly took shape in the reflection. A tall man with her black hair appeared behind her; his deep blue eyes showing his pride and love towards her. Beside him stood a beautiful and delicate looking woman with light brown hair and laughing silver eyes. Beside her is a young boy with dark brown hair and glittering silver eyes. Tears fell from Millicent’s eyes as she looked at her family; her shoulders shaking at her parents rested their hands on her shoulders while her little brother took her hand.

“Millie?” Dean asked, his voice soft as he stepped closer to the girl.

“M-My parents…my dad is in Azkaban for life. H-He’s a Death Eater and did a lot of horrible things during the war. Mum died a few years before that; when Will was two. O-Our aunt and uncle refuse to have anything to do with us because of what our dad did.” Millicent explained, hiccupping as she struggled to control her emotions.

“The matron at Merlin’s Orphanage has been really good to me and Will. She refuses to let us be separated and has even let me and Will have rooms next to each other even though he’s four years younger than I am. The other kids were upset with me, Will and a few others who are the kids of Death Eaters, but the workers were always doing their best to try and ensure that we didn’t fight. They made the best out of the holidays and birthdays.” She said, her voice strained as Dean took her into his arms and hugged her tightly.

“I never knew that you live in the orphanage.” He muttered, Millicent turning and clinging to him.

“It’s not something that’s banded about; especially in Slytherin. The Ministry has been very kind to us; especially in making sure that we still have homes we can go to once we turn seventeen. I’ve been made Will’s guardian and I plan on taking him back home when I can. Our account manager has been very accommodating and understanding. He’s been sending me letters ever since I’ve come here about how our fortune is doing along with updates about Will’s health and studies.”

“You know none of us will think differently of you.” Dean said, Millicent nodding against his shoulder.

“I know, but…it’s just hard to talk about. I don’t want Harry thinking that I resent him for his parents and godfather helping the Minister pass the law that imprisoned my dad. I’m not proud of what my dad did. I was so ashamed and angry when I found out that he was a Death Eater and I yelled at him; calling him so many names when I was brought to the Ministry and saw him in a holding cell.
Instead of getting mad at me he just smiled and said that there was hope for our society yet. My dad-my proud, stern and powerful father-begged me not to make the same mistakes that he did. He told me to bring our family back to the respectable name it once had. He urged me to ensure that Will wouldn’t follow in his footsteps and to watch out for whoever I made friends with.” Millicent sobbed, drawing comfort from Dean’s arms around her.

“Harry and the others won’t think bad of you, Millie. If anything they’ll want to help you and your brother out.” Dean said, Millicent sniffling lightly as she pulled back.

“You really think so?” She asked, her voice soft as Dean smiled and nodded.

“Of course. You’re becoming a good friend of ours. I’m sure Daphne and Tracy would help you and your brother as well.” He said, Millicent clearing her throat as she dried her eyes and cheeks.

Being the child of a Death Eater had once meant that you were a part of high society; that your family is to be respected and feared at the same time. Now, thanks to the Ministry and the various reforms, no one wants to associate with Death Eaters and others who were outed in having supported the Dark Lord. Her own relatives didn’t want anything to do with her or her brother because of a mistake that their father had made in becoming a Death Eater. She’s seen the way her aunt and uncle stare at her: as if they were expecting her to suddenly begin spouting Pureblood supremacy crap that Death Eaters used to say. Is she proud of her lineage? Yes, of course she is. However she also knows that Muggles and Muggleborns are vital to their society and in keeping their magic strong. She loves to Muggle Studies class and finds everything that they’ve managed to invent fascinating. She already has plans of modernizing Bulstrode Manor when she comes of age. Not only that, but William will be more comfortable in the Muggle world than she is.

“Thank you, Dean.” Millicent said, stepping back and smiling shyly at the boy.

They both took one last glance at the mirror before they headed out. Dean used the cloak on both of them as Millicent added the silencing charms. Walking through the hallways, Dean subtly used his Eagle sight in order to avoid the patrolling Prefects and professors as he escorted Millicent down to the dungeons. They stopped in front of a blank section of wall and Millicent stepped out from underneath the cloak and whispered a password to the wall. Dean was surprised when a doorway magically appeared and she walked through it. After the door vanished, Dean hurried through a nearby hidden passage which brought him up to the seventh floor. Heading to the portrait of the Fat Lady, he sighed in relief when he saw that she’s still in her portrait. Often times she wandered around after curfew to visit her friends in their paintings. Whispering the password, the portrait opened though she was looking around in suspicion as Dean climbed in and removed the cloak as he stepped into the common room.

He headed upstairs and returned Harry’s cloak to his trunk before removing his robe and slippers. Lying down in bed, he replaced the privacy charms around his bed; blocking out Ron’s snores. It wasn’t long before he was finally able to finally fall asleep. Sadly, it didn’t seem like he got much rest before Harry was waking him up for their morning training. During training, he saw that Professor Snape was giving him some odd looks and it made him flush and work harder at his training. He had a feeling that Professor Snape knows that he had been out last night; it wouldn’t surprise him. Once their training was finished, Dean was surprised that Professor Snape didn’t hold him back. Instead, he followed Harry and the twins up to the dorm and showered and changed into his uniform. During their time in the bathroom, Dean told Harry about what he found out last night. Harry was shocked at learning that Millicent and her younger brother live in Merlin’s Orphanage though he was angry when Dean told him about her relatives.

“Sounds like my aunt and uncle.” Harry growled, sneering when he thought of Petunia and Vernon
“Millicent’s worried that you and the others will think differently of her because her dad is a Death Eater.” Dean said, trying to turn his friend’s thoughts away from his relatives.

“Of course we won’t! Now if she paraded herself around like Malfoy or Nott then we might but Millie’s really sweet and kind. I think she’s a great friend and she’s really fun to talk to.” Harry said, drying his hair with a muttered spell as he wrapped a towel around his waist.

“That’s what I told her last night.” Dean said, smiling lightly as his friend nodded and dried off. They hurried in getting dressed and joined the others in the common room once they grabbed their familiars and their bags. Harry and Dean didn’t say a word about Dean and Millicent having gone and looked at the Mirror last night and they certainly didn’t tell the others about Millicent’s family. They figured that if Millicent wanted to tell the others then she’ll tell them on her own time. All of they sat at the Gryffindor table, in which Ron and Seamus sneered when they saw Millicent sitting down between Harry and Hermione. Harry sent the annoying redhead a fierce glare when Ron opened his mouth and was about ready to complain or insult Millicent. Thankfully the walking food dumpster wisely shut his mouth with a faint click when he saw the look in Harry’s eyes. He might be stupid but he’s at least proving that some things can be learned. It was rather surprising when Millicent softly told the others about her parents and the fact that she and her younger brother are in the orphanage.

The girls instantly rallied around Millicent; providing her comfort while Harry and Neville quickly reassured her that none of them thought differently about her. Millicent was surprised and grateful for the support, though she was even more surprised when Hermione, Eliana and Jillian offered for her and her brother to join them for Christmas and summer. She smiled at the offers though she gently declined.

“Even though living in an orphanage isn’t the greatest, the matron and workers do their best to make the holidays special.” She said, smiling gently as her friends listened and nodded.

“Do you know how many people are now orphans?” Hermione asked, glancing around at the various tables and the other students.

“Quite a few actually. However, many also have relatives that took them in, like my aunt did for me.” Susan explained, Hannah and Harry nodding.

“There are many in Slytherin; especially the older students. I know Bole, Smyth and Prudence are some of them. They helped me in Diagon Alley during the summer.” Millicent said, glancing at the three Sixth Year Snakes.

“When will we be learning about the war in History?” Eliana asked, finishing off her eggs.

“Either near the end of this year or next year. Right now we’re still on Merlin and Morgana and then we’re moving onto the Founders.” Hannah answered, the others nodding.

“You also have to think, we’ll be learning about Grindelwald before Voldemort.” Harry added, ignoring how many of the others flinched or gasped when he said the man’s name.

“You’ll also be learning about the other countries and what their magical societies are like. We’re learning about France right now.” Fred chimed in, grinning as the others looked at him and George with great interest.

“I love learning about our society.” Hermione said, smiling as she thought of what she’s already
learned by reading ahead in her History book.

“I do admit that it is interesting.” Jillian said, taking a sip from her thermos.

Conversations drifted and ranged from various topics though all of them were getting eager for the Yule holidays. They promised to make lists though they also made promises not to spend too much money on gifts for each other. Susan was the one who suggested they all get together at some point, which was agreed upon by everyone. As she suggested it, Susan offered to write her aunt and see if it would be okay to have everyone over for New Years. She happily explained that her aunt could provide portkeys for Hermione and Eliana since the pair don’t have fireplaces connected to the Floo network. All of them were rather excited about the idea and Susan absolutely loved the idea of hosting a party for her friends and letting her aunt meet them all.

“I’ll compose the letter during class!” Susan gushed, eagerness in her voice as the others grinned.

-Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx-

November 20th

Mum,

I’ve tried getting close to Potter but he’s being a stupid prat. He’s made friends with a know-it-all Mudblood, a Siren, a half-breed, Bones, Abbott, that squib Longbottom and some halfblood Thomas-Woods. Not only that, but he’s hanging around filthy Snakes! He’s refused every single one of my attempts make friends with him. However, the stupid git has accepted Fred and George into his little circle of friends. He’s even friendly with Percy of all people. I’ve tried driving the others away but they refuse to leave the git. At the way things are going he’ll likely get with one of the girls.

Professor McGonagall told me that I need to pick up my grades. She pointed out that if I don’t and graduate with poor grades then I’ll have to repeat the year. Parvati and Lavender have helped me with my classwork and Percy’s been breathing down my back. Can you believe he’s created a study schedule for me?! Seamus has begun picking up his grades as well; stating that he’s parents will kill him if he does badly in his classes. Yes, I know that you and dad warned me about not picking up my grades.

I hope you have some ideas on how Potter can become close to us. Hopefully Ginny can still snag him before anyone else does when she comes here next year.

Ron

Molly sighed as she folded up the letter from her youngest son. She had hoped that Ron would get close to Harry on the train. However, she hadn’t seen any sign of the lad when they had arrived at King’s Cross. Of course Ron had sent her a letter that night, telling her that Harry had apparently been in a different compartment and said compartment had been full. The idea of Harry becoming close with so many girls was worrying; especially when three of those girls aren’t Purebloods. The Potter line doesn’t need another Muggleborn in their line. It could and most likely would lead to Harry siring a Squib. Not only that, but the Potter line certainly doesn’t need someone of creature descent in their line. Harry would become a laughingstock if he married someone like that.

Yes, Susan Bones and Hannah Abbott are from old and magically strong lines. However, they certainly couldn’t be as perfectly matched for Harry as her Ginny is. From what she’s heard and seen of Lily, her Ginny is a very close match to the deceased Witch. Ginny is headstrong, intelligent, witty and rather compassionate. That’s not counting the stunning likeness Ginny bares to Lily. Yes, Ginny doesn’t have green eyes, but she still has the bright red hair, fair complexion and beauty. Not only
that, but Ginny could easily bare Harry as many children as he would need. Being the heir and future Lord to two Most Ancient and Noble Houses means that he’ll need at least two sons to carry on those lines. There’s also the possibility of Harry inheriting the Black line as well if Sirius doesn’t marry and have children of his own. It’s common knowledge that Sirius has named his godson his heir and that would only add more prestige and wealth to Harry when he comes of age.

“Mum, do you still have that old Winter copy of the Prophet?” Ginny asked, breaking her mother out of her thoughts.

“We tossed it a long time ago, dear.” Molly said, turning and looking at her darling daughter.

“What did you need it for?”

“I was hoping to cut out that picture of Harry. I can’t wait to see him on the platform when we get Ron and the others.” Ginny said, smiling dreamily at the thought of catching sight of the Boy-Who-Lived.

“Oh?! Is Harry coming here for Christmas?” She asked, excitement flaring in her eyes and ringing through her voice as she looked at her mum.

“No dearie. Ron hasn’t had much luck in becoming friends with Harry. Harry’s made friends with others, including an…alarming number of girls.” Molly said, moving over to the stove and stirring the stew she’s making for supper.

“What?! B-But he can’t!” Ginny cried, shock and despair in her voice at thought of her Harry close to other girls.

“Now, now, my dear, don’t worry. Harry is much too young to choose his future wife just yet. You still have a very high chance to get close to him when you go to Hogwarts next year. There is still plenty of time for you to draw his attention away from any others.” Molly soothed, watching as Ginny slowly calmed down from the mood she was working herself into.

The anger on Ginny’s face morphed into a look of fierce determination. She wouldn’t lose her potential husband to some…hussies! Nodding firmly, she set about cleaning wiping down the table and pulling out the bowls, silverware and cups. As she worked, she happily thought about what her future will hopefully bring her. Being on Harry’s arm, living in Potter Manor or whichever one of Harry’s properties she wanted to live in. Her mum has told her that Harry is rich enough and likely has multiple properties all around the world. The thought of shopping in Paris, sunning herself on a private beach and getting to explore numerous locations had her head spinning. Harry would be beside her through it all, smiling and loving her and any children they have. With a bright smile on her face, the little ten year-old fairly skipped to pantry to retrieve a few things her mum asked her to get. It was while she was in the pantry that the Weasley clock in the living room chimed as one of its hands moved.

“That’ll be your father coming home.” Molly said, wiping her hands on her apron.

The sound of someone coming through the floo made Ginny squeal and she shot out of the kitchen and into a pair of strong, loving arms. Arthur smiled as he swept Ginny off her feet and into his arms. He hugged her tightly and pressed a kiss to her cheek as Molly smiled and walked into the room.

“How was work, dear?” She asked, watching as Arthur set Ginny down and removed his traveling robe.

“Busy. I had a meeting with the Prime Minister about a few requests that the Minister wanted to
speak with Her Majesty about. I’ll be home late next Monday and I have to leave early then too.” He said, walking over and bending down to gently kiss his wife.

“Are you going to the meeting too?” Molly asked, frowning in concern as Arthur nodded.

“Yes. As the liaison between our society and the Non-Magical society I need to be there. If it had been between another department and, say the police force then Marty would’ve handled it. However, this is such a high profile meeting that I have to attend.” He explained, following his wife into the kitchen with Ginny walking alongside him.

“Sometimes I miss listening to you talk about nose-biting teacups.” Molly sighed, making Arthur chuckle softly.

“I know, love. However, I do have some big news for the entire family.” He said, grinning as Molly and Ginny looked at him with wonder and curiosity.

“What is it?!” Ginny asked, nearly bouncing as her dad chuckled and patted her head.

“Let’s eat first. I’m starved after such a long day. Besides, your mum’s stew smells amazing and it’s making my stomach growl.” He said, his eyes twinkling as Ginny groaned and Molly shook her head.

Molly soon had a healthy serving of stew in each of their bowls along with freshly made rolls, potatoes and corn-on-the-cob. Arthur happily praised his wife’s cooking; making Molly blush and smile happily at him while Ginny giggled. Molly talked about some of Ron’s letter home, in which Arthur was relieved that his youngest son is beginning to become more serious about his classwork. Ginny was rather put-out at hearing that Harry had so many friends and none of them included her brother. However, she was glad that the twins were close to Harry. She’s the favorite of her older brothers so it’s very likely that Fred, George and Percy would help her become friends, and later girlfriend, with Harry. Molly talked about a few things that she needs to get from Diagon Alley, to which Arthur added a few things that he’d like for his lunches. Ginny happily talked about her studies, to which Molly confirmed that she’s doing well with the various assignments.

After dinner was finished and Arthur and Ginny did the dishes, they all headed to the living room where Molly settled in her rocking chair with her knitting while Ginny eagerly sat down beside her father on the arm of his chair. Arthur chuckled when he saw the obvious looks from both his wife and daughter; both of them eager to know what news he has for them.

“This Christmas, I’d like you two to go and visit Charlie in Romania. I received word from Bill and he’ll be visiting Charlie around that time as well.” He said, laughing as Ginny squealed in happiness and hugged him tightly while Molly looked at him with wide eyes.

“We have enough for this?” She asked, her voice soft and nearly breathless as Arthur nodded.

“I’ve been making some wise stock decisions thanks to Dragonstone. It’s helping to greatly increase our money. Also, I’ve been granted another pay increase because I’ve been such an outstanding employee.” Arthur said, his wife and daughter letting out cheers of delight and pride.

“Oh, Arthur! This is wonderful news!” Molly gushed, tears brimming in her eyes as her husband laughed.

“But wait…you said that you want me and mum to go to Romania. What about you, Daddy?” Ginny asked, frowning as Arthur looked at her.

“Arthur?” Molly asked, unease in her voice as she looked at her husband.
“I have plans to be here during the Christmas holidays though I’ll take a portkey to visit Romania on Christmas Eve and it’ll take me back after New Years. That’s because I want to be here while the construction company rebuilds the Burrow.” Arthur said, watching as Ginny and Molly looked at him with shock.

“W-What?” Molly breathed, watching as Arthur summoned a thick packet from his robes which hung by the front door.

“Molly, I know this isn’t our dream house. Yes, it’s our house. We made it a home and have spent what little we could scrape together in order to provide rooms for our children. However, now that I’ve gotten a better position with better pay and benefits and after saving for awhile, I want us to have a home we can be proud of. A home where the kids will have enough room have their friends stay the night and a home that works better for us and our needs. You know there are problems with this house; not including the Ghoul in our attic.” He explained, opening the packet and pulling out a set of papers.

“D-Do we have enough for all this?” Molly breathed, her mind going into overdrive as their daughter simply sat there in shocked silence.

“I’ve spoken with a construction company and gotten their best rates. They can start the project in December and it’ll be done around mid-January. I’ve already given them the scans of our property and they said that we have a lot of potential that we’re not using. Instead of an orchard, we can have greenhouses where we can grow fruits, vegetables and herbs year-round. The kids can have an actual space to practice Quidditch and perhaps we could even get a swimming pool?” Arthur suggested, watching as tears filled Molly’s eyes.

“Molly? Dear, I’m sorry if I-“

“No, no. You did nothing wrong, Arthur. I-I just never imagined that we’d be able to do something like this.” She said, tears falling from her eyes as a smile filled with happiness broke across her face.

“If we keep enough rooms for all the kids plus two guest rooms then there’ll be plenty of room for when Bill and Charlie settle and visit; should they wish to have children one day. Not only that, but I know you were thinking of perhaps adopting or fostering children in the future.” Arthur said, his voice gentle as Molly nodded tearfully.

“Adopting?!” Ginny asked, finally breaking out of her shocked state.

“It’s just something we’ve talked about before bed, sweetheart. If we ever decided to adopt another child it’d be something we’d discuss as a family with all of us together.” Arthur said, Ginny nodding thoughtfully.

“We’ve been blessed with seven wonderful children. However, I’d love to be able to provide a home and a family for someone who doesn’t have one. There are so many children who lost their families during the war or because of some unfortunate circumstance.” Molly added, watching as Ginny nodded again in understanding.

“The contractors are having us design the house and the various floors. Admittedly, our current layout is very…hodgepodge and it rarely works out. One thing that is a must have is more than one bathroom.” Arthur said, laughing as Ginny perked up.

“Can I please have my own bathroom, Daddy? Please?! Ron takes forever in the mornings and the twins often leave surprises…like the time they switched my shampoo with that pink hair dye.” Ginny said, scowling as she thought of that prank.
“It would be for the best if she had her own bathroom.” Molly agreed, making Ginny let out a small squeal as she looked at her dad.

“Alright, you can have your own bathroom. However, you’ll be expected to clean it every week just like you clean your room.” Arthur said, his voice stern as Ginny looked at him.

“Of course! Thank you, Daddy!” Ginny gushed, hugging Arthur around his neck before rushing off upstairs.

“What about the boys this holiday? Will they come with us to Romania?” Molly asked, beginning to work on her knitting as Arthur sighed.

“I want us all out of the house in time for the contractor and his crew to begin work. Our furniture can be repaired and restored at a small fee thanks to a furniture company in Diagon Alley. With the work on the house and what’s needed to get us to Romania and stay there a good few weeks we need to budget how much we spend for a little. The boys will have to stay in school this Christmas unless they want to spend the holiday with their friends.” Arthur said, Molly nodding in understanding even though she didn’t look too pleased.

“Where will you be staying while the construction is underway?” She asked, looking up from her work as Arthur stood and went to the small drink cabinet.

“Whyte has offered me his guest house for the time being. He’s glad that we’re able to do this so he’s not asking for much while I stay there. I plan on helping him do a few home projects while I’m there.” Arthur explained, pouring himself a small glass of scotch and walking back to his chair.

“I’ll bake him and his wife something in way of saying thanks from me. I’m glad that you have coworkers and friends who are willing to help out.” Molly said, smiling as Arthur nodded happily.

“Things are finally looking up for the Weasleys.” Arthur said, his wife voicing her agreement happily.

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The rest of November continued along at a steady pace. The classes for Customs of Different Races headed down to the Great Lake before the water got too cold and the Merfolk headed to their village at the bottom for the winter. Professor Frost happily told them about the aquatic race; and the chief of the Merfolk residing in the lake actually surfaced and spoke to them; with the help of an official from the Ministry to translate of course. Many were fascinated that the looks of Merfolk varied on where they lived in the world. Using one of the ‘commercially’ sold communications mirror, the class was able to see the Merfolk village at the bottom of the lake. Professor Frost had simply given a
communications mirror to one of the Mermen warriors and, after explaining how it worked, opened and increased the size of his own communications mirror so all of them could see the village. As with the time they had spent with the Centaurs, many Purebloods and Halfbloods were shocked in the intelligence and diversity shown by former ‘inferior’ races. The Merfolk village was constructed of stone and coral. It was obvious that they’re highly intelligent given the construction of the village and the sight of several statues of their former chiefs. They were also in awe over the sight of the children and even the ‘pets’ that the Merfolk kept.

Professor Frost was greatly pleased when the First Years left the lake that day. Since the beginning of this class four years ago, he’s seen a multitude of students from all walks of life. Many Purebloods, Halfbloods and even some Muggleborns have come to his class in the beginning thinking that they’re the best of the best. They thought that their intelligence, race or ancestry made them superior to others. However, his class taught them about the various races and showed them that the other races aren’t inferior; just different. He knew that Charity and Lucy had the same thing happening in their classes as well. Those raised in the Wizarding world were learning that Muggles aren’t as helpless as they had thought. They were learning that Muggles were doing just fine without magic and had even advanced beyond Magicals currently. However, Minister Matthews was doing a great job in helping their world advance and catch up.

A prime example of this occurred one evening when Harry and his friends were using the Room to work on their assignments or just relax and hang out. Harry was sitting in one of the overly stuffed, comfortable armchairs the Room had provided with a sleek magazine in hand. Hermione looked up from her book to grab her cup of tea when she saw how absorbed her friend is in whatever he’s reading. She has noticed lately that he’s been getting a few magazines in the mail. He often had them on hand during meals or whenever they relax here or in the common room.

“What are you reading, Ry?” She asked, marking her place in her book as Harry blinked and lifted his head.

“Huh? Oh! Technomancer’s Weekly. It’s a relatively new publication that’s come out. It talks about the new technology that’s been released in our world.” Harry answered, handing Hermione the magazine.

The front of the magazine showcased a picture of a rather sleek and, dare she say, even sexy looking television. It was a flat screen, which was surprising and the small teaser on the front boasted about amazing picture quality and other features. There was also some information about new appliances, features that you could get with certain appliances and what was going to be coming next year or the year after. Flipping through the pages, Hermione’s eyes widened when she fully realized that Wizards and Witches are quickly catching up and even surpassing Muggles with some technology. It was one article that completely blew Hermione’s mind:

**World Wide Wizards Coming to England soon!**

*By Heather Anderson*

As many of you may well know by now the magical societies in Japan, America, Italy, Spain, Australia and a few other countries have banded together and created the World Wide Wizards Network. Well, the network is now coming to England everyone! Since companies such as Technology’s Playground and Tech-Magic Inc. have introduced Non-Magical technology to our society we’ve been rapidly becoming more ‘modern’. It is steadily becoming common for Magical households to have kitchen appliances such as electric stoves, refrigerators, washers and dryers and now televisions. However, our television programs have been pretty limited to Non-Magical shows and movies. However, not anymore! With the introduction of the W.W.W. Witches and Wizards will
soon be able to watch shows created by Magicals, for Magicals! Not only that but Quidditch games will soon be broadcasted along with News stories from across the world that will impact our societies as a whole.

For those of you who may not know, the W.W.W. is a specialized network that is only available for Magicals. It began in Australia and quickly spread to other countries. The I.C.W. has already been using the network to announce special changes in our world as a whole and has allowed the public the special opportunity to know what exactly is going on and what major laws will affect us all. Magical Britain has been in the dark to this for a long time thanks to those in power before Minister Matthews. Now, new companies are going to be popping up such as a news station and television show companies. Businesses are already thinking about commercials and advertisements which can be shown on television to attract more and new customers.

The Daily Prophet has already confirmed that they will be creating another branch of their company to report live news from inside a studio and out in the country. Mister Andrew Thompson; owner of the Daily Prophet, had this to say about the new studio:

“With the coming of the World Wide Wizards to our country this offers us a whole new opportunity to educate and inform the public. We’ll be hiring new employees to run and staff the new studio that will be built come the New Year. Once the W.W.W. has been implemented here, we shall be covering news in our society and in the Non-Magical society that will impact us as well. Not only that, but we’ll be able to provide the public with access to live Wizengamot meetings and news stories from the Ministry and other businesses. This is a great opportunity for all of us.”

Another opportunity the W.W.W. is bringing is their internet network. While computers are only beginning to take hold here in our society, people are already beginning to see the advantages of having such devices in work places and at home. The W.W.W. is also an internet network which will bring more news from around the world and also provide a quicker and easier way for people in different countries to communicate with each other without worrying about a post owl being injured or taking days to reach the recipient. It is expected for the Ministry to be one of the first places to fully use computers to make storing information more efficient and easier.

“Wow…” Hermione breathed, her eyes wide as she looked at the moving pictures of the inventors of W.W.W.

“Our world has come a long way since when our parents were young. Mum and Dad are seriously shocked in how much has changed.” Fred said, George nodding in agreement.

“Even Percy is surprised. He was here for a year before all the new classes and professors came. He’s happy with them though.” George added, stirring the potion he and Fred were brewing on one of the work tables.

“On page fifteen there are some pictures of the cameras reporters will be using for the future news shows.” Harry added, watching as Hermione eagerly flipped through to the correct page.

“In his letter about renovating the Burrow, Dad mentioned that it’ll be modernized as well. We’ll have electricity, a few televisions and hopefully a computer or two.” Fred said, eagerness in his voice as Neville hummed.

“I want to ask my gran about perhaps modernizing Longbottom Manor. Having a television and computer sounds like a good idea.” Neville mused, Susan, Hannah and Jillian nodding in agreement.

“Computers will bring a lot of good things.” Eliana said, excitement in her voice as the others looked at her.
“What do you mean?” Susan asked, tilting her head as Eliana smiled at her.

“There are programs to organize and sort data and various information. There are also programs to help with finance, writing and other things.” Eliana explained, the others listening with rapt attention.

“My parents have already modernized our estate. Dad is good friends with a few Technomancers so it was easy to outfit all of the family properties. He always uses a few programs to keep track of our finances and businesses. With the information he gets from the account manager he’s been able to wisely make adjustments to our stocks and has increased our fortune considerably.” Harry said, Hermione nodding.

“My parents use computers to keep track of their finances for home and their business. They also use it to ensure their employees get paid correctly and organize the schedules for their employees, schedule appointments and also plan vacations.” Hermione added, handing Harry back his magazine.

“What other magazines are there here in the Wizarding world?” Eliana asked, watching as Susan shifted in her seat to get more comfortable.

“Well there’s Witch Weekly which is about beauty, fashion, our celebrities and other gossip. Then there’s Teen Witch Weekly which is similar though intended towards teens. Wizard’s Weekly is the same thing, though for men and then there’s also Warlocks Quarterly and Quidditch Monthly.” Susan began, Hermione and Eliana listening with rapt attention.

“We now have Technomancer’s Weekly, the Healer’s News, the Witch’s Witch, the Wizard’s Wizard and other specific magazine’s which cater to various professors such as Potion’s Masters, Transfiguration Masters and such.” Hannah finished, lightly tapping her fingers on the cover of her book.

“Now, there’s also the Wizarding Wireless Network on our radios. We have various programs and a good number of bands and singers. The network has begun branching out to Muggle music as well which is rather nice. They also report on various events like trials, elections and other important events.” Neville added, glancing up from the Herbology book he’s reading.

“My parents will be happy that this world isn’t so…outdated. Dad was really…unhappy when we visited Diagon Alley the first time and saw that a lot of people had old hairstyles and were wearing robes.” Hermione said, frowning as she thought of her parents.

In all actuality her dad had tried to convince her to reject going to Hogwarts after they had gotten back from the visit. He stated that the society was so outdated that they’ll likely teach her how to be a housewife and live like people would’ve in the Victorian era. Her mum had gotten him to back off and then both of them had spent a few weeks going through her books. Her mum tried getting her dad to read them as well since they showed that the Wizarding world wasn’t as outdated as it appeared to be. Sadly, her dad had refused and had often glared at the books whenever they had been left out in any of the rooms besides her bedroom. She had taken to locking her door so her dad couldn’t get in and perhaps toss her books.

“My gran used to wear a stuffed vulture on her hats. It symbolizes her grieving of the death of her husband. It used to be common for women to wear stuffed or fake birds on their hats to show different statuses. However, during my visit at Halloween, she’s begun switching to wearing a vulture feather instead of the entire bird. I told her it looks much better and doesn’t retract from her looks. Anyway, the point is, is that even the older generations are beginning to change. We’ll still have much of our culture on display and we don’t want to forget said culture. However, we’re also willing to change and adapt.” Neville said, smiling lightly as the others nodded in agreement or understanding.
“Many of the Muggleborns, Halfbloods and newer generation Witches and Wizards like what’s happening. Sadly, many of the older generation don’t like it and are actively acting out against it. Some shop owners refuse to sell to Muggleborns and those of other races like Vampires, Elves and Werewolves.” George said, frowning darkly as Hermione and Eliana looked at each other in concern.

“I…I noticed some dirty looks when I was in the alley for the first time. Some people looked down at me and my parents and even sneered or muttered darkly to each other.” Hermione admitted, unease in her voice as she shifted.

“Not everyone feels that way obviously. Many at least realize that Muggleborns bring in new business so they’re more than happy to sell to them.” Fred explained, though his words did little to reassure Hermione.

“More and more businesses are also being owned and run by Squibs. You would’ve never seen that before the Minister’s new laws and reforms. The Ministry is also more willing to help citizens who want to look for employment outside of the Magical world.” Hannah said, her voice soft as Hermione looked at her.

“How so?”

“Well, students can take Muggle courses during the summer. Some, Muggleborns especially, are continuing their Non-Magical education alongside their Magical education. Myself and Dean are doing so during the holidays.” Harry answered, smiling at Hermione’s wide eyes.

“Universities which have been popping up more and more are also offering students the chance to take courses and major in law, business and such which covers both the Magical and Non-Magical version.” Dean added, Harry and Susan nodding in agreement.

“Percy is hoping to get a scholarship to Phoenix University in London. I believe he wants to go in for business management or something that will help him gain a position in the Ministry. From the sounds of it he wants to take over for our dad one day. Mum was over the moon about it since she wants all of us to get careers in the Ministry and Bill and Charlie left the country as soon as they graduated and got their jobs.” Fred said, snorting softly as he remembered one of his mum’s famous speeches about jobs.

“It’s not like your brother’s are doing horribly, right?” Jillian asked, frowning as the twins shook their heads.

“No, they’re doing rather well for themselves. Bill works for Gringotts as a Curse Breaker and is currently stationed in Egypt working on ancient Wizarding tombs.”

“And Charlie works in Romania at their Dragon Reserve as a Dragon Handler. While it doesn’t pay as well as Bill’s job, it’s still a good job and Charlie loves working with the Dragons. Mum doesn’t really see those jobs as very…’respectable’. I know she certainly didn’t like it when we were working at Padfoot and Moony’s. Dad, thankfully, stood up for us and convinced her to let us work there to make our own money. Dad’s been our main support for a long time now.”

Harry and those who have seen, heard or even met Molly and Arthur could see how and why Arthur supported his twin sons so much. Arthur is such a patient man that it was hard to believe he is still married to a banshee like Molly. Not only that, but it made them all wonder if Arthur really knows what his youngest son is like and when he’ll finally snap and put the fear of God in Ron. It was hard to imagine calm and collected Arthur Weasley angry, though they had a feeling that everyone shut up and listened when the man finally blew his top. Dean stated as such and they were all surprised
when the twins shuddered at the same time.

“Dad hardly ever gets angry. Mum’s normally the one who yells and punishes us while our dad simply laughs and encourages us to develop newer and better pranks. However…there was this one time when we accidently locked Ron in the shed. We had no idea he wouldn’t be able to get out on his own and we had gone inside to complete our chores.”

“You see, Ronnie has a huge and rather crippling fear of spiders. The shed had spiders in it which were harmless though that didn’t really matter to him.”

“When Dad came home he heard whimpering coming from the shed and unlocked it. Ron was curled up in the back corner white as a sheet and rocking back and forth in fear. It took Dad ten minutes to coax a response out of Ron and get him out of the shed.”

“Dad came inside with Ron and Mum took Ron upstairs. Dad rounded on us and…”

“…It wasn’t pretty. We’ve never heard him yell before and we instantly knew that we had gone way past what was acceptable for a prank. We instantly apologized to Ron and told him that the door should’ve unlocked after a minute but the spell had failed. We were grounded for a month and had to do Ron’s share of the chores. Since then we’ve never pulled a prank that we haven’t already tested and ensured that it won’t fail.” They explained, the others listening with surprise and interest.

“Well, it’s good that you learned from that.” Hermione said, the others agreeing as Fred and George smiled sheepishly and nodded.

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November 30th

Neville groaned as he rubbed his arm. Beside him Hermione wasn’t fairing much better as she was limping slightly. They had just finished working out with Harry and the others. It was already paying off greatly; especially in Neville’s case. All of his lingering baby fat had disappeared and has begun forming into muscles. He was also letting his hair grow out slightly and is making plans to get it styled during the holidays. He had already sent home a letter to his grandmother telling her that his shoulders are broader and the resizing charms on his clothes are slowly being strained due to his increase in muscle mass and decrease in weight. He’ll definitely need a new wardrobe by summer at the rate he’s going. Hermione admitted to herself that she’ll also need to get a new wardrobe as well since she’s becoming trimmer and has been gaining some muscle mass as well. She knew that her parents would be shocked at the changes she has undergone and her newfound like of working out. She just hoped that her parents would like her friends.

Walking down the first set of moving stairs, they both frowned as the staircase decided to move on them. Holding onto the rails, they waited for the staircase to stop moving before continuing their descent.

“I swear, those baths hardly do anything anymore.” Hermione sighed, wincing as she stepped off the last stair.

“I’m still waiting for when our bodies supposedly get used to the pain.” Neville muttered, Hermione nodding in agreement.

Nearby, Draco, Pansy, Sabrina and Theo stopped when they heard the two Lions heading in their direction. Draco’s eyes flashed as his mind instantly thought of getting revenge on Potter. He couldn’t believe that his godfather hadn’t defended him from McGonagall or got him out of those
detentions. Being forced to clean the several trophy rooms by hand had been a humiliating task, especially since he hadn’t been allowed to use magic of any kind besides the polish that he had been given. By the end of the first night he had been sorely tempted to give Missus Norris a good kick, preferably over the nearest railing. At the end of his detentions McGonagall or his godfather would come and collect him and escort him back to the Slytherin common room. He had hoped that by now he would have the title of Slytherin Prince but apparently Zabini was earning that title. He couldn’t fathom why considering Zabini is a half-breed! It went against everything he had been told and the title of the Prince of Slytherin is rightfully his! His father had held that title with his mother claiming the title as the Princess of Slytherin. To make matters worse the title of Princess had apparently been claimed by Greengrass. At least she’s a full Pureblood though she’s beginning to prove herself to be a blood traitor by hanging around Potter and his group.

“Dray?” Pansy hissed, jerking her head towards the corner where they could hear Longbottom and the Mudblood know-it-all.

“Tripping jinxes. Hit the Mudblood with Densaugo and petrify Longbottom.” Draco hissed, the others nodding as they got into range so they could hit their intended victims.

Hermione and Neville talked softly about their training, though they paused when they saw Tonks heading towards them with a few books in her arms. She grinned when she saw the two First Years and called out to them. Meanwhile, Draco and the others seriously thought about pulling back from their plans when they heard the voice of the Head Girl. However, Draco shook his head and scowled at the others when he saw their looks of panic. Instead, he muttered the tripping jinx and watched as a thin, magical line appeared at the bend in the hallway and extended to the opposite wall. If they managed to hit Longbottom and Granger before running for it then Tonks won’t know it was them who jinxed and hexed the stupid Lions. The magical tripwire disappeared within a few seconds and the group silently moved backwards and further into the shadow of an alcove nearby which provided them a good vantage point to fire their chosen jinxes and hexes. Sabrina was already planning on giving Granger boils that would spread across her entire body instead of just her face while Pansy was going to be the one to make the Mudblood’s teeth grow. Draco and Theo were planning on hitting Longbottom with Draco petrifying him and Theo hitting him with the antler growing jinx.

The trio continued on their way down the hallway, though Hermione paused when she saw something glint on the floor. Tonks and Neville stopped when they saw Hermione wasn’t following them. Hermione narrowed her eyes when she looked at the floor and Tonks’ eyes widened when she saw Hermione’s eyes flash with the telltale golden flash that belonged to assassins. Hermione pulled out her wand and, recalling a revealing spell that normally wasn’t taught until Fourth or Fifth Year, quickly casted it on the floor. Her eyes widened when the floor flashed softly; confirming that something was on the floor that shouldn’t be there.

“Someone’s put a trap on the floor.” She said, Tonks and Neville looking at the corner and the floor.

Tonks glanced at Hermione, shock spreading through her body when she realized that Hermione had been able to detect the trap before they had sprung it. Looking at Neville, she nearly fell over when she saw the same flash in the blonde’s eyes. Neville promptly grabbed Hermione’s and Tonks’ hands and led them down the opposite way without a word. He stopped once they were a few feet away from the corner and reached up, twisting a lamp on the wall and causing a small section of the wall to slide away; revealing a hidden passage.

“Harry and Dean showed me where this is. It leads down to the main floor though in a hallway that isn’t normally used too often.” He explained, waiting for Tonks to cast Lumos before they headed down the short flight of stairs.
“Hermione, how did you know there was a trap on the floor?” Tonks asked, her voice soft as Hermione seemed to falter in her step before she continued walking.

“It’s just something I’ve always been able to sense.” She said, her voice soft as she shrugged lightly.

“I could tell there were others waiting around the corner. I always chalked it up to being my magic helping me out. It helped me to hide from my Uncle when I was younger.” Neville chimed in, not wanting Hermione to feel like the odd one out.

“Well, there’s nothing wrong with having some added senses. I just wouldn’t go around telling others about them.” Tonks said, her voice firm as the two First Years looked at her and nodded.

“Do you know who was waiting around the corner?” She asked, looking at Neville who shifted uneasily before nodding.

“Yeah. I could read their auras. It was Malfoy, Nott, Parkinson and Dragon-Heart. I wouldn’t be surprised if they were waiting to attack Hermione and I. Malfoy would see it as a way to get to Harry.” He said, Hermione scowling as she thought of the group.

“Everyone knows that Harry is fiercely protective of his friends. He’d likely do something foolish and rash if we were attacked.” She said, shaking her head as Tonks snorted lightly.

“That’s an understatement. Though, don’t you have your charm bracelet, Hermione?” She asked, watching as Hermione flushed and shifted.

“I…I took it off while we were training and I forgot to put it back on. No one besides my friends and you know that the bracelet is enchanted. Malfoy and his lot would’ve found out if I had been wearing it and the jinxes bounced off.” Hermione said, Tonks and Neville nodding in agreement.

“You should put it back on. Malfoy and the others will be angry that their little ambush didn’t work. I just hope they remember to take down whatever trap they had set up.” Tonks said, frowning as she thought of the injuries that could happen to innocent students.

“I think it was a Tripping jinx. Malfoy would’ve wanted to take us out when we’re down. I’m surprised they didn’t back away when they heard you join us.” Hermione said, watching as Neville reached up and opened another hidden door.

“Remember, Mione, this is Malfoy we’re talking about. He’s proving to be slightly more intelligent than Ronald. If they had been caught by Tonks they would’ve been in serious trouble unless they attempted to knock her out as well.” Neville said, the two girls scoffing and shaking their heads as they headed out into the hallway.

Heading through the halls, they made it to the Great Hall without any incident. Malfoy and his goons were already sitting at the Slytherin table and they glared at the trio fiercely when they entered the enormous room. Hermione and Neville rolled their eyes and joined their friends at the Gryffindor table, to which they hurriedly piled food on their plates before telling their friends about Malfoy’s latest attempted ambush. Tonks, meanwhile, wrote down a small message and duplicated it before cupping it in her hand. A faint light flashed between her hands and she glanced up at the head table. Professor Snape had been watching her and thus had noticed what she had done. He nodded sharply to her before going back to his meal. Professor McGonagall blinked and lightly patted one of the pockets of her robe. Looking at the House Tables, she caught Tonks’ eye and nodded slightly; silently telling the young woman that she had gotten the note.

Tonks only got the chance to meet with the two Master Assassins when classes were done for the
day. Professor McGonagall sent her a messenger patronus when she was in her dorm room asking her to come to the Room of Requirement. Tonks hurried to comply, telling her friends in the common room that she needed some air. Heading up to the seventh floor, she used some of the new hidden passages that Harry and Dean had shown her to make it there in five minutes. She was slightly surprised to see Harry, Dean and the twins there as well. All of them looked at each other in confusion before heading through the door when it appeared before them. Stepping into the room, they found themselves in a common room type area with plenty of chairs and a few couches for them to sit on. Professors Snape and McGonagall were already seated in chairs near each other.

“Please, sit. There’s something we must talk about.” Severus said, nodding to the couches and chairs.

The group headed over and sat down; waiting for a tea service to appear on the coffee table in front of them before the two masters began speaking.

“During lunch Trainee Tonks brought to our attention that Miss Hermione Jean Granger and Mister Neville Francis Longbottom may be Assassins.” Minerva began, watching as her Lions looked at Tonks in shock.

Tonks, at the prompting of Professor Snape, explained what had happened in the hallway and during her chat with Hermione and Neville. Severus wasn’t happy in learning that four of ‘his’ Snakes had been prepared to ambush Hermione and Neville, though his displeasure increased when Tonks explained that, according to Neville, they hadn’t backed down when she joined them either. For the four First Years to be prepared to attack not only two other First Years but the Head Girl as well spoke volumes about Draco’s arrogance and his belief that he can’t do wrong. All of them were greatly interested in learning that Hermione can sense and see magical and non-magical traps while Neville can see auras. Both were rare but coveted abilities in the Brotherhood.

“Now, we will obviously cast the spell to determine if Miss Granger and Mister Longbottom are, indeed, Assassins but what happens after is something we want to discuss with you.” Minerva explained, the others nodding slowly.

“Miss Granger is a Muggleborn; thus her parents will also be in danger when we inform them about their daughter’s abilities. Mister Thomas-Woods, we’d like you and your mother to be there when we inform them.” Severus added, Dean blinking before nodding in understanding.

“Mister Longbottom, on the other hand, has been raised by his grandmother. As a Pureblood, she and Neville should be more accepting of the idea. However, Harrison, we’d like you to be there since you are Mister Longbottom’s godbrother. I believe Mister Longbottom would be more comfortable knowing that you’re a trainee and also there for moral support.” Minerva said, watching as Harry thoughtfully looked at the ground.

“I have another idea.” Harry said, making the others look at him.

“Why not have the Grangers and Madame Longbottom visit my family’s house and tell them all then? It would be easier to explain everything and they’ll be able to meet my parents, Dean, his mum and Tonks and her parents. Not only that, but I was thinking of inviting Fred and George to join Dean and I at Othello Estate for the holidays. That way they can continue their training and spend time with friends rather than be stuck here with Ronnikins and Percy.” Harry said, looking at the twins and grinning at their wide-eyed look.

“We’d love to!” Fred gushed, a grin on his face as his twin nodded rapidly.
“We just need to get permission from Dad but I’m sure he’ll have no problem with us staying with you. He’ll likely just tell Mum we’re spending the holiday with Lee or another of our friends.”

George added, eagerness in his voice as the others smiled.

“Hermione and Neville will feel more comfortable if we’re around when they learn about what their talents mean.” Dean said, smiling at his professors/trainers.

“Though…there might be a problem with Hermione’s dad…” George muttered, making Harry, Dean and Fred wince while the others looked at him in confusion.

“What do you mean?” Severus asked, frowning lightly as the group looked at each other.

“Hermione’s dad has a real problem with her being a Witch. Apparently he keeps hinting that she’ll want to come back home and go back to her normal schooling. He doesn’t like the idea of her having magic and being ‘different’. It’s causing a lot of problems at home.” Harry said, his voice soft as Minerva sighed.

“Admittedly I had feared this. Mister Granger reacted negatively when I first visited them when Hermione turned eleven. Missus Granger, however, made sure that they all heard me out and asked if I give them time to think about everything. I honestly feared that Miss Granger wouldn’t be joining us here at Hogwarts. However, I believe that Miss Granger and her mother convinced Mister Granger to allow her to come here.” Minerva said, making the others sigh.

“Sadly, magic has created many problems in families. We have quite a few children who are orphans or are living with relatives because their parents or guardians couldn’t handle the idea of them being able to wield magic.” Severus said, scowling as he thought of his own father and how Tobias abused him and his mother when he was young.

“Well, we can only hope that Hermione and her mum can make her dad see sense.” Tonks said, the others nodding in agreement.

As they entered December the Heads of Houses began taking down names of those who were heading home and those who were staying at the school over the holidays. Fred and George eagerly wrote to their dad asking for permission to stay with Harry and Dean during the holidays. Arthur responded back the next morning giving them permission. He also explained that construction has already begun on the house and all of their things are now in storage. Molly and Ginny are already in Romania spending time with Charlie and Bill who is visiting Charlie as well. Fred and George were more than happy with this and eagerly signed up with Professor McGonagall with the information that they’re staying at a friend’s house. Percy was rather accepting of this and was also heading to a friend’s house though Ron was rather upset that his brothers have already found someone to stay with. He certainly didn’t want to be the only one of his family here at the school so he accepted Seamus’ offer of heading to the Irish boy’s house.

Their professors were beginning to crack down on their assignments, tests and quizzes. Hermione loved the extra work and was often asking her professors if there was anything she could do for extra credit. Her friends tried to get her to calm down, though they were used to Hermione’s…exuberance when it came to her grades and assignments. They talked about what they were hoping to do over the holiday. Hermione complained about how her dad always tried to get her and her mum to go on a ski trip in France even though she and her mum never really enjoyed going skiing before. However, she did hope for her aunt and uncle to visit sometime during the holidays. Neville explained that his holiday was likely to be rather boring since his grandmother normally went to the Ministry’s Yule Ball and he was either left at the manor or had to go with her. Susan had the same problem, though
she often spent time at Hannah’s house. Hannah explained that she’ll have to deal with her brother’s girlfriend visiting this holiday which she wasn’t really looking forward to.

“It’s not that I don’t mind Miranda, it’s just that I could do without seeing them draped all over each other.” Hannah sighed, finishing up her stretches.

“Your brother’s in…Ravenclaw, right?” Hermione asked, heading over to the balance beam as Hannah shook her head.

“Hufflepuff. He’s a Sixth Year and a prefect.” Hannah corrected, watching as Hermione stepped onto the balance beam and began walking across.

“Tracy’s brother is in Ravenclaw: Roger. He’s been made Quidditch captain this year and has been driving Tracy insane.” Susan added, Jillian frowning as she looked at her friend.

“What do you mean?”

“Well, Roger was hoping that Tracy wouldn’t be in Slytherin. He’s been overprotective of her since the start of the year. He’s also on the lookout for any…boys who take an interest in his little sister.” Susan explained, the others shaking their heads and giggling lightly.

“You’ve noticed how protective Harry and Dean are, right?” Eliana asked, her voice hushed as they looked over to the other side of the room where the boys were working out.

“Really?!” Hermione asked, her eyes wide as the other girls looked at her with incredulous looks.

“Hermione, hardly anyone dares to approach us or attempt to harm us because of Harry, Dean and now Neville. Malfoy and his lot along with Ron and his group are the only exceptions to that. Not only that, but I’ve seen many older girls giving us rather…nasty looks.” Eliana said, shuddering lightly as Hannah and Susan nodded.

“It’s because those three are considered three of the richest students in our school. Harry stands to inherit two massive fortunes and possibly a third if his godfather doesn’t marry and have an heir of his own. The Longbottom fortune isn’t anything to sneeze at either; nor is the Woods fortune. All four families belong to the Most Ancient and Noble class and anyone who will marry into those families will be instantly respected. Even if they’re from a ‘lower’ class they’ll be catapulted into the highest class of society.” Jillian explained, the others nodding in agreement and growing understanding.

“Those other girls see us as potential threats and will try to think of ways to either get the boys away from us or become a part of our group.” Susan added, heading over the built-in trampoline in the floor.

Hermione shook her head as she thought of everything that she’s learned from her friends. The politics going on in the school were hard to follow and now she has to worry about others trying to worm their way into their group of friends in order to get close to the boys in hopes of dating and eventually marrying them. But…it did make sense about some of the things she’s been seeing lately. Cho Chang, a rather pretty older Ravenclaw, has been sneering and scowling whenever they’re in the Great Hall. Not only that, but some of the other girls in their year and above have been eyeing them with rather…envious looks now that she’s thought about it. Shaking her head, she turned her attention back to her workout.

Things continued at a normal pace with the group working on their casting speed and accuracy once they finished their physical workout. The twins were a great help in this and the Room provided
them prizes for whoever managed to get the fastest time or more accurate shots whenever they had a competition. While they practiced, Harry told the twins what they could expect at his house and what his little sister is like. The twins were more than excited to see Harry’s home and were rather interested in meeting all of the other Assassins and their trainers. Millicent told them that she’s looking forward to heading back to the orphanage to see her brother again. Susan extended the invitation for the New Years party at Bones Manor to include Millicent’s little brother and encouraged Harry to bring his sister as well. She didn’t want to exclude anyone from the party and couldn’t see any harm in inviting close siblings.

None of them were looking forward to doing their Christmas shopping; especially since they left on the twenty-second which gave them the twenty-third to shop and then Christmas Eve. It also meant that Diagon Alley will be extremely busy with students and family doing all their shopping that they hadn’t been able to do while they were in school. Of course, Third Years and up were lucky since they got a Hogsmeade visit on the twenty-first. They could get most of their shopping done then, though the younger years had to wait until the break began. Of course all of them made lists of what they’d like for gifts and the twins were glad that they had worked hard that summer so they have enough money to purchase gifts for all their friends and family. Throughout the rest of their workout and practice, they laughed and joked around; talking about their families and bemoaning the fact that their professors will be giving them assignments to complete over the holidays.

“I overheard Ronnikins talking a few days ago.” Fred said, the group stopping to look at him.

“Oh?” Millicent asked, accepting a towel from Hermione and wiping the sweat from her forehead.

“He and Seamus haven’t given up on whatever the Cerberus is guarding on the third floor. They overhead Hagrid muttering about it so Seamus asked him if he knew what was on the third floor.” George explained, the others frowning as they thought of what Hagrid might accidently reveal.

“What did Hagrid say?” Harry asked, concern for the gentle man.

“Well, he said that Ron and Seamus shouldn’t go digging around in matters that don’t concern them. Apparently whatever is beneath the trapdoor is between Professor Dumbledore and Nicolas Flamel.”

“Since then Ronnie and his friends have been trying to find anything on Nicolas Flamel. Though they haven’t had any luck.”

Harry and the others frowned as they thought about what the twins had just told them. For Harry, the name Nicolas Flamel rang a bell in his mind though he couldn’t quite put his finger on it. Hermione, of course, wanted to instantly head to the library and look up possible books that might hold information on Flamel, though Fred and George explained that Ron and his group has already looked through many books which might’ve held any information about the Wizard.

“I can ask my parents, Mione. Who knows, perhaps a book in our family library has information on him. I can also check the Potter library at my manor.” Harry offered, blinking when Hermione whipped around and looked at him with wide eyes.

“You have a library?!” She asked, awe in her voice as Harry blinked again and nodded slowly.

“Yeah, of course. All pureblood and some halfblood families have libraries in their main ancestral homes. The Othello library is in our estate, the Potter library is in our estate and my godfather has his library at Black Manor though he has a smaller library in Grimmauld Place. I also have a smaller library in Potter Manor.” Harry explained, the others nodding.

“We have a library at home too.” Susan chimed in, smiling as Hermione looked at them all with wide
“The Goblins and our former House Elves managed to save the Woods library and put all the books into a library trunk. It’s in the family main vault.” Dean said, chuckling as Hermione nearly vibrated in excitement.

“The Goblins and our former House Elves managed to save the Woods library and put all the books into a library trunk. It’s in the family main vault.” Dean said, chuckling as Hermione nearly vibrated in excitement.

“You can always visit our homes sometime during the school holidays, Mia. Remember, there’s Christmas break, Spring Break and then the summer. Spring break is only for a week but that’s still a week where you could visit for a few days.” Neville said, smiling kindly at his friend.

“My mum and I had made a kind of library in the basement of our home. We both love reading and wanted a place to store all our books. Dad wasn’t too happy since he had hoped to turn the basement into his ‘man cave’ but mum had a small outer building made for his space.” Hermione said, blinking with some of the others looked at her in confusion.

“Man cave?” Susan asked, frowning as Neville shrugged.

“It’s kind of like the ladies parlor, Nev, just for men.” Harry clarified, Hermione and Eliana nodding.

“Oh.” Neville said, tilting his head to the side as he thought about it.

They soon finished their training and began heading out to get ready for their evening classes. However, Harry called Neville and Hermione back and asked them to remain behind. The pair were confused, but they stayed back and waited for the last of their friends to leave.

“What’s up?” Hermione asked, blinking when Harry pulled out two envelops.

“My parents would like to meet your parents, Mione and your grandmother, Nev. They would like to speak with them the day we head back so they were thinking of picking up all of us from King’s Cross and we’ll head back to our house in Tandridge. It’s about a…private matter.” Harry said, watching as Neville and Hermione looked at him with concern.

“Is everything okay?” Hermione asked, concern in her voice as she accepted the letter from Harry.

“Yeah, everything’s fine.” Harry said, smiling gently at Hermione as Neville looked at him closely.

“It’s about House matters, isn’t it?” He asked, blinking when Harry rubbed the back of his neck and shifted.

“Kinda. It’s rather…sensitive information that I shouldn’t talk about without your parents here. Fred, George, Dean and Tonks know; only because they went through the same thing with their parents.” Harry explained, Hermione and Neville looking at each other in confusion before nodding.

“We’ll send these home right away. How would my parents get to and from your house? It’s quite the drive for them to make.” Hermione said, frowning as she thought of the route her parents would have to take.

“There’s a small silver hoop in the envelope which is a passphrase activated portkey. When they grab onto the portkey, all they have to do is say the activation phrase and they’ll be portkeyed to the enclosed backyard of my house. The letter to your grandmother, Nev, includes the floo address and password so she can floo to my house. You’ll be able to portkey back home, Hermione.” Harry said, the pair nodding in understanding.

Hermione and Neville headed out of the room and hurried to Gryffindor tower. Both of them split up and headed to their dorm rooms where they sent the letters home. Hermione was, admittedly,
nervous about her parents’ meeting Harry and his parents along with her other friends. While she wasn’t worried about her mum, she was worried about her dad. Her dad might see this as more confirmation that she has no intention of leaving the Magical world and he might try to keep her from hanging out with her friends during the holidays. Of course her mum wouldn’t let that happen, but it’ll only add more friction to their relationship. The letters from her mum haven’t said anything about the true friction going on between her parents. She’s always been close with her mum though things between her and her dad had always been…strained at best.

Her dad had always wished to her be more athletic. When she joined the youth football league he had been so proud of her; especially when she became the star striker. However, whenever she devoted more time to her books and studies he would always just watch her or would try and pull her away from her books to get outside or make friends with others. Whenever he and her mum were called to the school because of bullies, her dad would defend her but in private he would encourage her to stick up for herself and not give her fellow classmates a reason to bully her. He just didn’t really understand her struggles or her love of books and learning. It had always been her mum who had encouraged her to read and learn though she also encouraged her to try and make friends at the same time.

“Maybe Dad will change his mind about everything once he meets Harry and the others.” She muttered, closing her mailbox and setting it down on the shelf on her headboard.

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Hermione and Neville received word from their respective guardians that they’ll be at Harry’s house on the twenty-second. Time seemed to fly by as the students gathered their holiday assignments and took their end of term tests for their classes. Fred and George were excited to be heading to Othello Estate and couldn’t wait to meet other Assassins like them. Of course they did promise to visit their friend Lee sometime during the holidays, since they would’ve spent the holiday at Lee’s house if Harry hadn’t offered. They were very happy to be out from under their mother’s thumb for the holiday though they expected to get a letter telling them that she’s disappointed that they weren’t spending the holiday watching over ickle Ronnikins. They also noticed that Percy seems to be spending a lot of time with the female Ravenclaw Prefect: Penelope Clearwater. The urge to tease their older brother about his obvious crush was highly tempting but their female friends scolded them and warned them to leave Percy alone less they find themselves pranked heavily.

Five feet of snow blanketed Hogwarts and its grounds. The students could be found outside having snowball wars, ice-skating on the frozen Great Lake and building various snow forts and sculptures. Fred, George and Lee got into trouble for charming snowballs to follow Professor Quirrell around and bounce off the back of his turban. They ended up spending the night before they left for King’s Cross in detention with Professor Snape cleaning cauldrons. The morning that the Hogwarts Express left, everyone was up early and ensuring their trunks were packed and ready. Rickie and Mira were noticeably excited as the pair were constantly playing and running/flying around. Breakfast was a hurried affair before everyone was ushered outside and to the carriages. Harry and his friends said goodbye to Hagrid on the way out and the man smiled and wished them a happy holiday; to which Norbert rumbled at them and nuzzled against Mira before the group hurried outside.

“So auntie said that the idea of a New Years party sounds great. She plans on letting me do all the planning for the party since it was my idea.” Susan said, excitement in her voice as the others smiled.

“I know my parents won’t have a problem in letting me, Eliza and the twins go.” Harry said, rubbing Mira’s head as she nuzzled against his neck.

“My mum won’t have a problem with it. She’s always talking about me needing to get out of the
“I’ll need to talk to the matron about me and Will coming but it shouldn’t be a problem. Older teens at the orphanage are always flooing or portkeying to their friend’s houses or parties.” Millicent said, a soft smile on her face.

“I’ll have to talk with Gran but there shouldn’t be too much of a problem. She’s always having to leave me at home because she has to attend a party herself.” Neville admitted, shifting in his seat as the others looked at him.

“It’ll be up to my parents as well. Dad might want me home during the holiday.” Hermione said, her voice soft as Eliana and Jillian cuddled in close to her.

“My parents will be all too happy to let me go. It’ll be a heck of a lot more fun than any of the parties that my parents hold.” Jillian said, rolling her eyes as she thought of some of the previous parties her parents had held.

“I should be allowed to go. I know my parents are glad that I have so many friends so it shouldn’t be a problem.” Eliana said, the others nodding happily.

They soon arrived in Hogsmeade and joined the long line to find their trunks and other luggage before slowly making their way onto the Express. Eliana found them a compartment near the back of the train; two cars away from Draco and his goons thankfully. Putting their trunks up on the storage rack, they settled down and began pulling out things to do on the ride back home. Hermione began reading ahead in Potions while Eliana, Jillian, Hannah and Susan talked and giggled together while looking over the latest edition of Teen Witch Weekly. Harry and Mira read a Defense book the Room had provided him while Dean and Neville played a game of Exploding Snap. It wasn’t long before the train started moving and Fred and George popped into the compartment to check on things and to ask Harry where he wanted them to meet him and his parents at the station.

“If you want to wait up and follow me and the others off of the train then we’ll find them easily and we won’t have to track you down.” Harry suggested, grinning as the twins blinked before grinning at him.

“Sure thing-“

“-Harry-kins!”

Harry rolled his eyes and tossed a ball of wadded up parchment at the twins as they retreated out of the compartment. It wasn’t much longer before Hermione finished her book and joined the other girls in talking about the latest fashions and celebrity gossip. Harry, Dean and Neville soon began a game of hangman, which also drew the attention of the girls and it became a rather interesting game; especially when Hermione thought of the word or phrase they had to guess. Hermione was cackling evilly the more frustrated the group became before she finally relented and began giving them clues by pointing to certain things or miming things. It certainly made things interesting and rather fun since they were then guessing what Hermione was trying to tell them. After a few games of hangman, they then decided to try their hand at charades, which generated a lot of laughter and some rather hilarious scenarios. Sadly, not everything could continue to go smoothly for the group of friends.

It was as Neville was pantomiming flying a broom when the door to their compartment was rudely opened. Ronald, Seamus, Lavender and Parvati stood there, causing Neville to nearly trip and fall.

“What the bloody hell was that, Squib? Trying to show the others how a Pureblood shouldn’t act?”
Ronald asked, smirking as his friends laughed while Neville’s face turned red in embarrassment. “What Neville was doing is none of your business, Weasley.” Jillian snapped, scowling as the redhead looked at her and sneered. “No one asked you, freak.” Ron hissed, though he paled slightly when Jillian hissed at him; revealing a pair of elongated fangs. “Don’t bother, Jillie. He’s not worth getting expelled over. It doesn’t matter if you and your family have diplomatic immunity here; his blood would likely poison you with how much fatty foods he eats.” Susan said primly, mentally smirking as three of the group in front of them paled. “Besides, you don’t want to get your blouse messy. I’ve heard that blood is very hard to get out of clothing.” Millicent said, patting Jillian’s hand as the half-Vampire slowly calmed. “You’re right, Millie. I think my great-great-great-grandfather would be most disappointed that my first real kill was wasted on such a…insignificant speck of a human being.” Jillian said, smirking as Ron paled drastically and took a step back. Thankfully Lavender and Parvati had enough sense to grab the boys and drag them away before they could open their mouths and say something that’ll get them hexed or worse. Neville shook his head and closed the compartment door once more before they returned to their game. Fed and George stopped by after a few minutes; asking what had happened between them and Ron since their little brother had come running to them complaining that his life was being threatened. Of course they didn’t believe a word out of his big mouth and Jillian and the others explained what had happened. Fred and George groaned at the stupidity of their youngest brother and apologized to Neville and Jillian on behalf of their family. They also told the group that the snack cart was on its way. The group waited for the snack cart and bought enough snacks and drinks to last for the rest of the trip home. After settling down with their snacks and drinks with the door closed, they talked softly amongst each other. However, Harry paused when his communications mirror began vibrating in his pocket. Setting down his things, he dug out the small item and flipped it open, grinning when he saw the image of his godfather in the mirror. “Hey, Padfoot.” He said, grinning as Sirius smiled at him. “Hey, Pup. How’s the ride home?” “Long as usual. What’s up? Where are you?” Harry asked, frowning as he peered into the background and saw various people moving around behind his godfather. “I’m currently at the International Portkey terminal. Kano and I are heading to Japan for the holidays. I’m sorry I won’t be there to see you, Pup. But…I want to ask Kano’s father for his blessings. I want to propose to her.” Sirius said, rubbing the back of his neck as Harry’s eyes widened before he beamed at the man. “That’s great! Just don’t let Lord Saito intimidate you. He’s allies with our family and knows you’re my godfather.” Harry said, Sirius nodding lightly. “I’ll try to keep my cool. It’s bound to be interesting.” Sirius said, a hint of nervousness in his voice as Harry smiled. “It’ll be fine, Siri. Remember, translation charms can only go so far.” Harry advised, his godfather snorting lightly before he looked ‘off camera’.
“Well, I gotta go, Pup. Kano’s back from using the facilities and our turn for our portkey is almost ready. I’ll talk to you again soon. Have fun and behave!” Sirius said, making Harry laugh.

“You too. Give Kano a hug for me.” He said, his godfather nodding before ending the connection.

Harry shook his head fondly before putting away the communications mirror. He rejoined the conversation in which he told his friends a little about Kano and how she and his godfather had met. Hermione and the other girls thought it was sweet that Kano and Sirius had met because Kano had been Harry and Dean’s private defense tutor when they were younger. Harry and Dean were all too happy to talk about Kano and their other tutors. Their friends were surprised in learning that Dean’s family lives on the grounds of Othello Estate, but it also made sense in a way. Thankfully the rest of the ride wasn’t interrupted by any annoying prats in the form of Malfoy and his group. Tonks did stop by and check on them. She ended up staying for a few minutes and just chatting about what she has planned for the holidays. It turns out that she and her parents are going to be heading to America to visit her dad’s brother and his family.

Harry was slightly upset that his cousin wouldn’t be joining him and his family for the holiday, but she promised to be back in time for New Years, which Susan happily extended the invitation for the party to her. Surprisingly, her aunt was allowing all of them to spend the night and there will be fireworks at midnight to celebrate the coming year. All of them were excited about this, especially since Susan was planning on getting the fireworks from Sirius and Remus’ store which meant that the fireworks would last longer and would form shapes and patterns in the air. For Hermione and Eliana, this was rather surprising and every exciting for them and they couldn’t wait to get permission from their parents. Harry expressed his happiness at having a reason to avoid the Ministry’s Yule ball. His parents didn’t want to make him, Dean and the twins attend the ball and they felt rather confident that the other Assassins on the estate could keep the group out of trouble. Remus was planning on spending the holiday there as well which was reason for even more excitement.

Tonks soon left to continue her patrol of the train. The twins rejoined them and were soon talking about what they wanted to get their parents and siblings for presents.

“Mum sent us a letter yesterday.” George said, digging through the pockets of his jeans.

“Oh?” Millicent asked, tilting her head to the side as the two redheads sighed and nodded.

“Ronnikins complained that we were ‘abandoning’ him by wanting to spend the holiday with Harry.” Fred said, the others scoffing and rolling their eyes.

“Of course she told us to change our plans so we can take care of precious little Ronnie. Never mind the fact that Dad already gave us permission to go.” George said, finally pulling out a folded piece of parchment.

“She demanded that George, Percy and I spend the holiday with Ronnie and devote our time to him. Merlin forbid we actually want to do something other than spend time with ickle Ronnikins.” Fred drawled, shaking his head as George passed around the letter to the others.

“What the-?!” Hermione muttered, her eyes wide as she read the letter in disbelief.

“T-This is basically having you watch him every day!” She exclaimed, frowning as she re-read the letter again.

Fred, George.
Ron wrote to me telling me that you both are planning on heading to a friend’s house for the holiday and leave him behind at school. Is that anyway to treat family?! Honestly, your father and I raised you both better than that. It’s bad enough that your father, Ginny and I are unable to have you all join us in Romania. Add in the fact that Percy has already made plans to leave the school and spend the holiday with his new girlfriend and her family. You should be spending the holiday with your younger brother; not going off and leaving him alone.

I don’t care if your father has already agreed that you can go to your friend’s house. You should go and tell Professor McGonagall that you’ve changed your mind and are staying behind to spend time with Ron. Next Christmas should see all of you coming home for the holidays. The new house should be done sometime late February to early March. For the last month or so of construction your father, Ginny and I will be staying on the grounds of our property in a tent. Once the house is finished we may pull all of you out of school for a few weekends so you can personalize your new rooms and bathroom.

We’ve already decided that you both will get your own room with a shared bathroom between them. Because of your new…occupation, your father has also given the two of you a work room near your rooms. I expect you both to keep that room clean along with your bathroom. Ron and Percy will share a bathroom with Bill and Charlie’s room having a bathroom between them as well. Their rooms will mostly be used as guest rooms and their effects will be stored in the new basement storage room.

I expect to receive a from either one of you or Ron telling me that you two are going to spend the holidays with Ron at the castle.

Love,

Mum

“Wow…she really expects you to listen to her, doesn’t she?” Hannah asked, surprise in her voice as the twins nodded.

“Yup.”

“Mum always gets her way less we want to get a howler from her. Those are the worst.” George said, his brother shuddering at the thought.

“Katie was telling us about them. Apparently you can hear them four floors up.” Jillian said, frowning at the thought.

“Thankfully we were spared because Ronnie decided to spend the holiday with Seamus and we think that Dad intervened.” Fred said, accepting the letter back and stuffing it back into his pocket after folding it.

“Well, let’s do something to pass time. Enough talking about Ronald.” Hermione said, the others laughing even though they agreed with her whole heartedly.

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The train pulling into the station saw the twins helping the First Years by shrinking their trunks for them. The group thanked the twins profusely before joining the crowd of students filling the main car to get off the train. It was slow moving and Dean was very glad he had managed to coax Ricki back into his carrier so he wouldn’t get lost or accidently get squished by the press of bodies. When they finally stepped off the train, they began looking around in an attempt to spot their parents and
guardians. Tonks easily found them and joined their group. She was the one who spotted her parents, Harry’s parents, Remus and the Abbotts standing off to the side of the main platform and away from the crowd. With Tonks and the twins leading the way, the group hurried over to the adults.

“Harry!”

Harry laughed and swept Eliza into the air; spinning her around as she squealed and giggled in delight. Delilah stepped forward and hugged her son tightly as soon as he let Eliza down before hugging Dean. Lucas beamed at his son before shaking hands with the twins. Introductions were made and Jillian and Eliana hurried into the crowd as soon as they spotted their parents. They only had to wait a few moments before Eliana led a rather stunningly beautiful couple over. It was easy to see where she had gotten her looks and her parents were rather happy to meet all of their daughter’s new friends. Jillian returned with her parents; in which her mother caused a lot of people nearby to slowly back away at the aura of power that radiated from her. All of them greeted Evangeline Michaels with respect which made the Vampiress smile warmly at them.

They spoke for a little while until Millicent saw one of the workers from the orphanage beckoning to her. She promised to keep in touch with them all and that she will see them all at Susan’s for the party. It wasn’t long after that, that Jillian left with her parents since her little sister had been left at home with the nanny. Hannah and Susan left with Hannah’s parents a few minutes later once Hannah’s brother joined them.

“The Grangers and Augusta are waiting for us at our house. We’ll be portkeying there.” Lucas said, leading the group further away from the shrinking crowds and to the portkey area.

“Have you used a portkey before, Hermione?” Neville asked, looking at the brunette as Lucas pulled out a golden chain.

“Yes. One of the first things that was covered in my Customs class was various ways that Magicals travel. We used a portkey to go to Diagon Alley and to Phoenix Town.” Hermione said, shifting and grabbing onto the chain tightly.

After ensuring everyone was gripping onto the chain tightly, in which Mira was gripping onto Harry’s chest, Luca muttered the activation phrase. Hermione winced as she felt the jerk behind her navel and the world disappeared around her in a swirl of color. Looking around, she saw the others looked rather comfortable with this way of travel though she doubted that she’ll ever truly get used to it for awhile now. It didn’t seem to take long before they began slowing down slightly and Hermione braced herself for impact. Touching down on the ground, she grunted slightly from the impact and stumbled, though Remus reached out quickly and steadied the brunette.

“Okay?” Remus asked, smiling gently as she flushed and nodded.

“Yeah, thanks.” She said, looking around the large enclosed backyard with interest.

“The key it to turn into the spin and almost prepare yourself for running.” Andromeda said, Hermione nodding her head in understanding.

The backyard is very spacious and is covered in two feet of snow. Looking around, Hermione spotted a rather large storage shed in a corner of the yard. She also spotted the pool cover on the ground and it was surrounded by a small fence so someone would stumble on it. She followed the others up to the porch and through the double French doors. They were instantly let into a large living room with many different chairs alongside the huge sectional. Dean was instantly pulled into his mother’s arms while his siblings surrounded him and clamored to hug him and ask him questions. Hermione squealed happily when she saw a beautiful brunette older woman with the same warm
cinnamon brown eyes as hers. She rushed forward and hugged her mum, making the woman smile and chuckle. Beside her on the couch is a rather handsome dark brown haired man with stern hazel eyes. While he smiled at his daughter, his smile was strained and he didn’t look too pleased to be there. Neville hurried forward and hugged his grandmother, to which she chuckled softly and hugged him back warmly.

“What did you think of traveling by portkey?” Hermione asked, detaching from her mum and hugged her dad.

“It was exciting! Remus and Ted were kind enough to make sure we didn’t fall.” Emma said, smiling at her daughter as Hermione giggled.

“It certainly saved us on petrol.” Richard said, wincing slightly at the stern look his wife gave him.

All of them settled down and Emma and Richard were rather surprised when a House Elf suddenly appeared and set down a tea and coffee service along with a few snacks. Augusta smiled at the look and quickly explained what a House Elf is to the Grangers, to which they were slightly alarmed in learning that they’re servants. However, Augusta, Andromeda and Delilah hurriedly explained that they treated their House Elves with respect and like they’re a part of the family; unlike some people who treated their House Elves horribly. Once they were all settled with something to drink and something to nibble on, Richard spoke up.

“So, why are we here?” He asked, frowning lightly as he looked at the Othellos.

“Augusta, I ask that you and the children take an oath not to repeat what we’re about to discuss with anyone else who doesn’t already know. This is due to the sensitive nature of what we’re about to discuss. Now, Richard, Emma, we will be placing a spell over you that will protect your minds from anyone who might try to enter it and read your thoughts.” Delilah said, watching alarm spread through the two Granger adults.

“Would someone try to do that?!” Emma asked, concern in her voice as Lucas sighed and nodded.

“Sadly yes. Hermione can and should learn Occlumency; the art of shielding her mind. It’s a useful skill and will also help her memory even more.” He explained, smiling softly at the eager look on Hermione’s face at the idea of learning something new.

Augusta looked to Andromeda and Ted, in which they nodded minutely. Delilah and Lucas walked Neville and Hermione through taking the oath and the trio soon gave their oath promising not to speak about what was going to be discussed with anyone other than those who already know. Emma quickly gave her permission to have the spell placed over her, though her husband seemed reluctant to accept it. However, when it became clear that his wife and daughter were going to learn with or without him, he nodded his acceptance and the spell was placed over him. All of them settled slightly, though there was a noticeable tension in the air as Delilah and Lucas mentally prepared themselves to tell the group about Assassins and Templars. They knew that Augusta would more than likely accept this given she’s already heard about them, but the Grangers were a whole different matter; especially since Harry had warned them of Richard’s…reluctance to even accept that his daughter is a Witch.

Starting at the beginning, Lucas and Delilah told the age-old story of Templars and Assassins. Hermione’s eyes were wide as she listened to the story; leaning forward on the edge of her seat as she absorbed all the information being given to her. Beside her, her mum gasped and listened with wide eyes, a hand covering her mouth as Delilah and Lucas talked about the constant struggles between the two groups. Augusta was shocked as well, though she was more shocked at the fact that her grandson is most likely an Assassin. After all, why else would they be telling her and the
Grangers this story? Harry, Dean, the twins and Tonks chimed in at different points during the story; adding in what they’ve learned and how things have gotten better for them over the years. Emma was shocked and concerned that Harry and Dean were learning how to become Assassins, though she refrained from saying anything as Lucas and Delilah began telling all of them about what training the children received and what expectations they had for when they graduate.

Tonks explained that her training will pick up even more once she graduates this year and she’ll be learning how to become a ‘full fledge’ Assassin and will begin going on missions with older, more seasoned Assassins. Dean’s siblings talked about how they live on the estate with Harry and his family along with the other Assassins and their families.

“How do you know Hermione is…an Assassin?” Emma asked, looking down at her daughter in concern.

“Dora here is the one who noticed Hermione and Neville using Eagle Sight which is a power that’s specially used by Assassins. She spoke to two Master Assassins who are at Hogwarts and they performed a simple spell on Hermione and Neville. It confirmed that they are Assassins. Harry and Dean were the ones who asked that we gather you here together and explain everything at once rather than asking you all to go to Hogwarts and speak with the Master Assassins privately.” Lucas said, Emma nodding lightly.

“What happens now?” Neville asked, glancing up at his grandmother who looked to be in deep thought.

“Well, you and Hermione will speak with your families about the possibility of accepting the fact that you are Assassins and if you will begin your training. All we ask for is an answer by the end of this year. We don’t expect an answer right away and we would actually refuse an answer so soon. Of course you and Hermione can talk with Harry, Dean, Fred, George and Tonks about their training and what would change.” Delilah said, smiling kindly at the blonde boy.

“I understand what you’re going through, Richard, Emma. I’m a single mother with all these ones to look after. I was also a nurse at the local hospital where we used to live. It came as a huge shock for me and I learned when Dean was around five.” Cassy said, smiling gently as Emma and Richard looked at her.

Hermione and Neville looked at each other thoughtfully. Learning this explained a lot about their friends that they had been confused about. Their extra ‘workouts’, the whispered conversations, Harry and Dean often disappearing with the twins to talk about something outside of the common room or up in the older boys’ dorm room…it all made sense now. Hermione looked to her parents and saw that her mum was struggling with wrapping her mind around all of this but she looked as if she was thinking it all over. However…her dad worried her. She could see his neck slowly becoming red which meant that he’s becoming angry and she could also see the anger and disbelief in his eyes. Worry and a small sense of fear rose within her at those signs; something bad was going to happen.

“You honestly expect us to believe this bull-shite?” Richard growled, making the others look at him with wide eyes.

“Richard!” Emma gasped, though she flinched slightly when he turned angry eyes at her.

“No, Emma, this has gone on far enough! Ever since that…that McGonagall woman came to our house and told some cock and bull story about Hermione being a Witch things have gone downhill. Now they’re peddling some shite story that Hermione has these special abilities that make her some kind of killer!” Richard snapped, the others staring at him in shock and alarm.
“But, Dad—“

“Enough, Hermione!” Richard growled, making his daughter flinch and huddle in close to her mother.

“We’re leaving, now. I’ll be pulling you from that… that school before this holiday is out. Say goodbye to everyone.” Richard ordered, standing up and striding towards the main hallway.

“It’s about damn time you go to a good school that will ready you for university so you can get an honest and good job. No more of this… hogwash.”

“I’m afraid you can’t do that, Richard.” Lucas said, his voice low but carrying strength as Richard froze and turned slowly to look at the other man.

“Like the bloody hell I can! Hermione is my daughter.” He growled, narrowing his eyes as Lucas looked at him calmly.

“That she is. However, when my wife and I visited you after Halloween and talked to both of you about Hermione’s magical guardianship, you already made your choice. You made me Hermione’s magical guardian. That means, in matters pertaining to the Magical world, I have a say. I will not allow you to pull Hermione out of Hogwarts unless both Emma and Hermione agree with you.” Lucas said, watching as Richard sneered at him.

“How dare—“

“Richard Daniel Granger! You will be silent!” Emma exclaimed, her husband looking at her in shock as Emma held onto a weeping Hermione tightly.

“Go into the kitchen, right now.” Emma hissed, glaring at her gaping husband before Richard scowled and stormed into the kitchen.

Emma looked down at her daughter and gently ran a hand through Hermione’s hair to soothe her. Seeing her daughter and thinking back to all the pictures and letters Hermione had sent home really made Emma think. Hermione had always been a lonely child. Her intelligence and eidetic memory had singled her out and made her an easy target for bullies. It also didn’t help that her teachers had complained to them about how far ahead Hermione was in school before they had managed to get Hermione placed into a special advanced class. When Professor McGonagall had come to their house and explained the strange events surrounding Hermione, Emma had been relieved and also in shock that magic is real. However, Richard had been so upset and had nearly demanded that McGonagall leave. He had wanted Hermione to continue her normal education and ignore her being a Witch but she had managed to get Richard to agree to let Hermione go to Hogwarts. Sadly, every few days he was constantly reminding her that Hermione would be all too willing to come back and stop this ‘utter nonsense’ as he called it.

He refused to see how happy their daughter is. However, she does. Hermione has so many friends and actually fits in at school. She had been shocked when Lucas and Delilah came and told them about the Troll that had gotten into Hogwarts and had nearly agreed with Richard in pulling Hermione out of there. However, Lucas and Delilah had explained everything and also taught them about magical guardians. It had been hard, learning that their opinions and wishes didn’t matter too much in the Magical world. They had taken a few minutes to decide to allow Lucas to become their daughter’s guardian after they had spoken to him and learned more about him and Delilah along with their children. Now, she’s grateful that Lucas is Hermione’s guardian. Richard can’t do anything unless she and Hermione agree with him and she certainly doesn’t agree with how her husband is acting right now.
“Hermione, stay here with your friends. Go ahead and go with them to wherever they’re staying for now. I’ll keep in touch and I’m sure they’ll let us spend some time together.” Emma said, giving her daughter a gentle smile as Hermione looked at her with worry and fear filled eyes.

“W-What about you?” She asked, blinking as her mum kissed her forehead.

“Your father and I have things to talk about.” Emma said, hugging Hermione tightly as the others looked at her in concern.

“Are you sure you’ll be alright?” Remus asked, worry in his voice as Emma smiled tiredly at him.

“I’m sure. Richard knows when he can get away with things but this has gone on too long. Is there a way I can get in touch with Hermione besides letters?” Emma asked, blinking when Delilah hurriedly pulled out a business card.

“This has the main phone. Just ask for Hermione and someone will get her. We can also arrange to have you brought to the estate since you’re officially ‘in’ on our secret.” Delilah explained, Emma nodding as she took the card.

“Thank you. Does the portkey bring us back to our house?” Emma asked, receiving a nod from Lucas.

“I’ll be back, hopefully with my husband, to ask more questions and to speak with you, Cassie, if you wouldn’t mind.” Emma said, smiling as the other woman smiled kindly.

“Of course, Emma.”

Emma stood and walked into the kitchen, frowning when she saw Richard pacing as he muttered under his breath about something. Sighing, she pulled out the portkey, a small rope, and walked over to him. Richard blinked and frowned when he saw that Hermione wasn’t with her, though he wisely kept his mouth shut. Taking hold of the portkey, Emma activated it and they disappeared from the kitchen. In the living room, Hermione sobbed quietly as Harry pulled her into his side and held onto her. The others were looking worriedly at Hermione, watching as Harry gently rocked her in his arms and tried his best to soothe her. Dean and Neville both looked worried but they also looked furious at the way Richard had acted and how he had tried to take Hermione from them. However, they knew that they couldn’t think about that right now, they have to be there for Hermione in her time of need right now. They’ve known for some time now that things at home for Hermione weren’t going well but this just slammed that fact home for them. Hopefully Emma will truly be alright and Richard won’t do something stupid.

“Augusta, would you like to see the Estate and meet some of the people who would be training Neville if you both decide to allow the training?” Lucas asked, watching as the formidable woman looked at him.

“I would like that. I also think it would be a good idea if the group isn’t parted for a while.” Augusta said, watching with pride in her eyes as her grandson comforted Hermione by gently rubbing her back.
Disclaimer: Harry Potter and co. don’t belong to me. Assassin’s Creed and co. don’t belong to me. I’m just taking some credit for the plot and original characters. Fire Lizards belong to the talented Anne McCaffrey. In no way, shape or form am I making money from this.

Main Story Warnings: A.U.-severe-, characters are OOC, canon is only a minor guideline, crossover, swearing, violence, gore, character death, Light Grey!Harry, Assassin!Harry, modern technology, OC’s abound, Ron!Molly!Ginny!Bashing, Dumbledore!Bashing

Pairings: James/Lily, Sirius/OFC, Remus/Surprise, Harry/Luna, Neville/Hermione, Dean/Millicent, others to be decided

Author’s Warning: Alright a big warning for this chapter. Please, pay attention. This chapter features domestic abuse of the verbal and physical nature. If any of you have gone through or know someone who has been abused by a loved one I am so terribly sorry and my heart goes out to you. This chapter also talks about divorce; something that has happened to many of my dear friends. I deeply and sincerely apologize if the first section of this chapter brings back any bad memories or causes a negative reaction. It is not my intention to harm any of my readers. However, this needs to happen in order for my story to advance in the way I wish it to. If you’d like to talk to someone about anything, anything at all there are help lines you can call and I’m sure your friends would be more than willing to hear you out. If you’d like to speak with me then I’m more than willing to respond to private messages.

Author’s Note: So, this chapter is mostly focusing on Hermione and Emma. However, there are some crucial plot points that are going to be introduced in this chapter as well. I’ll tell you this, coming up with a chapter title was hard for this one! Yes, I did make Richard out to be a bad guy, but it’s mostly because I’ve rarely read any stories where Hermione has a dysfunctional family. There have been some where her parents didn’t accept her for whatever reason but those are few and far between. Also, there will be another part to this series which will be dedicated to ‘short stories’. Those will mostly be one-shots featuring other characters and things that happen in the background that aren’t really shown in the main series. The first one is up if you want to read it! Thank you all for your wonderful support and for letting me know what you think! Please enjoy!

Challenge: DZ2’s Way of the Warrior challenge. For more information look to the first chapter or DZ2’s forums.

[Parseltongue]

[Telepathic Speech]
Emphasis on words/Spells

Text

Crowley

Emma stepped away from the living room where the portkey had deposited her and her husband. She knew that, right now, neither she nor Richard would be able to talk without screaming at each other. Right now, they need time to allow their tempers to cool and for them to think about what has happened. What Delilah, Lucas and the others had told them was…mind blowing! However, it was also very worrying. Their daughter is even more special than they had previously thought and has the necessary skills to become an Assassin. Whenever she thought of that word, she thought of ruthless killers who sought out targets. However, what Lucas and Delilah had told them was completely different than anything she had previous thought. The Assassins have a vast and rich history; have lives and fight for the freedom of others. Knowing her daughter as well as she does, Emma could honestly see how her daughter would easily fit into the role of an Assassin; though the thought of her daughter eventually learning how to kill unsettled her.

Taking a deep breath, Emma moved into the kitchen and began making herself a strong cup of coffee. She rolled her eyes when she heard the door to Richard’s study slam close. Their relationship had been a rather quick one. Both of them had met in History in college and Richard had approached her after they had worked on a few projects together. Admittedly, she had been overjoyed that such a handsome and popular young man had noticed her. She was like Hermione in that aspect; being overly shy and highly intelligent and she hadn’t thought highly of herself when she was younger. They had dated for half a year before Richard had surprised her by proposing. Her family had been shocked when she brought Richard home during the summer holidays and explained that they were now engaged. Her mother and father had warned her about such a fast moving relationship but she had been in love with Richard.

Thankfully, they had held off from marrying until they both graduated college. After that, they built and worked on opening and running their own dental practice. Neither of them wanted to bring a child into this world without having a steady and comfortable source of income and way of life. However, Emma had also begun to notice some…less than flattering things about her new husband that she hadn’t noticed before. He was rather petty and tended to mock others or even made fun of some people. Not only that, but when she suggested that they perhaps adopt he had flat out refused, stating that he will never look after someone else’s child that they couldn’t bother to care for. She had been appalled when he had said that and it had led to a rather heated argument between them at the time. She had told him before they had married about an accident she had been in when she was sixteen. The accident had been rather severe and the doctors had told her that her chance of getting pregnant and having a safe pregnancy had been lowered because of the surgeries she had to undergo during her recovery.

Richard had been shocked in learning that, but he had comforted her and reminded her that they could always go through fertility tests and go through the various ways to increase their chances of having a child. It had been in the second year of their marriage when they had begun trying to have a child. It had taken another year of tests and following her fertility cycles before, after a checkup at the doctors, they found out that she was pregnant. Things had been going well during the first few weeks of her pregnancy but after the second month, things began taking a downturn. Her body
became weak and the doctors had her on two different medications to help her keep her strength and ensure that she and her unborn daughter were getting the proper nutrients.

Sadly, she had developed prenatal depression and, even though she had gone through counseling during her pregnancy, little had helped. Richard had a hard time coping with her mood swings and her depression and it had resulted in many arguments and fights and they had actually begun sleeping apart after the fourth month of her pregnancy. By her seventh month she was on bedrest with restrictions on what she could and couldn’t do. When her water finally broke and she was rushed to the hospital, the doctors had to perform an emergency C-section when both her life and her baby’s life became endangered. Thankfully, both she and Hermione had come out of the operation healthy and safe. Her depression got better after a few months and she and Richard slowly repaired their fractured marriage. No, it wasn’t perfect, but they were talking and sharing the same bed once more. They bonded over their love for Hermione and things were stable again. However…it didn’t last when Hermione began displaying bouts of accidentally magic.

A normal seven month old baby shouldn’t be able to levitate her blocks or cause lights to flicker or even explode when they started crying or became frightened. Both of them were seriously worried about Hermione and the things happening around her. It only got worse as she got older too. When Hermione began displaying a higher intelligence and a startlingly excellent memory, things became strained between her and Richard once more. Richard wanted to take their daughter to the hospital to have tests performed on her to figure out what was happening but she refused to allow doctors and scientists perform tests on their little girl like some sort of lab rat. She fought against this tooth and nail with her husband and Richard finally gave up, knowing that he’d never win and she would likely kill him if he took Hermione to the doctors to get tests done behind her back.

When Hermione got older and started paying more attention to books and her studies than sports, fashion and children her own age, Richard began becoming withdrawn. He always tried to get Hermione to be more outgoing and had been overjoyed when she had joined the youth league football team. However, he had always tried to get her to ‘toughen up’ when dealing with the girls and boys who had bullied her about her intelligence and appearance. The relationship between her husband and their daughter was at best that of respect and love. However, there were many times when Hermione and Richard would argue. Hermione had certainly gotten her stubbornness from both of them and it caused her and Richard to clash often. Her daughter is very strong willed and has a strong sense of morals. She rarely backed down from an argument and that included arguments with her dad. It certainly didn’t help that Richard had often tried to use his ‘role’ as Hermione’s father to get her to do things that she didn’t want to do.

Days after Hermione’s eleventh birthday when Professor McGonagall had arrived at their house and turned their world upside down; Richard had nearly blown his top. She had been shocked herself, but Professor McGonagall had spent a good two hours explaining the Magical world and showing them simple but effective household charms and spells. She had also brought along a seemingly normal looking camping tent but inside supported four full bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room, a small kitchen and a small dining room. She and Hermione had been in awe over the tent though Richard had been…only slightly impressed but hadn’t been willing to fully accept that Hermione should go to Hogwarts. However, she had seen the longing in Hermione’s eyes. Hermione had always thought of herself as a freak because of the strange things that happened around her. Learning that those ‘things’ were just her magic reacting to her emotions and desires. Emma had just been relieved that nothing was wrong with her little girl.

Richard had been so angry when she had pushed for Hermione to go to Hogwarts. However, she flat out told him that they had been considering sending Hermione to a private school and it wasn’t like they couldn’t afford it. Sadly, just about every single day since Professor McGonagall had arrived Richard would say an odd comment or two about one of the private schools they had been
considering to send Hermione to in hopes of changing their daughter’s mind. Hermione actually got so sick and tired of hearing it that she refused to speak with her father for weeks or would ignore him every time he tried talking to her. When Hermione had gone to Hogwarts she had been worried about having Hermione away for so long. However, after those first letters telling her and Richard that Hermione has finally made friends who accept and encourage her was a relief. Her little girl was finally blossoming and has friends who accept her for all that she is. The small mailbox from Hermione’s friends had been a godsend, especially since it allowed them to communicate freely.

However, Richard simply wouldn’t let it go. He kept telling her that Hermione will come to her senses and will want to come home. No matter what the letters Hermione sent them said, he refused to believe that Hermione will want to continue her magical education. He ranted that she was giving up the potential for a good life by not continuing her ‘normal’ education and would end up poor and homeless because she wouldn’t be able to get a ‘good and honest’ job when she graduates Hogwarts.

He just didn’t understand that Hermione would have even more job opportunities and that the magical world even has universities so she’ll be able to get a good job just about anywhere. Hermione had also told them about how Harry and Dean are still continuing their Non-Magical education and she was thinking of doing the same thing during the holidays. It made her happy that her daughter wanted the best of both worlds and that the magical world was constantly advancing and was even starting to surpass their own world.

“And now this…” Emma sighed, cupping her mug of coffee in her hands.

Yes, the thought of Hermione being an Assassin is greatly worrying. However, Richard had handled the news in a wrong way. Instead of asking tons of questions and listening to everything that Delilah, Lucas and the Tonks’ were saying, he blew up at them and practically dragged their daughter away from her friends. Never before had she been so happy that she and Richard had met Lucas and Delilah after Halloween and spoke with them. At that meeting, she had been horrified in learning about a dangerous ‘being’ breaking into the school and posing a huge threat to her daughter. She had nearly agreed with Richard in pulling Hermione out of school and re-enrolling her into a normal school.

However, Lucas and Delilah had explained that Non-Magicals or ‘Muggles’ like her and Richard have very little say in the Magical world still. It shocked her knowing that so many lost their children due to their inability to have much say over what they were doing in the Magical world. The thought of losing Hermione brought her to tears and she had been relieved when Lucas offered to become Hermione’s magical guardian and he would consult them with anything major that needed the permission of her magical guardian so they could still have an input in their daughter’s life. Richard hadn’t been too happy, big surprise there, but he had been willing to meet with Lucas and Delilah for lunch or other meals to get to know the couple better. Lucas and Delilah were wonderful people and Emma found herself getting along well with both of them while Richard merely seemed to tolerate their presence. He seemed to humor them and she had often caught him frowning at them as they left or muttering under his breath after they had left.

“Have you finally come to your senses?”

Emma blinked and looked up, watching as Richard stood in the archway with a fierce scowl on his face.

“What do you mean?” She asked, her voice guarded as she set down her mug.

“You know damn well what I mean, Emma! Hermione should be in an actual school that’ll give her a quality education where she’ll be able to get a good job after going to a good university.” Richard snapped, making Emma frown as she stepped away from the counter.
“Richard, Hermione is in a good school. Hogwarts is one of the top magical schools in the world; only rivaled by Japan’s and the United States’ magical schools. There are three magical universities here in Britain alone that she could attend after Hogwarts and she could even go overseas to further her education if she wanted. Hermione is already thinking of continuing her Non-Magical education during the holidays through a special program offered by the Ministry of Magic. Of course, you’d know this if you actually paid attention to our daughter and made an effort to learn about her.” Emma snapped, anger flashing in her eyes as Richard scoffed and shook his head.

“Emma you’re allowing these…people to blind you! Now they’re telling us some bullshit about Hermione being an…an Assassin?! Do you know how ridiculous that sounds? It’s even more ridiculous than when that McGonagall woman came and told us about magic.”

“Richard Granger would you shut up?! Ever since Hermione has gone to Hogwarts you’ve been ranting and raving about how much Hermione’s going to hate it there; how she’ll be begging to come home and go back to ‘normal’ school. Well our daughter has finally found somewhere where she belongs. She has good friends; friends who most likely rallied around her when you blew up at her! It never mattered what our Hermione did, Richard. You just couldn’t ever be happy with her. You made fun of her because of her love for books and learning. You were constantly nit-picking her about her hobbies and lack of friends. You never saw her tears because she refused to let you see her break down.” Emma exclaimed, her voice rising in pitch.

“Don’t you dare pin the blame on me, Emma!” Richard shouted, his hands balling into fists as Emma scoffed.

“Oh sure! Little Richie can’t do a thing wrong! It’s all my fault that I can’t have any more children. It’s my fault our daughter love books and learning rather than running around with little rich brats causing trouble and acting just like your sister’s daughter!”

Emma’s chest heaved as she looked at her husband. After Hermione was born every doctor they had gone to told her that getting pregnant would most likely kill not only her, but any child she might be carrying. Yes, she had been devastated in learning this but she had also been happy that she had been given a daughter. Richard had taken the news hard and had been quiet about the matter for months. He hadn’t touched her until Hermione was about one year-old. She knew that Richard had always wanted to have a big family but that wasn’t possible and it hit him hard. Things had been strained between them ever since; especially as Hermione got older.

“Don’t you dare bring my sister and niece into this!”

“Oh yes, because precious little Sarah is the perfect girl around! You never once stood up for our daughter when Sarah teased and bullied her. Whenever Sarah pushed Hermione or stole something from her you always said ‘children will be children’. I thought you were different, Richard. I thought you would care about our daughter and myself. But no. Whenever Lucille made some…snide comment about my inability to have any more children or my own looks you never said a word against her. Instead it was your parents who defended me. My parents had warned me but I thought you were different. I thought you loved me.” Emma cried, tears gathering in her eyes as Richard stared at her.

“Everything was going fine before this whole mess with magic began-“

“Everything wasn’t fine, Richard! You keep wanting to change our daughter into someone she’s not! You want her to be your idea of the perfect daughter. Well she’s not! No one is perfect! Hermione deserves the chance to be herself and that will only happen if we encourage her and allow her to do what she wants so long as it doesn’t harm anyone else! You were only happy when she was playing football and instantly went back to scoffing at her and belittling her when she stopped playing and
focused more on her studies!”

“Oh sure! Make me the bad guy! You’d rather have Hermione be some shut in, know-it-all, book worm who’d rather stay inside than meet others!”

“I want Hermione to be comfortable with herself! Why do you think I’m willing to learn about the world she’s now a part of?! You keep rejecting her and refusing to learn anything about the Magical world. News flash, Richard! We’re now a part of that world too!”

“I will not have our daughter become even more of a…a freak! The sooner you come to your senses the better! I should’ve slammed the door in that McGonagall woman’s face when she rang the doorbell.” Richard snapped, his eyes widening when Emma stepped up close.

“Don’t you dare call our daughter a freak! You’re nothing but a closed-minded bastard Richard Granger! I should’ve listened to my parents and brothers when I introduced them to you. They were right about-“

A sharp cracking sound filled the air as Emma fell to the ground. It seemed to happen in slow motion as Richard looked at his fallen wife in shock. Emma shakily reached up; her fingertips lightly touching the throbbing spot on her left cheek. The skin was already turning a deep, vivid red and she instantly knew that it would bruise within the next few minutes. Swallowing thickly, she shakily rose to her feet, grabbing onto the dining table to pull herself up. Richard hurriedly backed away, his eyes still wide and filled with shock at his own reaction to his wife’s outburst. He watched as Emma swayed lightly before turning cinnamon brown eyes on him; eyes that were no longer filled any kind of emotion.

“I’m packing mine and Hermione’s clothes. I’ll be having Miranda cover my appointments for the next few weeks. I’ll be staying with my parents for the time being.” She said, her voice soft but strong as she turned and began walking out of the kitchen.

“Emma!” Richard exclaimed, reaching out and grabbing his wife’s arm.

Emma spun around, slapping Richard’s hand off of her arm. The anger, betrayal and pure hurt in her eyes made him flinch and back away.

“Don’t you dare touch me. You’ve finally crossed the line, Richard. I won’t let you hit me or give you the chance to hit my baby girl. You’ve finally shown your true colors and honestly, you’re the freak. You’ll be hearing from a lawyer as soon as I can get one. I have a feeling things might be even more difficult given the nature of our daughter.” Emma said, turning and striding from the room.

Emma hurried up the stairs; feeling her emotions bubbling just below the surface. Making it to the master bedrooms, she slammed the door closed and locked it. As soon as the lock clicked, she slowly slid down the door and onto the floor; pulling her knees to her chest as sobs finally broke free.

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Hermione sighed as she settled into the room she’ll be using during her stay here at the estate. They had all left for the estate a few minutes after her mum and dad had left and Harry and Dean had taken them on a tour while Augusta had gone off to speak with Harry’s parents about what they were going to do. The estate really is beautiful and she had been in awe over the sheer number of people who call the grounds their home. Admittedly it was overwhelming seeing so many people walking around wearing uniforms which were apparently the traditional uniforms of Assassins. Remus had joined them for their tour and added in a few things he’s learned about the Brotherhood during his time staying with the Othellos. It was truly amazing seeing the amount of respect seasoned Assassins
showed Harry simply because his parents are the leaders of the Brotherhood. Tonks and her parents had shown her their house and then Cassie and Dean’s siblings showed her their house as well. She and Neville had even gotten to speak with some of the tutors who taught Harry, Dean and Tonks some of the various skills they need to learn.

However, in the back of her mind she couldn’t help but worry about her mum. She knows that her dad has a temper; especially since she’s been on the receiving end of it so many times before. Something inside her was filling her with dread and she couldn’t shake the feeling that something was going to go wrong. Her mum had told her a little before she had started Hogwarts that things weren’t perfect between her parents. Her dad had always wanted a big family and her mum is unable to have any more children because of the risk she could die giving birth or even getting pregnant.

She knows her dad wants her to be a certain way but she has no intention of changing in order to gain his approval. He’ll just have to get used to her and the idea of magic if he wants her to have any kind of respect for him.

“Hermione?”

Looking up, Hermione blinked when she saw Lucas standing in the doorway of her room. However, the dark look on his face instantly set her heart racing in her chest. Standing up, she walked to Lucas and frowned lightly when he placed a hand on her shoulder. She allowed the man to lead her out of her room and down to the main living room. Her eyes instantly locked onto her mother’s form, though her eyes widened in shock and horror when she saw the massive bruise on her mum’s cheek in the shape of a large handprint. The others would swear Hermione had somehow apparated on how fast she crossed the room and had her arms wrapped around her mum. Mother and daughter clung to each other, crying as the others stood back and gave them their space. However, everyone couldn’t help but feel rage growing inside them at the sight of the bruise on Emma’s cheek.

“What happened?” Hermione hiccupped, pulling back and looking at her mum’s cheek.

“Your father and I had a…a huge fight about how he’s been treating you. I lost my temper and screamed at him and he…he snapped and struck me. I told him that enough was enough. I wasn’t going to let him walk all over me or you anymore. I packed up most of our clothes and some needed belongings and left. I went to my parents and they’re currently in a rage about what Richard had done. My parents want me to press charges but I just want this to be done with.” Emma said, her tears slowing as Hermione looked at the bruise with growing anger.

“What’s going to happen?” She asked, her voice soft as Emma carded a hand through her daughter’s hair.

“I’m sorry, sweetie. I really am. I don’t want to give your father a chance to steal you away from me. I’m going to file for divorce and see if I can get custody of you…unless you want to-“

“No! I never want to see him again.” Hermione snapped, anger flashing in her eyes as Emma blinked before nodding.

“There is a potential problem should you try to get a normal divorce lawyer.” Andromeda said, stepping forward as Hermione and Emma looked up at her.

“What do you mean?” Emma asked, frowning lightly as the older woman sat down across from her.

“Hermione is a Witch and there’s a high potential that…Mister Granger could feel…vindictive to say the least. Because you want sole custody of Hermione, Mister Granger should have the memories of his daughter’s magical abilities erased. Instead, he will know that his daughter is highly intelligent and is attending a special school in Scotland for the gifted. If you’d like, I can offer my services to
you as a lawyer. I am known in both the Magical and Non-Magical world and I have handled divorce cases before. I also know of a couple Magical lawyers who could represent Mister Granger along with a judge who will look over the process quickly.” Andromeda offered, Emma nodding slowly as she thought the woman’s offer over.

“Mum…i-is this because of me?” Hermione whispered, making everyone’s heart ache at the pure sadness and fear in Hermione’s voice.

“What?! No! No, sweetie, no! Your father and I have had problems for a long time; long before you were ever born. I had hoped that things would’ve gotten better between us but they’ve only gotten worse. None of this is your fault and don’t you dare think otherwise.” Emma said, her voice firm and strong as she held onto her daughter.

“Emma, what’s happening with your other belongings? Do you have plans to retrieve them soon?” Cassie asked, watching as the younger woman sighed.

“My father and brothers have offered to go with me to pack up mine and Hermione’s things. I’ve gone to a storage rental place and am now renting a small storage unit to hold our things. I don’t care if Richard keeps the house and I plan on offering him to buy my half of our business. I don’t want to continue working with him and I’ve been keeping meticulous records of all my work such as how much I’ve earned at work and the inheritance I got from my grandparents when they passed. I’m guessing that Richard will likely want to move out of the house. If not he can have it.” Emma said, the others nodding.

“We can easily help you pack up. Magic would speed along the process quickly and we could do it while Mister Granger is at work.” Remus offered, smiling gently as Emma blinked before nodding.

“I think I would like that. My brothers are itching to confront Richard about what he did; even my father is on the warpath.” Emma sighed, though she saw the dark look pass over the other’s faces.

“Do you want to stay with your family? You could always stay here if you’d like.” Delilah said, watching as Emma shifted.

“I think that it would be a good idea if Hermione and I stayed with my parents until after Christmas. I’d still like to speak with you all about Hermione’s training and what’ll happen should she wish to be an Assassin.” Emma said, watching as her daughter smiled and hugged her.

They talked for a little while longer and Andromeda took a picture of Emma’s cheek incase Richard tries anything against them. Emma agreed to take Andromeda up on her offer to have the woman as her lawyer. She and Andromeda headed to Delilah’s private study to go over the contract and talk about what needed to happen in order to file for divorce. Hermione went along with them; wanting to know what was going on and be there to support her mum. Lucas and Delilah called on a few of their House Elves and asked for all of the spare trunks they had so Hermione and Emma could pack their things in those instead of in boxes and totes. It didn’t take long before a dozen trunks were neatly stacked by the front door. All of them were slightly battered and there were obvious signs of them having been used.

“Where did all those come from?” Dean asked, raising an eyebrow as he looked at the various trunks.

“Relatives.” Harry and Eliza said, looking at each other before laughing.

“I can’t believe Richard would do something like that.” Remus growled, his eyes turning gold as Moony rose to the surface.
“Calm down, Remus. Right now Emma and Hermione need us to be here for them. Tomorrow we’ll head over to the Granger’s residence to pack everything up. After Christmas they’ll be coming here and staying with us. During that time Andromeda will likely have Emma file for a Summons. She’ll also likely have a financial advisor because of the money involved. From our research Emma and Richard are very successful business owners and it would be a shame if Richard managed to scam her out of any of her hard-earned money.” Delilah explained, watching as Remus drew in a deep breath and slowly calmed himself down.

“I want to begin my training.” Neville said, his voice firm and confident.

Neville looked up at his grandmother in surprise; shocked that she was even considering allowing him to go through Assassin training. However, looking around at Harry, the twins, Dean and Tonks gave him hope. Harry and Dean had talked for hours at length about the various things they learned and what they will continue to learn. Honestly, the idea of learning how to become an Assassin was appealing to him. He’d belong to a group, a Brotherhood which practiced what he had always valued. His grandmother and other relatives have always told him about the great things his parents had done in their lives. How they had been a near unstoppable team in the Auror force and had been a force to be reckoned with. His grandmother had told him that they likely would’ve been able to win the fight at their safe house if they hadn’t been ambushed.

This would give him the opportunity to connect on a deeper level with his parents and he would also get to spend more time with his friends. Harry had told him that his morning workouts during the weekends were actually training sessions with the two Master Assassins at Hogwarts. It made sense to him and he wasn’t too surprised when Dean informed him that they used the Room of Requirement to do their training. Looking at his grandmother, he could see the trust and pride in her eyes. She is trusting him to choose what he felt was best for him and she would support him whatever choice he made.

“I’d like that.” Augusta said, smiling warmly at the formidable woman.

Unfortunately Algernon and a few others will be visiting the manor soon. Will you be going shopping in Diagon Alley tomorrow?” Augusta asked, noticing how her grandson sighed and looked less than pleased in having to leave.

“Yes. We’ll be heading to the Alley around ten in the morning. We’re hoping to beat most of the rush. We’ll also be heading to Harrods in Muggle London. You’re welcome to join us. We plan on giving the same offer to Hermione and Emma.” Lucas explained, watching as Augusta looked at Neville who gave her a pleading look.

“Alright. Just don’t complain about having to wake up so early.” Augusta chided, in which Neville had the decency to look slightly abashed.
“Yes, Gran.”

They were shortly joined by Hermione and Emma, to which the pair gratefully accepted the offer of going Christmas shopping with everyone. Emma was touched at the offer and was all too happy with the welcome distraction. She explained that Richard was scheduled to work later in the afternoon and well into the evening tomorrow. Lucas and Delilah explained that they could apparate to the backyard of their home after shopping and pack everything up easily. She explained that there were a few things she wanted to take that her parents and grandparents had given her that had been in her family for years. Yes, Richard would likely be pissed when he saw all of her and Hermione’s things missing, but she had warned him before she had left the house. He had tried to stop her from leaving, but she threatened to go to the police if he didn’t. Richard had been quick to let her leave, especially with the bruise on her cheek.

“I’ll go and get in contact with the lawyer who should represent Richard along with the finical advisor I had told you about. The day after Christmas the Summons will be issued to the court. I’ll be sure to tell his potential lawyer the…ramifications should he refuse to deal with a ‘magical’ based lawyer.” Andromeda explained, walking out with a file in hand.

“Thank you, Andromeda. I appreciate this.” Emma said, shaking the woman’s hand.

“It’s no problem at all, Emma. You and Hermione deserve better. From what you’ve told me this has been coming for a long time. You just needed that little…push to finally make a move.” Andromeda said, Emma and Hermione nodding lightly.

“Would you like to stay for supper?” Harry asked, looking at his female friend.

“Unfortunately, my parents and brothers are expecting Hermione and I for dinner. We’ll meet you at Diagon Alley in the morning, alright?” Emma asked, blinking when Delilah hugged her while Hermione hugged her friends.

“Of course. Feel free to call if you need anything.” Cassy said, handing Emma a piece of paper with her house phone on it.

Emma and Hermione were touched by the sheer amount of support they were getting from everyone. There was no doubt in Emma’s mind that Richard would be telling his family what had happened on how she’s the one who’s over reacting about everything. However, she has the support of her family and Hermione’s friends’ parents and guardians. These people, who she had met about five hours ago, were offering her so much help simply because Hermione calls their children friends. It stunned and amazed her and it confirmed that she is doing the right thing in supporting her daughter and her decision to continue to allow Hermione to go to Hogwarts. Richard may think these people were weak minded and foolish but it was him who was the weak minded fool.

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Next Day

Emma smiled gently as she parked in a small parking lot a few blocks away from the Leaky Cauldron. Yesterday evening had been rather taxing for both of them. Her parents had coddled Hermione, trying to sensor what they were saying in front of her to the point where her daughter had flat out told them that she knows everything and completely supports her mum’s decision to leave her dad. Her parents had been shocked that Hermione had spoken so bluntly though Emma had simply explained that she didn’t hide anything from her daughter; it wouldn’t be right. Sadly, the night only got worse when it became apparent that Richard had dug up her old phone address book and found her parent’s house number. He had called four times demanding to speak with her or Hermione and
her parents and brothers refused to pass the phone. Her dad had ranted and raved at Richard; explaining that he was lucky that he and her brothers live so far away. She was grateful that her family was running interference and they thankfully understood when she explained that she and Hermione were going out today for Christmas shopping.

“Look! There’s Dora!” Hermione said, eagerly unbuckling and hopping out of the car.

Chuckling at her daughter’s eagerness, Emma unbuckled and followed Hermione down the sidewalk to Ted and Tonks. Hermione happily hugged Tonks and began chatting away happily about what she was hoping to get for Harry, Dean and Neville.

“The others are already in the Cauldron.” Ted said, smiling warmly as he hugged Emma.

“You didn’t have to wait.” She protested, blinking when the man shook his head.

“Nonsense. I know the kids will want to run off alone to get things for us and then we’ll likely break off into groups and switch around, same in Harrods. The twins have, apparently, been saving up in order to get gifts for everyone so they’re rather eager to begin shopping. Remus is manning the shop right now but he’ll join us for Harrods. Andie is currently in her office getting some work done.” Ted explained, watching as Emma flushed.

Emma tried to apologize but the pair wouldn’t hear anything of it. Reaching the Leaky Cauldron, they headed inside and Hermione was instantly set upon her friends. Susan, Hannah, Jillian, Eliana and, surprisingly, Millicent were there as well. Millicent also had a younger boy with the same black hair as her nearby. Millicent smiled and introduced them to her little brother William, to which Eliza instantly took the younger boy and was soon holding his hand as they all headed out into the main Alley. Hermione learned that Harry and Dean had gotten in touch with the others using the floo to see if they could join them and their friends had, obviously, gotten permission to come. Eliana’s parents and, surprisingly, Amelia joined their group and managed to corral them towards Gringotts so Emma could convert some money in order for her and Hermione to buy some things.

“Emma, you might want to think about opening a vault in Gringotts.” Amelia said, watching as the other woman blinked.

“I thought only Magicals can do that.” She said, frowning lightly as Susan hurried up alongside her.

“Normally yes, but the parents of Muggleborns have been able to have a vault. The vault would ‘officially’ be in Hermione’s name but it would be a family vault. You would be the one who would handle the money and stocks. I’ve heard that you get better rates than that in the Muggle world.” Susan said, smiling up at Emma when she saw the thoughtful look on the woman’s face.

Diagon Alley in the winter was a beautiful place. Snow covered the tops of awnings and roofs while carolers sang in small groups throughout the streets. Decorated windows sparkled in the sunlight and many of the shops were decorated for the season. Emma noticed a few stores that sold what was needed for Pagan Yule celebrations. Hermione had told her in a letter that many Magicals still celebrate the old holidays and traditions. Reaching bank, all of them were grateful for the escape from the cold outside. The others waited near the doors while Emma got in line for one of the tellers. Thankfully it didn’t take too long since many people were still sleeping or were just getting up and getting their day started. After she exchanged a decent amount of money, she rejoined the others and they began forming a plan to do their shopping. The kids already decided to get two gifts for their parents/guardians and two gifts for each other. One gift will be from the Magical world while the second gift will be from the Muggle world.

The teens decided to split from the adults in order to shop for them first. Amelia, Lucas and Delilah
weren’t too keen on this at first, but Tonks and the twins promised to keep a watch on everyone. Lucas and Delilah knew they could trust Tonks and Hector was always nearby along with Amanda. Not only that, but one of Amelia’s bodyguards were also nearby in the crowd. The adults finally relented and the group of kids hurried away from their parents and guardians. The adults, meanwhile, happily took the opportunity presented to them to go shopping for their charges. Heading down the opposite street, they were soon pulling out lists that their charges had given them and sifting through all the gift ideas.

“I know Missus Weasley sends her children homemade gift baskets along with a handmade sweater. Fred and George will be getting plenty of sweets this year.” Lucas said, looking at the very small list the twins had given him and his wife.

“It was a struggle just getting them to make a list.” Delilah said, smiling fondly at the thought of the twins.

“While Ronald might not be as considerate as his brothers, at least the older boys were raised right. I’ve noticed that, even though they’re excitable and nearly always the center of attention, they rallied around the group as soon as they started heading off.” Augusta said, the others nodding.

“They understand that our children are in their care. Dora will be leading them around but the twins will make sure no one gets lost or left behind.” Ted said, pride in his voice as he spoke of his daughter.

Sure enough, Fred and George made sure to keep a keen eye on all of the little Firsties they’re in charge of. They had no intention of letting anyone trail behind or get lost; especially considering who is part of their group. Harry, Susan and Jillian are all high profile students because of who their parents/guardians are. However, Neville, Dean and Hannah also belong to the elite classes of their society which made them rather high profile people as well. They could also feel the few morning shoppers looking at them in wonder and awe; especially when they saw Harry among the group of children. The group of laughing, excitable teens made their way into various shops along the street; pointing out things that the adults might like or things that a sibling might like. The twins were constantly looking out for something for their siblings. Thankfully their dad had bought a mailbox so the presents wouldn’t arrive late to him, their mum and sister. They were very tempted to ignore Ronnie; especially considering how much of a prat he’s been lately. However, they’d never hear the end of it from their mum when Ronnikins went to her to complain about them ignoring him.

They went from shop to shop quickly, wanting to look at the various options before actually buying things. They did pass by the adults at a few points, in which the adults were already carrying a few bags. Of course they also began seeing some of their schoolmates as the hours passed. Seamus and Ron were the first two they saw, in which the redhead twit scowled and glared fiercely at his older brothers; betrayal clear in his eyes as Seamus’ parents hurried them through the streets and to Gringotts.

“Well, Mum will soon learn who we’re staying with.” Fred said, rolling his eyes as his twin nodded.

Moving on, they finally finished browsing through all the shops they planned on buying from. Working their way backwards, the group slowly and steadily bought gifts for their families. Millicent and William bought a few gifts for their friends in the orphanage along with the matron who took care of all of them. All of them had a great time just hanging out, laughing, chatting and talking about anything and everything. Tonks kept them all in line with help from the twins and they soon made their way down another street to continue their shopping. Of course, Hermione eventually told the others about what had happened between her parents. Susan, Jillian, Eliana, Hannah and Millicent were shocked and horrified about what they heard and rallied around Hermione and offered their
support. She was touched by their support and smiled at them as she thanked them.

Eventually they made their way to P&M where they met up with the adults. Harry hurried behind the front counter where Remus was finishing up ringing up purchases for a guest. Remus laughed softly and, after helping the guest, turned and hugged Harry; ruffling his hair which made his cub bat his hands away and scowl at him.

“How goes the store?” Delilah asked, smiling as the children scattered and began looking at the different products.

“Pretty good, busy as usual. Thankfully we have plenty of staff coming in.” Remus said, stepping out from behind the counter as an employee walked over to take his place.

“ Weird without Sirius here, huh?” Lucas asked, grinning as the man shrugged lightly.

“A little. Though I’m getting used to it. I’ll be running the store in Hogsmeade while Sirius runs this one so it’s good experience.” Remus said, smiling as he looked down at his cub.

“You’ll be free on Christmas, though, right?” Eliza asked, lightly tugging on Remus’ hand.

“Of course I will be. You know we’re closed on Christmas and the day after.” Remus said, lightly ruffling her hair as well.

Remus showed them around and pointed out a few new items they had recently gotten in. Harry, Eliza and the others, bar Millicent and William, all decided to get small games and puzzles for William and Jillian’s little sister: Kelly. All of them spent a fair amount of time in the store and many of them found the first gift for each other. It was rather interesting as they tried to hide the gifts they were planning on getting from each other; especially when they kept trying to sneak a peek at whatever their friends were placing into the small shopping baskets they had picked up. Thankfully they eventually managed to get all of their things paid for and stored into bags where no one could see them. They also bought a few things for themselves before heading to Roxane’s Grill for lunch. Remus ended up joining them after the general manager assured him that she could handle watching the shop for a little while.

Lunch was filled with laughter and light hearted conversation. It was rather shocking seeing how much stress seemed to have dropped off of Emma. All of them had been worried that she would be rather stressed or worried about her impending divorce but instead she seems relieved and happy without any looming arguments she might get into with her ‘husband’. Hermione also seemed rather happy, though all of her friends could see the worry in her eyes whenever she looked at her mum. She was worried that her mum might have a breakdown, though they both technically had one last night after they retired to the guest bedroom her grandpa had readied for them. They had fallen asleep holding onto each other and crying over the loss of someone who they had loved but had never really loved or accepted them for who they truly are. Now, they’re on the mend and both of them are better off without Richard bringing them down.

After lunch, they headed out to the Muggle world and gathered in their cars after saying goodbye to Remus. Andromeda joined them and they all split up into various cars and vans and headed off to Harrods. Hermione was overjoyed in having Susan, Hannah, Millicent and William carpool with her and her mum thanks to her mum having a van. Reaching Harrods, they hurried inside and Hermione, Harry, Dean, Eliana and Hannah were laughing at the shocked looks on the rest of their friend’s faces. The Purebloods were in awe over such a huge place, especially when they were informed that this is just the first floor. Emma and Andromeda explained that they were to meet in the food court in three hours. Delilah and Lucas distributed communication mirrors and urged the teens to use them inside the restrooms or a changing room so they won’t become inconspicuous should they be seen
talking into a compact mirror.

“Han, you’ll…come with me, right?” Susan asked, looking rather intimidated at such a massive building.

“Of course, Sue. I’ve been here before so I know all the places we should go to.” Hannah said, linking arms with her best friend.

The adults ensured the children had their bank cards and actual money in some case before setting them loose on the building. Tonks managed to get Fred and George to calm down before their magic accidently reacted to their high emotions. The kids hurried through the various stores; eagerly looking around and debating on what to get their parents and friends for their second gifts. Millicent and her little brother were grateful for the extra money the matron had given them for this occasion. Missus Mayweather claimed that they had earned it because of their hard work and their willingness to do extra work around the orphanage but they both figured that she wanted them to have a chance to get some good, quality gifts for everyone. It was one of the main reasons they wanted to get her something nice to show their appreciation for her kindness.

Eliza happily went with Harry for the first bit of their shopping since he wanted her opinion on any possible presents for their parents. Dean found himself leading his siblings around for the same reason, though there was a noticeable strain between him and Megan. Megan has been improving in school grade wise, though she has gotten into trouble for arguing with her teachers and for getting into a fight with another student. Dean had tried talking to her about her behavior and how that wouldn’t be acceptable in Hogwarts but she had snapped at him and walked away. Cassie had spoken with the other adults, including Amelia earlier in Diagon Alley. Amelia could understand the woman’s concern and told her that Megan had to learn these kinds of lessons on her own and had to face the consequences. Delilah and Andromeda, along with a few other women on the estate she’s friends with, agreed that Megan shouldn’t go to Hogwarts. She would expect Dean to protect her from everything and anything without having to face the consequences.

Megan will be turning eleven come March and Cassie has already made up her mind that she’ll send back her daughter’s Hogwarts letter. She plans on visiting St. Brigid’s Academy on one of her weekends off and speak with the Headmistress. Her daughter would be flooing or portkeying home every afternoon/evening from the academy and she’ll be able to make sure that her eldest daughter does her homework and studies instead of having her rely on Dean trying to make sure she does her work and pays attention in class. Yes, Megan might resent her for separating her from her older brother and perhaps even her younger siblings when the time comes but in the long run it is for the best. Sasha has already brought up all of her grades and has actually become a tutor in school to a few younger classmates. She’s proud of how much her other daughter has come from being a bully like her older sister and Sasha has been eagerly waiting for her eleventh birthday like Dean had been. She just hopes that Megan’s rebellious stage will end soon and her daughter will focus and find her balance in school.

Shaking herself from her thoughts, Cassie smiled as she followed Emma and Andromeda into one of the book stores. She and Andromeda laughed when they saw the sparkle in Emma’s eyes, knowing that Hermione had gotten her love of books from her mother.

“How are your parents handling the news besides being angry with Richard?” Andromeda asked, walking alongside Emma as the woman sighed.

“They’re glad that I’m attempting to part from him peacefully. They’re also very happy to have Hermione around. Sadly Richard had his family over all the time during the holidays so it was rare when they got to see me and Hermione.” Emma explained, her friends nodding gently.
“Hermione’s happy though. She loves her cousins Brittany and Bethany. They at least treat her right.” Emma said, scoffing as she thought of Richard’s family.

“Well it’s good that you both are doing well after all this. It’ll only get better as time goes on.” Cassie said, smiling as Emma beamed at her.

“Thanks.”

Later that day

Lucas sighed as he walked up the stairs that led down into the library trunk they are using to safely store Hermione’s and Emma’s books. They had decided to forgo using a normal trunk since Emma had told them that some of the books she has are rare first editions that she’s collected over the years. Emma and Hermione had been in awe over the trunk, especially when the saw the many rows of shelves that they could fill with their books. So far they’ve been clearing out the Granger girls’ things for an hour and it’s been going pretty smoothly. All of the fine china dinnerware was safely stored in one compartment of a trunk while all of the fragile figurines and statues were stored in another compartment. They were hoping to get everything done and packed away before Richard gets back to avoid a confrontation. The last thing Emma or Hermione want is to be here when Richard fully realizes that his wife and daughter want nothing more to do with him. Hermione is upstairs in her room with Eliza and Delilah while Harry went through the rest of the house with pictures of things that Hermione and Emma want him to grab for them.

“Thank you for doing this, Lucas. If there’s anything-“

“Think nothing of it, Emma. Your Hermione has been a great friend to Harry. He spoke highly of her when he was home during Halloween and in his letters home.” Lucas said, watching as Emma smiled softly.

“Hermione was so happy in her letters. I was always worried about her going to Hogwarts. It’s her first time away from home for an extended period of time. I was worried that she would want to come home because of bullies or not making any friends. She’s so much more confident now and she’s so much happier than I’ve ever seen her.” Emma said, her voice wrought with emotion as Lucas hugged her gently.

“Hermione has certainly had a positive effect on Harry and Dean. They didn’t really slouch around in school but they were never this focused or dedicated to their school work. Now they’re all at the top of their year and in their House thanks to her encouraging them to study and do well in class.” Lucas explained, smiling when he thought of when he and Delilah had received their son’s first report card.

Emma smiled at that. She knows that her daughter can be a little…bossy when it comes to school work. However, she’s seen for herself that her daughter’s friends still think the world of her even though they already know about her quirks. She and Lucas continued putting books away into the library trunk, though they soon employed the help of one of Lucas’ House Elves after the little being popped in. As they continued to work, Emma asked plenty of questions about the Brotherhood and what would be expected of Hermione and how long her training will take. Lucas explained that, like Fred and George, Hermione’s training will take longer to complete because she’s beginning later than Harry, Dean and Tonks. However, he was confident that Hermione will do well in her new lessons and training. The idea of Hermione becoming an Assassin is rather worrying but she could tell that her daughter wants to go through with the training. She plans on talking with Cassie and Andromeda about it for a little longer before making coming to a decision.
Meanwhile, in Hermione’s room, the brunette watched in amazement as Delilah shrunk her desk, bed frame and mattress and the other pieces of furniture in the room. Her clothing had all been neatly packed away in one of the trunks along with her books and stuffed animals. It was weird, honestly, seeing her room so bare and empty. Delilah also had instructions from her mum to change the soft lavender colored walls back to white. It would be strange not living here anymore, but at the same time she was rather eager to leave. Her room had been her sanctuary while she lived here. She used to hide in here whenever her dad wanted to ‘talk’ about her lack of friends or her anti-social behavior whenever her aunt, uncle and cousin were visiting. She knows that things will be much better after this, though she also wondered where she and her mum will live. They certainly won’t be living with her grandparents for too long; her mum had already told her such. However, where will they go? Her mum is planning on quitting dentistry but that would leave her without a job. Of course that’s not saying that they’ll be poor. Her mum had been a cosmetic dentist for some time now and had gotten a lot of money from working with celebrities and the wealthy.

“Do you have any idea where you'll be living?” Eliza asked, helping Hermione to fold her comforter.

“Not yet. I think we might wait until my mum knows what she wants to do for a job.” Hermione answered, Eliza nodding her head in understanding.

“Well, you're more than welcome to live with us for awhile! I know Harry and Dean would love that.” Eliza said, making Hermione smile and giggle lightly.

“I know, though we don’t want to intrude.” Hermione said, blinking when Delilah gently hugged her.

“You’ll never intrude, dear. Lucas and I are all too happy to have you both around. Besides, we could always help your mother find another job. I know it would be a good idea to have you both checked over by our healer.” Delilah said, stepping back and watching as a House Elf walked into the room with Hermione’s toiletries.

“But I have normal checkups at Hogwarts.” Hermione said, frowning lightly in confusion.

“I know, dear, but Madame Pomfrey and Healer Briggs might miss something. Our healer is trained to spot things that might be missed by others. Besides, we want to get a read on your mother’s magical core.” Delilah said, making Hermione’s eyes widen.

“W-What?! You think my mum might have a magical core?” Hermione asked, shock in her voice as Delilah smiled and nodded.

“Lucas and I suspect that your parents are actually Squibs. We won’t be able to get a ‘read’ on Richard but we will on Emma if she’s agreeable to it. Squibs are gaining more and more rights in our society. They can own businesses now and are becoming respected due to their ability to help connect the Magical and Non-Magical world. I know the Ministry has begun hiring Squibs in certain departments. They’re also able to gain masteries in Potions, Herbology, Arithmancy and Ward design. Cassie works with a clinic we run and has become rather skilled in brewing potions. I believe she might take a few courses in one of the universities and try to gain a mastery in potions.” Delilah said, tilting her head thoughtfully.

“I’m glad the Magical world has been improving so much.” Hermione said, standing up on a step-stool and taking down her curtains.

“You’re not the only one. Minister Matthews has done so much good ever since he was elected. He’s really helping our world to heal and grow; especially since the end of the war. Aurors are more
highly trained and their snap response teams have become the elite groups that are highly thought of. Our world is slowly but steadily surpassing the Non-Magical world in way of technology. Manors and other homes are getting electricity, televisions, dishwashers, and now even phones and computers. From Lucas’ contacts in the Ministry there has been a steady decline in accidents happening in the Non-Magical world because Wizards and Witches are better able to blend in and no longer stick out like sore thumbs because they aren’t familiar with technology.” Delilah explained, her daughter and Hermione nodding.

“Wasn’t the I.C.W. about ready to step in at one point?” Eliza asked, frowning lightly as Hermione blinked in confusion.

“Yes, they were. The I.C.W. watches over all the happenings of the many magical societies around the world. Sadly, our society was one of the last ones that modernized. They were considering stepping in if Fudge was replaced. Of course with Albus Dumbledore as the head of that body it most likely wouldn’t have happened.” Delilah said, sighing as she thought of the aged Wizard.

“What happened?” Hermione asked, her voice soft as Eliza packed away some of the toys Hermione had kept.

“Well, Albus has recently been removed as the head of the I.C.W. there’s even talk of him stepping down as the head of the Wizengamot. Lucas and Sirius are trying to pass a law to prevent any other Witch or Wizard from holding more than one position of power. Albus used to have three: Headmaster of Hogwarts, Supreme Mugwump and Chief Warlock. I know he pushes a lot of his headmaster duties onto Professor McGonagall. She handles the finical handlings of the school and the disciplinary aspects as well. According to Augusta the advisory board is considering stepping in if Albus doesn’t begin to focus more on the school.” Delilah explained, her daughter and Hermione listening with interest.

“Hermione?”

All of them looked up at the sound of Emma’s voice. Hermione smiled at the sight of her mum standing in the doorway. Emma smiled back and looked around the room. Almost everything has been packed away except for a few small things. Her things have already been removed from the master bedroom and from the attic space which had been used for storage. She wanted them to be gone by the time Richard gets off of work in hopes to avoid a rather…explosive argument. No doubt he’ll blow his top when he comes home to find all of their things gone. She’s already prepared to get an angry phone call from him later tonight. From what she gathered from his earlier calls he believes all this to be a kind of argument that they can get past. It hasn’t really sunk in that her love for him has completely disappeared. Any love that had been between them is gone. Yes, she had cried over him. She had cried for the love lost and that things had gotten so bad between them. However, now she can see that things had been bad between them. She had fallen into a routine with her life and had allowed him to walk all over her; up until Hermione’s eleventh birthday when things changed.

-I need to thank Professor McGonagall.-She thought, thinking of the woman who helped set her on her way to freedom.

“All of the albums are packed away and Grumble copied all the single photos around the house so you have your own copy.” Harry announced, walking into the room and smiling at Emma and Hermione.

“Thank you, Harry.” Emma said, making the boy shrug lightly.

“No problem. The Elves love the extra work.” He said, smiling as Hermione closed the last trunk.
A House Elf appeared and took the two trunks away with a faint popping sound. All of them brushed themselves off and Delilah changed the paint color back to white as per Emma’s instructions. Heading downstairs, Emma and Hermione collected the few suitcases that they had filled with books, clothes and other effects to take with them to Emma’s parents’ house. Lucas and Delilah told Emma that she and Hermione are more than welcome to stay at the estate after Christmas until they’re able to get back on their feet. Emma thanked them profusely and, much to Hermione’s glee, accepted their hospitality. Emma knew to drive to their ‘house’ where the car will be put in the garage and she and Hermione will floo to the estate. Harry hugged Hermione tightly and reminded her to call before they said their goodbyes. Emma and Hermione waited until the family had apparated out of the house before they turned everything off and headed out the door. Emma locked the door behind her and put her things into the trunk next to Hermione’s.

“Ready?” She asked, looking down at her daughter as Hermione looked at her childhood home.

“Yeah. You change our mailing address?” Hermione asked, looking up at her mum.

“Of course. I’m renting out a P.O. box for the time being. I’ve already called our employees at the practice and told them I won’t be working there anymore. No doubt Richard is getting the third degree from Michelle and Tom.” Emma said, smiling fondly as she thought of the pair.

“Good. I’ll talk with Professor McGonagall when I get back from break.” Hermione said, opening the passenger side door and climbing into the van.

“You’re really okay with all this?” Emma asked, concern in her voice as she climbed into the van as well.

“Mum, I told you this already. Dad and I were never close and he was constantly putting me down and agreeing with Lucille. He rarely defended me and we were constantly arguing.” Hermione said, her voice gentle as her mum sighed and nodded.

“I know…I’m just worried about all of this. Richard knows he’ll have to pay child support and Andromeda has already written everything up with the various estimates. When I go forth with the Summons and he gets it and I doubt he’ll be very happy.” Emma said, making her daughter roll her eyes.

“Dad always pretended that things were perfect around here until I started Hogwarts. Then he wanted to pin the blame on me.” Hermione said, Emma nodding her head as she pulled out of the driveway and headed down the street.

Hermione turned on the radio and they were soon singing along to the various songs. Emma also talked about them staying on the estate, to which Hermione became rather eager and happily talked about the various mentors she’s spoken with during their visit. She was truly excited to learn about becoming an Assassin. It was the information that Hermione could ‘drop out’ of her training that relieved Emma. She had been worried that Hermione would be trapped into Assassin training even if all she wanted to do was leave at a later date. However, Harry had apparently explained that that trainees and even full Assassins could leave the Brotherhood without repercussions. Emma was shocked when Hermione further explained that Harry’s biological mother had left the Brotherhood when she was in her Seventh Year.

“They were sad to see her leave but they didn’t force her to stay. Harry’s read some of his mum’s journals and apparently she regretted leaving but felt she needed to in order to protect her son and husband.” Hermione said, sadness in her voice as Emma glanced at her.

Emma opened her mouth to say something before she caught sight of Richard’s car heading towards
them on the other side of the road. She watched as Richard saw her; his eyes widening before a look of frustration and anger crossed his face. She tore her attention away from her former husband and focused on the road; knowing that it would only be a matter of minutes when he would arrive home and see that their things are gone. He’ll be calling her parents demanding to speak with her or Hermione about why they’ve moved out and when they’ll come back home. Shaking her head, she pulled onto the highway and turned into the direction that’ll being her and Hermione to her parent’s home. They have some wrapping to do and then they’ll be extra things they need to do. Her second oldest brother is coming over with his wife and daughters once more and they’ll be staying until the day after Christmas.

-Things certainly are changing around here.-She thought, though she couldn’t say that she wasn’t happy with said changes.

Christmas came and bought with it a sense of happiness and wonder like normal. Harry and his friends had all agreed to exchange presents at Susan’s house. Eliza had her brother and their parents along with Remus up early in order to open gifts. There was much laughter and joking as they made their way through the small mountain of gifts underneath the Christmas tree. Like always, there were gifts from various members of the Brotherhood to all of them. While none of them asked for gifts from the others, they were always giving them different, small trinkets or rare books or even a weapon or two. Lucas and Delilah returned the kind gestures by giving them gifts or in helping their families and giving them vacations from missions and orders. They were more than happy with the work their members did and were more than willing to show their appreciation. Harry loved getting his new books, clothes, a few action figures, games and, shockingly a new magical laptop and CD player. Remus had also given him a new photo album of his parents along with his parents’ graduating thesis along with his own and Sirius’’. Harry was touched by such a precious gift and had hugged the man tightly as they both fought back tears.

Eliza loved her new clothes, toys, books and her own CD player. She wasn’t too upset that she didn’t get a magical laptop as she knew that her parents were waiting until she’s eleven as well. After the presents were open and the wrapping cleared away, they enjoyed a hearty breakfast made by the Elves before the two children ran outside to play. They were soon joined by the many children who call the estate home and a massive snowball war soon broke out on the grounds. Some of the adults found themselves sucked into the war and alliances were soon made as various forts were erected using hard work and magic. Sadly, the war was ended after a few hours when warming charms had already worn off and the soldiers were called in before they caught colds from being outside too long. Harry and Eliza played with Dean and his siblings for a while and it was then that Dean reminded Harry about the fact that they still need to find some kind of information on Nickolas Flamel. Harry nearly smacked himself at forgetting and he promised Dean to check the library as soon as he got back home.

When he and Eliza headed back to the main manor, Harry instantly headed to the library. Looking around the vast, two story room, he moved over to a small lectern and placed a hand on it.

“Any books containing information on Nickolas Flamel.” He called, watching as the lectern flashed.

Several books flew down from a few different ‘sections’ of the library and landed on the lectern. Collecting the books in his arms, Harry headed for the large fireplace and settled down on the couch with a throw blanket. He called on a House Elf and asked for a cup of hot chocolate before settling down to read. Harry soon called on another House Elf for a journal and a pen. It didn’t take much longer before he was writing notes on what he was reading. Thirty minutes after he began reading, his mother walked into the library in search for him. She was surprised to see her son surrounded by
several books, three of which were off to the side which was a sign he had finished reading them. Walking over to the young teen, she peered over his shoulder and was shocked when she found out that her son is reading up on Nickolas Flamel. It made her wonder where he had heard that name and why he’s suddenly so interested in reading up on the aged Alchemist.

“Harry?” She called, her voice soft as her son blinked and lifted his head to look at her.

“Hey, mum.” He said, smiling lightly at her.

“Why are you looking up information on Nickolas Flamel?” She asked, frowning lightly as Harry sighed and ran a hand through his hair.

“There’s a room on the third floor that’s off limits to anyone who doesn’t ‘wish to die a most painful death’ according to Headmaster Dumbledore. Fred and George have already gone inside it and there’s a Cerberus inside the room. However, they managed to get past in and down a trapdoor and past a room filled with Devil’s Snare. After that is an enchanted chess set that you have to play in order to get through. They haven’t figured out the solution to the room of flying keys. They think it’s a kind of obstacle course. However, from what they overheard Ronald saying is that Hagrid had said that whatever is at the end of the course is between the headmaster and Nickolas Flamel.” Harry explained, Delilah frowning lightly as she thought over her son’s answer.

She knows Nickolas Flamel personally. He and his wife were allies of the Brotherhood and there were even a few Assassins who had apprenticed under the man. However, hearing that there’s something at Hogwarts that might belong to Nickolas was…concerning to say the least. Not only that, but she was alarmed in learning that there are creatures and plants that are highly dangerous inside a school for Merlin’s sake! Looking down at her son, Delilah mentally winced when she saw the look in Harry’s eyes. It’s a look of determination that she had seen in Lily when the redhead had been alive. Lily never gave up when her mind was set on something and she knows that her son is the exact same way. Yes, James had been determined, but he often gave up after failing a few times. Not Lily. No, she never gave up no matter how often she failed. She would’ve been a great Assassin if she hadn’t left the Brotherhood.

“Nickolas Flamel is a very famous Alchemist. Albus apprenticed under him and it’s one of the reasons why he’s so famous. Nickolas has discovered many things throughout his long life and is also the creator of the Sorcerer’s Stone.” She said, her voice soft as Harry frowned deeply.

“Isn’t the Sorcerer’s Stone a legend though?” He asked, his mother shaking her head.

“No. Using it in a potion will create a potion that will lengthen a person’s life by a hundred years. Making another potion with it will allow a person to turn anything into gold. However, the last I had hear Nickolas was keeping the stone safe.” She said, frowning as her son shifted.

“Mum, what if the stone is in Hogwarts?” He asked, his voice soft as Delilah looked at him with shock.

“Son-“

“Think about it, Mum. Why would there be a freaking Cerberus in the school? Not only that, but why would Hagrid say that whatever is underneath the trapdoor is between Flamel and Dumbledore? I don’t like where the clues are pointing things at. But…it makes the most sense. But why would it be kept in a school? Why not…have it…”

Delilah blinked as her son’s eyes widened while his thoughts finally came together.
“Mum, what if Flamel had been hiding the stone in Gringotts and Albus found out. He ‘convinced’ his friend and former mentor to trust him with the safety of the stone. Days later there’s a break-in at Gringotts but the thief never took anything because the vault was emptied out earlier that day. Now, the headmaster is just confident enough to believe that the students will listen to him and hides the stone behind a series of traps that seem too simple enough if you know how to do some research. However, because ‘he’ said not to he doesn’t think the students will go looking around the corridor. Unless…”

“Unless what?” Delilah asked, watching as her son swallowed heavily.

“You and dad were always upfront with me about the fact that Riddle isn’t dead. You also told me that the headmaster knows this as well…what if the headmaster is attempting to set a trap for Riddle?” Harry asked, Delilah’s eyes widening in shock.

However, the longer she thought about it the more that made sense. Albus was dead set on Riddle being defeated. However, he wanted it done on his terms. Sadly the man was so blinded by his delusions of grandeur that he wouldn’t even think of people not listening to him. It’s one of the many reasons why he had approached her and Lucas multiple times in an attempt to get them to hand Harry over to him so their son could be raised by the ‘right’ kind of people. He had backed off only when Lucas threatened him to a duel. The man may be blind to many things but he wasn’t a complete idiot. Sadly, this meant that Albus was willing to put hundreds of innocent children in danger in an attempt to draw the former Dark Lord out of hiding.

“I need to speak with your father about this. Speak nothing about this to anyone.” Delilah said, her voice firm as Harry looked at her and nodded.

Delilah hurried out of the library and followed the familiar path to her husband’s private study. Knocking on the door, she waited until he called her inside and closed the door behind her once she stepped inside. Throwing up a privacy ward, she turned and looked at Lucas as he rose from behind his desk. Not giving her husband a chance to inquire what was wrong, she told him about what Harry had put together and how he came to that conclusion. Lucas went from concerned to worry and finally to anger over the course of Delilah’s tale. No, he wasn’t just angry, he was pissed! How could that foolish, prideful old man dare to put so many children in danger?! For all of the intelligence Albus claims to have he has proven himself to be a very foolish and egotistical man who is blinded by his own ego.

“We need to see if Harry is right.” Delilah said, drawing her husband out of his anger.

“I’ll call Nickolas. Let’s just hope the old coot didn’t put him under an oath. If not then we’ll have to be careful. Thankfully the alliance with the Brotherhood began before he was the coot’s mentor.” Lucas said, walking to his fireplace and pulling out a pinch of floo powder from an ornate container.

Tossing it into the low flames, Lucas knelt down and stuck his head into the emerald flames before calling out his destination: Flamel Castle. It took a few minutes before he was looking into a rather beautiful though empty parlor. Before he could call out to anyone, a well-dressed young man in a butler’s uniform walked into the room and headed towards him.

“How may I be of service, Master Othello?” The man asked, bowing at the waist and peering at Lucas.

“I need to speak with Nickolas immediately. It’s of the upmost importance.” He said, the butler nodding in understanding.

“Lord and Lady Flamel are entertaining some guests but I shall tell Lord Flamel that you need to
Lucas shifted on his knees, his mind flying through different possibilities of how this conversation could go and what he needs to get confirmed by his friend. He has no doubt of his son’s worries and theories and he has every intention of speaking with the twins about what they had discovered inside the hidden chamber. He just couldn’t believe that Albus would willingly and knowingly place so many students in danger; especially since so many of said students belong to wealthy and influential families.

“Lucas? I do hope that this is as important as Magus said it was.”

Lucas looked up and watched as an elderly Wizard with pure white long hair, a white goatee and bright amber colored eyes walked towards him. While Albus has his hair hanging down and often free, Nickolas kept his hair tied back at the nape of his neck and often held back in a braid. His very presence screamed wealth and intelligence and he gave off an aura of power and endless knowledge.

“Nickolas, I wouldn’t have dreamed of interrupting you and your wife if this wasn’t important.” Lucas said, his tone slightly chiding as Nickolas nodded lightly.

“What do you need my friend?”

“Nicolas…where is the stone?” Lucas asked, watching as Nickolas blinked before instantly becoming guarded.

“What do you mean, Lucas?” He asked, his voice gruff as the younger Wizard sighed.

“Has the stone been removed from your castle, Nickolas? I need to know. It’s a matter of safety for hundreds of innocent children.” Lucas said, watching as Nickolas looked at him sharply before clearing his throat.

“Are you in your office?” He asked, glancing behind him towards the door leading out of the parlor.

“Yes.”

“I’ll send a message to Perenelle and come through. I don’t wish to speak about…such matters with the company we have.” He said, Lucas nodding his head and pulling back.

It didn’t take long before the fireplace flared and Nickolas stepped out, banishing the soot from his clothes with a wave of his hand. Lucas had called in Delilah, to which Nickolas greeted her with a kiss to the back of her hand before taking a seat in one of the nearby chairs. A House Elf popped in with a tea service before disappearing, making Nickolas blink for a minute before fixing himself a cup of tea while Lucas and Delilah appeared to gather their thoughts on what they had to tell him.

“Nickolas, I need to know if Albus Dumbledore approached you about the safety of the Sorcerer’s Stone.” Lucas said, watching as the elderly Wizard paused and looked at him.

“Why do you ask?” He asked, his voice slightly guarded as Delilah sighed.

“Because we believe, and rightly so, that Albus currently has the Sorcerer’s Stone hidden on the third floor corridor at the school guarded by a Cerberus, Devils Snare and a few other ‘traps’.

However, these traps had been discovered by some of the students and some of them believe it is some kind of test the Headmaster and Professors have put up for them. After all, why would there be such a powerful and dangerous item at the end of these…traps?” Delilah explained, watching as Nickolas’ eyes widened.
“What?!”

“Two recently discovered trainees have been through some of the ‘traps’ and described them in great detail. Music soothes the Cerberus while a simple sunlight charm makes the Devils Snare recoil. So long as you’re able to defeat the giant chess set you’re in the clear. They hadn’t gotten past the next trap but they guessed that some other older students might have. My son and his friends managed to convince them to stop and to try and convince others not to go any further in case they’re injured.”

Lucas said, watching as anger and disbelief warred for dominance in the elderly man’s eyes.

“T-That fool! He told me the stone would be perfectly safe!” Nickolas raged, making Delilah and Lucas look at each other.

“Why did you move it from your castle? I know you have plenty of places you could hide it.” Lucas said, watching as Nickolas drew in a deep breath before exhaling.

“I’ve recently been getting…threats from an unsavory lot. It’s why my wife and I have strengthened the wards around our homes. I told Albus that we were thinking of moving to Spain when he convinced me to move the stone. I moved it into a vault in Gringotts but Albus explained that it might not be safe from any Dark Witch or Wizard who might hear about the stone being relocated there. I…I gave him permission to move it to the school so long as it was placed under heavy protections. I never thought he would be so…so blinded as to have it at the end of a couple simple traps.” Nickolas said, anger in his voice as Delilah sighed.

“It’s worse than that, my friend.” She said, watching as Nickolas wisely set down his cup of tea.

“How so?”

“We believe he’s using the stone in an attempt to draw out Tomas Riddle. You’d know him better as Voldemort.”

Two days after Christmas Hermione, Emma and Neville arrived at the estate. Emma and Hermione were shown to their set of rooms which was more like a small flat for them. They had a living room, two bedrooms and two bathrooms for them which made the pair rather happy. Hermione was ecstatic to be around her friends and asked them if they had begun their assignments. She was rather pleased to hear that they had already completed their assignments. When Neville arrived, they were all shocked to see a pure black pup trotting next to Neville. The pup has bright blue eyes and there’s a small bright blond ring of fur around the pup’s left paw. Neville smiled brightly when he saw the surprise and awe on the other’s faces and the pup barked and eagerly trotted over to Hermione who crouched down and rubbed his head and scratched underneath the pup’s collar.

“This is my new familiar. Her name is Shade.” Neville said, pride in his voice as the pup looked at him with interest.

“She’s adorable!” Hermione gushed, smiling as she continued to pet Shade.

“Uncle Algie took me to a pet store in Phoenix Town and we wandered around. I was drawn to Shade here and I learned that she’s part German Shepard and part Dire Wolf. She’ll be pretty big when she’s fully grown.” Neville said, smiling as Shade walked over to Harry and Dean to get attention.

“What about Trevor?” Dean asked, watching as Neville called Shade to him.

“He’s going to be in our greenhouses helping to keep down the bug population. Gran was proud of
my report card. She admitted that she had been worried but she’s glad that you guys have been helping me so much.” Neville said, gratefulness in his voice as the others smiled warmly.

“Hey, you’re our friend, Nev. Of course we’re gonna help you out.” Dean said, clapping the boy on the shoulder.

“Exactly. Now, have you done your assignments?” Hermione asked, raising an eyebrow as the blonde groaned and hung his head.

“I’m stuck on Transfiguration and Defense.” Neville sighed, the others smiling as Hermione nearly bounced in place.

“We can use the library and I’ll help you with the essays.” She said, making Neville look at her with a small smile.

“Thanks, ‘Mione.”

Neville and Hermione headed off to the library after they collected their things from their rooms. Neville had been surprised that his grandmother had let him come and stay here until New Years day. She figured that it would be easier on him to stay there for his training and they’ll be heading back home the day after. Harry and Dean decided to head to the manor’s training room to work on their fencing. As they fenced, they talked about what had happened on Christmas day. The twins had gotten their normal gift basket from their mum and had surprisingly gotten small gifts from Ginny. Their dad had sent them a few books on inventing potions, which they were happy about while Charlie had shocked them by sending them miniatures of a few of the Dragons on the reserve. Fred had gotten a Common Welsh Green Dragon while George had gotten a Hebridean Black Dragon. Percy also surprised them by getting a few business books since he knows they want to either open their own joke shop or become full partners with Remus and Sirius. Ron, unsurprisingly, hadn’t gotten them anything even though they had sent him a few comic books he had been asking for.

However, what had been confusing was when Harry had received a gift basket filled with sweets and mince pies from Missus Weasley. Not only that, but she had apparently made him an emerald green sweater with a large gold colored ‘H’ in the center of it. Fred and George had been confused at the sight of it since they’ve been friends with Lee since their First Year and their mum had never made him a sweater. Now, they’re friends with Harry and she’s suddenly making him, not only a sweater, but a gift basket as well. Harry and his parents, however, Lucas and Delilah instantly understood what Molly was trying to do. She’s trying to endear Harry to the Weasley family in hopes of prompting him to get closer to all of them and begin thinking of them as another part of his family. Of course all of the food items had been scanned and there had been a mild compulsion charm on the sweater. Harry had placed his hand on it and felt the sudden urge to sit next to Ron and hang out with him. However, the most worrying piece was the mincemeat pies which had a loyalty potion mixed into them. His parents had been enraged at the audacity of Molly for doing something like that.

His dad had sent a letter to Arthur, telling him what his wife had done and warned him that, if she attempted something similar or worse, they’d press charges of attempted line theft. Needless to say the twins were horrified at what their mother had tried to do and assured Harry that they would’ve done everything they could to keep him away from such potions and charms. Harry reassured the twins that his Head of House ring would’ve alerted him before he ingested anything laced with potions or charmed. Just that morning Lucas had gotten a letter from Mister Weasley apologizing for what his wife had done and swore that he would do everything he could to prevent it from happening again. Fred and George didn’t have to be there to know that their dad had blown his top at their mum. Their dad was completely against compulsion charms and loyalty potions so to hear
that his own wife was using them on someone would send him into a rage no matter what pitiful excuse their mum might come up with.

“Harrison, Dean, can you come to the meeting room?”

The two boys stopped in their tracks at the sound of Lucas’ voice and they turned, spotting the man’s Eagle patronus hovering in the air nearby. Putting away their gear, they hurried out of the training room; all boyish glee gone from their faces and posture. They moved with purpose and speed; making anyone who they passed move out of the way. They knew the look of someone who had been given an order and knew that it was best if they moved out of the way. Harry and Dean hurried through the halls until they reached the meeting room. Opening the door, the boys were surprised to see Lucas, Delilah, Severus, Minerva and an elderly Wizard they didn’t know. However, they didn’t say anything. Instead they walked inside and sat down as Lucas put up privacy wards after the door was closed and locked.

“Harrison, Dean, this is Nickolas Flamel.” Delilah said, watching as the two boys looked at the aged Wizard with shock and respect.

“On Christmas evening I contacted him after you told your mother what you and the others were looking for. Nickolas has confirmed that the Sorcerer’s Stone is, indeed, at Hogwarts.” Lucas explained, the boys looking at him sharply.

“The stone is being guarded by various magical and intellectual puzzles. Albus thought that they would be enough to deter anyone who wanted to ignore his words of warning. We’ve caught many students bragging about how far they’ve gotten past some of the challenges and each time we’ve warned them from continuing. After detentions and point deductions they’ve begun listening. Sadly Albus refuses to remove the stone from the castle.” Minerva explained, the pair nodding slowly.

“Harrison, we believe that you’re right about Albus using the stone to try and draw Riddle out of hiding. You and the others did the right thing in telling the twins not to go any further. Minerva and Severus, however, have more insight as to what the traps are.” Lucas explained, the two students looking to their professors.

“Beyond the trapdoor guarded by the Cerberus is a nest of Devils Snare. After that is a trap designed by myself: a giant Wizard’s chess set in which the players have to place themselves into the game and direct their side to win. Next is a trap which features flying keys and a broom. To get past it one must study the keyhole on the next door before taking into the air and searching for the correct key. Once the key is grabbed they must hurry to the door and unlock it while the other keys are attempting to attack. Next is a room which is guarded by a Troll; getting past it is the only way through.” Minerva explained, the boys listening intently.

“The last trap is a room which has a simple table in the center of it with various potion bottles. A riddle is written down on a piece of parchment. The riddle must be solved in order to figure out which potion will allow the person to pass through the enchanted flames guarding the door forward. Another hidden potion will allow the person to go back. While the riddle warns of poison, those flasks are simply filled with a potion that will render the drinker unconscious. Two other flasks are filled with wine.” Severus added, the boys nodding in understanding.

“What do you want us to do?” Dean asked, watching as the adults looked at each other.

“After exams are finished, we want you both to go through the traps and find a way to remove the stone from the end. Albus is putting countless children in danger. We would have you remove it sooner, but it would raise too many suspicions if the stone were to disappear sooner than that.” Lucas answered, Harry and Dean looking at him in surprise.
“Albus made the ‘traps’ so simple because no one would dream of putting such a powerful and
dangerous artifact at the end of such a simple test. He’s hoping to fool Riddle into a false sense of
security and draw him out of hiding. Only the headmaster can get out of the final chamber once
someone enters it. It is his intention to trap Riddle in the chamber until someone arrives.” Severus
added, Harry and Dean shaking their heads in disbelief.

“I would also like one of you to retrieve the stone and make it look like it had been destroyed. If
Albus believes it had been destroyed then he cannot continue to use to lure out Riddle. My wife and
I plan on going to a different country. We both have enough elixir to allow us to live long enough to
get our affairs in order. We have already agreed to destroy the stone ourselves. After being around
for six-hundred years, it’s time to move on to the next great adventure.” Nickolas said, smiling gently
as the group looked at him in surprise and great sadness.

“How long will you live for once the stone is destroyed?” Delilah asked, her voice soft as Nickolas
sighed softly.

“At least another thirty years. I plan on taking on another apprentice and pass on my notes. My
descendants have continued to carry on the Flamel name and will continue to do so. Currently
Cassandra is the most promising Alchemist of my line and I shall be passing on all my old notes and
journals to her.” He explained, the others nodding in understanding.

“Minerva and I will keep a lookout for anything or anyone suspicious. We may ask you two to go
after the stone sooner. If you should see or hear anything suspicious, don’t be afraid to bring it up
with us.” Severus said, his tone gentle as the two trainees nodded.

“On the evening that you two go after the stone, we have a plan in mind to get Albus out of the
castle. We’ll send you a message telling you to go ahead.” Minerva explained, watching the pair
carefully as they looked at each other.

“Can we tell anyone else?” Dean asked, watching as the adults looked at each other.

“Miss Granger, Mister Longbottom and the twins may be told. If any of your other friends find out
then encourage them to keep quiet about it. We don’t need any other adults such as Madame Bones
knowing what’s going on before the stone is removed.” Lucas answered, the boys nodding in
understanding.

They talked a few more things over before Harry and Dean were dismissed. Both of them were
shocked that they had just gotten their first mission as trainee Assassins. It was rare, but trainees did
get missions sometimes. They were normally research or low level spying missions but it was still
rare when they came since the trainees were considered unprepared for such missions. Harry and
Dean couldn’t help but feel proud that they had been chosen for such a mission. Yes, Tonks
could’ve been given the mission but she’s been busy preparing for her N.E.W.T. exams and
applying for the Auror cadet training. She rarely has time for her friends as it is, let alone handling a
mission like this.

“Can you imagine what Elliot’s face would look like if he knew we have a mission?” Dean asked,
snickering at the thought of the ponce’s face.

“You know we never give out information about missions to others.” Harry said, making his friend
nod.

“I know, Ry. It’s just…that stupid git has been causing trouble for Hannah and Susan. It’s kind of
amazing that he’s in Hufflepuff and not Slytherin.” Dean said, following his friend through the
manor to the library.
“Not really. Elliot has none of the cunning or wit that is prized by Slytherin. Neither does darling Draco, but it was a process of elimination for the hat and Slytherin was the only place to put the sod. For all of his faults, Elliot is loyal to his family and the Brotherhood.” Harry said, Dean nodding lightly.

Walking into the library, they smiled at the sight of Hermione showing something to Neville at one of the work tables. They joined their friends and helped Neville figure a few things out; using simpler terms than Hermione had been. She flushed at that, but Neville smiled at her anyway and still thanked her for helping him out so much. While Neville worked, they talked about how their Christmas’ had been and what they did at home. Hermione told them that her dad had gotten the Summons and had actually driven up to her grandparent’s house. He was screaming at her mum about over-reacting and wanting to drive him to living on the street. Of course Emma had been prepared and explained exactly what she wanted to get out of the divorce, which wasn’t much. When Richard heard about Emma wanting to get custody of Hermione he had blustered and tried to claim that he had his rights. That was when Hermione jumped into the argument and stated, loud and clear, that she wanted nothing to do with him anymore.

Needless to say that had been a blow to Richard’s ego and he had quieted down. He had, shockingly, accepted the services of the lawyer Andromeda recommended for him. Thankfully he has enough sense in him to understand that because he knows of the Magical world things are going to be different for this divorce. Emma and Richard plan on meeting with each other, with their lawyers present of course, and a finical advisor to go over the finer points of the divorce agreement.

“He’s finally realized that Mum is serious about splitting. I think he might move out of the house and into a smaller place.” Hermione said, the others listening with interest.

“What about his side of the family?” Neville asked, watching as Hermione scoffed and rolled her eyes.

“Grandpa and Grandma Granger claim that Mum was just interested in his fortune and what he might inherit when they pass. Aunt Lucille has been badmouthing Mum ever since they started dating. From what I’ve heard she claims that Mum plans on ‘bleeding Dad dry’ of all his money and stocks. She’s hoping that Richard will get all of Mum’s money and make us paupers.” Hermione said, scowling as she thought of her aunt.

“Aunt Andie will make sure that won’t happen.” Harry said, his voice firm as Hermione smiled.

“I know, Ry.”

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Sirius Returns and Checkups, Richard, A wonderful party, A cure, The Longbottoms, A hidden threat

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Harry Potter and co. don’t belong to me. Assassin’s Creed and co. don’t belong to me. I’m just taking some credit for the plot and original characters. Fire Lizards belong to the talented Anne McCaffrey. In no way, shape or form am I making money from this.

Main Story Warnings: A.U.-severe-, characters are OOC, canon is only a minor guideline, crossover, swearing, violence, gore, character death, Light Grey!Harry, Assassin!Harry, modern technology, OC’s abound, Ron!Molly!Ginny!Bashing, Dumbledore!Bashing

Pairings: James/Lily, Sirius/OFC, Remus/Surprise, Harry/Luna, Neville/Hermione, Dean/Millicent, others to be decided

Author’s Note: Wow. We’re almost to the end of this journey everyone! Now, I know things may seem a little rushed with on how quickly time has passed, but the actual book did have months skipped at a time. Anyway, for those of you who are wondering when the next chapter in the Extras will be added: don’t worry! The next chapter is coming up soon! Those who haven’t yet read it, I highly recommend you do since that mini-series will have a lot of different things that may only get mentioned in the actual series. Anyway, I hope you enjoy the chapter and let me know what you think!

Shout Out: I’d like to give a shout out to DragonTamer01 for giving me the idea of how to mention Altair and Ezio in this story. I had honestly been drawing a blank as to how to mention them without needing Desmond to be brought in. DragonTamer01 presented a simple yet effective way to mention them that made me want to smack myself for not having thought of it before! Thank you my friend! This chapter is for you!

Challenge: DZ2’s Way of the Warrior challenge. For more information look to the first chapter or DZ2’s forums.

[Parseltongue]

[Telepathic Speech]

Emphasis on words/Spells

Text

-XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX-
Sirius smiled as he led Kano up to the estate. He couldn’t believe that he had gotten permission from Kano’s father to marry her and that the beautiful woman beside him had said yes when he had asked her. A gentle laugh made him look beside him, a grin on his face as Kano laughed softly at him. Both of them hurried up the steps to the manor and opened the door, their eyes alight with happiness. A House Elf popped in and asked if he could take Kano’s bags, to which she pulled out a shrunken trunk and handed it over. The House Elf popped away, allowing the newly engaged couple to seek out the other residents of the manor. Heading to the living room, Sirius grinned when he saw Harry, Dean, Hermione, Fred, George, Neville and Eliza sitting around the television watching a movie. They shared a few bowls of popcorn between them and they were relaxing on overly large pillows as the movie played. Eliza reached behind her to grab a bottle of water and her eyes wandered away from the movie. Her squeal alerted the others that something had happened. Turning, their eyes widened when they saw Sirius and Kano standing in the archway to the room. Eliza and Harry shot towards the pair and slammed into them, making Sirius and Kano laugh as they embraced the siblings. Hermione paused the movie before hurrying over as the others got up and crowded around the couple.

“Did you just get back?” Harry asked, looking up at his godfather with a smile.

“Of course. How are you all?” Sirius asked, smiling at the group.

“Good!” The group chorused, which made the couple laugh.

“So you really accepted this old dog’s proposal?”

Sirius and Kano turned and grinned when they saw Remus walking towards them.

“He was hard to resist.” Kano said, smiling lovingly up at Sirius.

“I always told you I was the better looking, Moony.” Sirius said, yelping when Kano reached up and smacked him upside the head.

Sirius and Kano talked about their time in Japan; though when the pair started being cautious about what they were saying Harry and Dean were quick to explain that both Neville and Hermione are Assassin trainees. Needless to say the two adults were shocked that Harry, Dean and Tonks have found so many trainees so far. Of course Kano explained that it’s highly unlikely that they’ll find any more since the twins were a rare case in not having been discovered earlier. The children were enthralled in learning more about Japan’s Magical Assassin Brotherhood. Over there things were seeped in ancient traditions and, while women certainly are considered very useful and are trained in a similar manner to the men, the head of the Brotherhood could only be a man.

All of them were more than happy that Kano’s father had given them his blessings, in which Sirius flushed and muttered how stressful it had been for him. Kano simply smiled and giggled at her future husband; knowing firsthand on how protective her father and three older brothers are. Of course it wasn’t long before Hermione told Sirius and Kano about her parents and what’s going on there. Kano and Sirius were shocked and horrified; in which Kano instantly hugged Hermione tightly while Sirius muttered darkly about all he’d like to do to Richard for striking Emma and suppressing both Emma and Hermione. Hermione was, once more, touched by the support she’s been given. It’s driven both her and her mum to tears with how many people are willing to help them; especially since they hardly know these people at all. Of course her mum has been helping out around the estate since they’ve arrived. She often watches the young children at the playground and Hermione has even taken to babysitting as a way of helping out and so she has some spending money.
Sirius, Kano and Remus headed out after talking for a little longer; allowing the group to get back to their movie. Kano and Sirius were in deep discussion about what they wanted to do now that they’re engaged. Kano had been staying over at Grimmauld Place at least three times a week but now that they’re engaged, they didn’t want to be separated for so long.

“You could move in to Grimmauld. It’s rare when the Assassin’s come in so we’ll have our privacy.” Sirius said, Kano nodding her head lightly.

“What other properties do you have?” She asked, making her fiancé blink and hum thoughtfully.

“Well, there’s Grimmauld Place, Black Manor in North Yorkshire, Black Estate in France, the Winter House in Russia, Black Ranch in the United States of America and finally Black Island in the Maldives.” Sirius answered, Kano looking at him in surprise while Remus shook his head.

“I know how you feel, Kano. Sometimes it’s surprising on how wealthy Sirius actually is. I know the Potters have two more properties and I’m not sure how many the Othello’s have.” Remus said, Kano shaking her head lightly in an attempt to get out of her shock.

“We have five properties, though we don’t have an island. Many of our properties have been lost in the wars and in our battles against the Templars.”

The trio turned and smiled when they saw Lucas, Delilah and Emma walking towards them. Delilah happily hugged Kano while Sirius was congratulated by Lucas and Emma. Sirius hugged Emma warmly and thanked her for being so accepting of everything that’s been going on. Emma was touched by the easy acceptance and welcomes coming from Sirius and Kano, especially when the Japanese Assassin hugged her and told her that she’ll be taking over Hermione’s stealth training now that she’s back.

“I hope my cousin has been able to help.” Sirius said, Emma smiling gently as she nodded.

“Andie has been so helpful, both with the divorce process and with helping me understand more about my daughter’s new…station? in life.” Emma answered, Sirius nodding happily.

“Hermione will always have the option of ending her training should she wish to. I won’t sugar coat things, Emma, there will be times when all Hermione will want to do is stop. We need to push her past her limits in order for her to gain the experience she needs. Harry and Dean helping her and Neville to workout has certainly made our job easier but we’ll still be pushing them. Training will be grueling and at times they will be in the infirmary due to exhaustion or injuries gained during training.” Kano explained, Emma frowning lightly as the others nodded.

“Harry and Dean have been in the infirmary because of their training. Sprained ankles, bruises, splinters, a few broken bones or just exhaustion have been the causes. However, they’ve become stronger because of it.” Lucas explained, watching as Emma worried her bottom lip.

“Fred and George have already experienced some of this. The training they receive at Hogwarts is certainly grueling, but it’s not nearly as...extensive as the training they’ll receive here. Yes, they’ve been learning stealth, tracking and hand-to-hand combat but Minerva and Severus have also been focusing on history, language and Occlumency. Hermione is already learning Occlumency and has chosen what language she wants to learn first.” Delilah said, her voice gentle as Emma nodded.

Hermione had come to her last night gushing about the fact that she’ll be learning another language. Her daughter has such a love for learning that it had been hard for Emma to say no to the idea of new lessons. The fact that Occlumency will be teaching her daughter how to protect her mind from being read was always going to get an agreement from Emma, especially since she knows the risks.
involved in her daughter having an unprotected mind. Lucas and Delilah had told her that there are children of Templars at school; some of which are in higher years and may know the art of Legilimency which will allow them to read her daughter’s mind. She was glad that Hermione will be protected and has also taken to wearing a charmed bracelet which protects her own mind now that she’s living here on the estate.

She and Hermione have also already made headway in the Othello library. While there are books which have protections on them to keep them from being read, there are plenty of other books which are free to read. Hermione had been overjoyed when she found a book titled ‘Famous Assassins Throughout History’ and has taken great joy in learning about Altaïr Ibn-La’Ahad and Ezio Auditore da Firenze. It was rather fascinating if she was to be honest. She’s taken to reading some of the chapters from the book whenever Hermione is training and the rich history of the Assassins always had her on the edge of her seat marveling at how many historical figures had been influenced by either Assassins or Templars. She and Hermione had been very glad that Leonardo da Vinci had altered the hidden blade so Assassin’s no longer had to lose a finger in order to use it.

“Emma, have you been to see Healer June?”

Emma blinked as Delilah’s voice brought her out of her thoughts and she looked at the other woman with a questioning glance.

“Why do you ask?”

“Well, it’s actually pretty common for Muggleborn Witches and Wizards to actually have a Squib parents. If you’re actually a Squib instead of a normal Muggle then you’ll be able to have a vault in Gringotts without needing Hermione to be the owner of the vault and you’ll be able to see Magical establishments without the aid of a charmed bracelet.” Delilah explained, smiling as Emma’s eyes widened in surprise.

“Not only that but you’ll be able to work in a Magical shop or open your own business in Diagon Alley, Hogsmeade or one of the other magical towns or villages. Life for Squibs has greatly improved over the years.” Remus added, the others nodding as they looked at Emma with expectancy.

“She might also be able to see about reversing the damage that had been done to your body all those years ago. No promises, but it won’t hurt to get a checkup.” Delilah said, her voice soft as Emma sighed and nodded.

“Alright, I’ll get a checkup.” She said, the others smiling at her.

While Sirius and Kano headed to Kano’s small house in the back of the property, Richard and Delilah collected Hermione from the living room so she could see the results of her mum’s checkup. Hermione was worried at first before they explained what might happen as a result from said checkup. She was happy and relieved that there was nothing seriously wrong which warranted the checkup in the first place and, admittedly, wanted to know the results herself. Heading to the infirmary, Healer June soon had Emma sitting on one of the beds and was performing various spells on the other woman and was asking plenty of questions. Healer June also went over Emma’s medical files which the woman had gotten the day before Christmas Eve incase she had to switch doctors.

“Well, your vitals are good. From what your files say there’s been no sign of any diseases which run in your family. I will tell you this: you may need glasses in your senior years. I’m guessing that your parents are nearsighted?” June asked, looking at Emma who looked at her in surprise.
“Uh…yeah. Yes, my mother is nearsighted and so is my oldest brother.” She answered, June nodding her head.

“Now, as for your previous surgeries. With some scar vanishing balm the scar from your emergency caesarian section can be removed along with the faint scars on your back and legs from your surgery as a teen. I’ll need to do a more thorough examination to see if there is anything that can be done about removing the damages from the accident you had when you were young.” June explained, Emma’s eyes widening in shock.

“D-Do you mean…I-I might be able to have children again?” Emma whispered, awe and hope in her voice as June set down her clipboard.

“Emma, I’m not going to beat around the bush with you. There is a lot magic can do. We have developed potions which will help cure cancer, can bring people back from the brink of death or put them into a medical coma. However, there is also a lot that magic can’t do. For me, it depends on what was damaged during your accident and what the doctors had done for their repairs. I may be able to fully heal you or partially heal you. You may have to be on a potions regimen for a while in order to reverse the damage done or you may need to take fertility potions should you remarry and wish to have more children. Right now, it’s a big unknown.” June explained, watching as mother and daughter listened to her every word.

“I don’t mind. I just…I just always wanted to have a good sized family. I love Hermione dearly, she’s my little miracle. But this has been such a huge weight on my shoulders since I was young.” Emma explained, smiling as Hermione hurried over and hugged her tightly.

“I’ll do my best, Emma. After Hermione and the kids are back at school I can do a deep examination and find out what had been healed and how it was healed. Now, I believe you wanted to know about your magical core results?” June asked, smiling as the others looked at her with wide eyes.

“Magical core results?! Then that means-“

“Yes, Miss Granger, your mother does have a magical core. You, Emma Granger, are a Squib and a rather powerful one at that. If your core had developed a little further then I dare say you would’ve been a Witch.” June said, chuckling at the looks of surprise on the group’s faces.

“So Emma will have no problem getting a vault in Gringotts or finding a job in the Magical world?” Lucas asked, grinning as June nodded.

“I’ll write down my findings. On the Merlin Scale of Power you are around a seventeen. Twenty is the weakest Witch or Wizard power level.” June explained, making Hermione and Emma tilt their heads thoughtfully.

“How powerful are you, Mister Othello?” Hermione asked, making Lucas chuckle softly.

“Honestly I never bothered to have my core tested. I’ve never been interested in knowing, really.” Lucas said, the others nodding.

“Same here. Though the last time Harry was measured he was already rather powerful. He was…seven at the time.” June said, her voice thoughtful as the others listened intently.

“That’s not very surprising, Harry has an amazing grasp on the practical aspect in our classes.” Hermione said, smiling as she thought of Harry’s talents.

“Alright, Miss Granger, up on the bed. Time for your checkup.” June said, smirking when Hermione looked at her with wide eyes.
“W-What?! But I had a checkup with Madame Pomfrey not long before break began.” Hermione said, shifting lightly as her mum got off the bed and nudged her towards it.

“That may be true but Madame Pomfrey only looks for certain things. Have you gotten your inoculations for Dragon Pox and Vanishing Sickness?” June asked, watching as Hermione and Emma nodded.

“Professor McGonagall suggested that Richard and I take her to St. Mungo’s after we learned she was a Witch. I took her two days after.” Emma explained, June nodding her head as Hermione hopped up onto the bed.

Hermione held still while June cast a few spells. She also had Delilah, Lucas and Remus get out of the room while she performed a minor physical after Hermione and Emma gave her permission. Afterwards, June called in Neville and Augusta remained in the room while her grandson was given his own physical and exam. She also consented to allow June to look her over to ensure she was healthy. Fred and George also went through their own physicals, as did Dean since all the others were getting theirs done. Everyone was happy for Emma and Lucas took her to his office to talk about how she can set up an account with Gringotts and get her money transferred there.

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December 31st

Richard vaguely listened to his younger, twin sister prattle on about something. Ever since Emma left he’s found himself in quiet thought quite frequently. Yes, he had been angry; beyond angry at that. Emma dared to accuse him of pushing their daughter away and making her uncomfortable with herself. Okay, yes, he has always wanted Hermione to be more outgoing and social, especially with her peers. However, Hermione had always refused to go out of her comfort zone whenever it came to others. Then there had been the fact that his daughter has an eidetic memory. She had always excelled at her studies which often made other children jealous of her because she learned at a much faster rate than they did. Her teachers had even accused them of encouraging her to study ahead which made the other children feel stupid according to her teachers. Emma had been beyond angry when the teachers blamed them and they had pulled Hermione out of that school as soon as the school year was over.

When Hermione had shown an interest in football, he had been ecstatic. Finally his daughter would have more of an opportunity to make friends and would finally put down her books and get outside. Hermione had played on a youth league for a few years until she left the team and focused more on her studies. Okay…yes he could’ve handled that news better but he had been so disappointed in Hermione at the time that he had just…snapped. She was throwing away a good opportunity to continue making friends and get out of the house. Yes, she did go on frequent walks and bike rides with Emma, but that wasn’t letting her be around children her own age.

“Richie!”

“Huh?!” Richard asked, looking up and wincing when he saw the exasperated look on Lucille’s face.

“Richie, pay attention. I know you’re going through a rough time but our parents will be here soon.” Lucille said, turning around and heading back to the stove to stir something.

Lucille Granger-Hill is a rather beautiful woman. Like her brother, she has the same dark brown hair though had gotten golden highlights added to her hair. Her hazel eyes are bright and often sparkled with laughter and life. She had done well for herself and had gotten a modeling contract when she
was sixteen. Her modeling career lasted until she was twenty two when she met her husband Derek. Instead of modeling, she became a fashion designer and created her own line of clothing which has been worn by celebrities around the world. She, Derek and their daughter Sarah live a rather wealthy life and Richard felt slightly out of place in their large house which was more like a small manor than anything. It reminded him of his own life choices and the fact that he and Emma had lived a modest, upper middle-class life style.

“Sorry, Luc. I’ve just been…distracted.” He said, sighing as his sister walked over and placed a bottle of beer in front of him.

“I still can’t believe she actually filed for divorce.” Lucille scoffed, scowling when she thought of her brother’s soon-to-be ex-wife.

“I mean, you just want the best for Hermione and she should’ve heard you out instead of blocking all your attempts to have some kind of say for Hermione’s education. I mean, you put money away for her schooling as well!”

“Luc, just…just drop it. Hermione’s happy in her new boarding school and is apparently the top student of her entire year. It doesn’t matter that I don’t like the fact that it’s so…exclusive.” Richard sighed, watching as his sister shook her head.

Lucille opened her mouth to say something when the sound of the front door opening reached them. Richard turned in his seat and watched as a rather pretty fourteen year-old girl with light mocha colored skin and black hair hurried into the room. Her bright hazel eyes matched Lucille’s and she eagerly hugged her mother before letting out a little squeal when she saw Richard.

“Uncle Richard!” Sarah cried, rushing over and hugging the man.

“Hey, Sarah. How was ballet?” He asked, smiling softly as he hugged his niece before releasing her.

“Oh it was wonderful! We’re having auditions for Sleeping Beauty and I’ve been going over the pieces for Aurora. Mary Perkins is my only real competition. The other two girls are barely able to move gracefully.” Sarah said, picking up her duffle bag from where she had put it and walking out of the kitchen.

“Shower and change quickly, Sarah. Grandma and Papa will be here soon.” Lucille called, turning her attention back to dinner when her daughter shouted that she would hurry.

“Hey, Richard.”

Derek Hill is a rather handsome man with dark chocolate colored skin, a shaved head and dark brown eyes. He’s strongly built from his days playing rugby in high school and university and Richard knows that his brother-in-law keeps in shape by going to the gym every few days. Derek is the C.E.O. of a rather prestigious global company which is why he tried to get out to the gym so often. It helped him burn off stress from his job and kept him fit and healthy even though he works a desk job. Richard shook hands with Derek before the man moved over to Lucille and hugged her from behind, kissing her cheek and asking her what she’s cooking. Richard looked away from the domestic scene, his mind painfully reminding him that it wasn’t too long ago when he and Emma would do the same thing. It is a hard blow to his pride to accept that his marriage to his wife had failed so spectacularly but it was something he has to accept.

He and Emma just…aren’t combatable anymore. He had been attracted to her in college due to her beauty and quiet nature. He had thought that he would be able to pull her out of her shell and reveal the true woman she was underneath. Things had been great and they had fallen in love quickly. Sure,
When she had gone through her pregnancy, he had tried doing all he could to help her. However, he just didn’t know how to reach his wife as she suffered from depression and so much pain. It pained him seeing her in agony and there were many nights where he would stay up all night rubbing her back and feet in an attempt to soothe her. Eventually, it just got to be too much for both of them and they drifted apart. When Emma was in labor, he had been terrified about losing both his wife and child. The idea of raising a child on his own terrified him and the newly discovered knowledge that Emma can’t have any more children was a hard pill to swallow. He had always dreamed of having at least three children. Yes, there was adoption but he honestly didn’t want to raise someone else’s children.

Richard was brought out of his thoughts when Lucille asked him to help her set the table. Finishing off the last of his beer, he tossed the bottle away and helped Lucille and Derek set the dining table in the formal dining room. Sarah hurried down and helped her mum finish off the last touches on dessert before putting the pies into the fridge to cool and set. The sound of the doorbell going off announced the arrival of Jacob and Cassandra Granger. Hello’s were exchanged and Richard found himself being fussed over by his mother.

“Mum, I’m fine, really.” He said, sighing as Cassandra’s piercing green eyes narrowed at him.

“I’ll believe that when I see it. How is work going?” She asked, taking her son’s arm and walking towards the dining room.

“It’s alright. Our employee’s aren’t too happy with Emma leaving but they also understand. Miranda is handling all of Emma’s clients.” Richard explained, the others listening intently as they sat down.

“She’s really selling off her half of the business?” Jacob asked, frowning lightly as Richard nodded.

“She is. Her grandparents were very wealthy and left her and her brothers equal shares of their fortune. Our lawyers are going over everything and Emma will be getting all the money she’s made from work over the years. We have a finical advisor going over everything with a fine tooth comb to make sure neither of us are scammed.” Richard explained, his parents and Derek nodding.

“Good.” Cassandra said, patting her son’s hand before they all helped themselves to the food Lucille had made.

Conversation was kept light and free flowing. Cassandra and Jacob talked about their retirement and what they were planning on doing with some of their own fortune. Cassandra does a lot of charity work now and her husband still keeps an eye on the golf courses he owns to ensure that his successor is taking care of everything properly. Derek complained about some of his employees and managers, to which his wife and father-in-law provided him plenty of advice about what to do with the troublesome employees. Sarah talked about her latest boyfriend, to which her grandmother cautioned her to be careful and to take things slow, which made the teen roll her eyes. Lucille gushed about the new line of clothes she’s designed, to which her daughter and mother took great interest in while the men shook their heads fondly and shared a faint smile between themselves.

After dinner, Sarah and Derek cleared the table and rinsed off the dishes before putting them into the dishwasher. Afterwards, Sarah retreated upstairs to her room to finish a project for school while the
adults headed to the parlor with a drink in hand. Sitting down, they got comfortable and continued to talk about their business and social lives though questions about the divorce started to come as well now that Sarah’s not in the room.

“So, what’s going to happen with Hermione?” Cassandra asked, watching as Richard sighed.

“Emma’s pushing for getting sole custody of her.” He said, watching as the others looked at him in surprise.

“What?!” Cassandra gasped, pressing a hand to her mouth in shock.

“What about you?! You should be allowed to see your own damn daughter!” Lucille raged, ignoring her mother’s scolding for her language.

“Hermione and I…never had the best relationship. Our lawyers spoke with Hermione privately about what she wanted and she wants to live with Emma. She’s old enough to make that choice for herself and the lawyers will abide by it. We’re settling on child support payments and I’ve already agreed to allow Emma to have the money we’ve both put away for when Hermione goes to college.” Richard explained, mentally sighing as Lucille frowned at him.

“Richard you should know better! Emma’s likely to spend it all on herself or…on something like books and clothes!” She snapped, though she was shocked when Richard frowned at her and even her parents looked at her with disappointment.

“Now I may not understand why Richard and Emma are getting a divorce but I know Emma is much better than that. She is a highly responsible woman who wants the best for her daughter.” Jacob said, his daughter huffing.

“Emma wants Hermione to have the best possible future. That’s why she was so adamant that Hermione attend the school she’s in now. I know Emma would never use Hermione’s college fund. We’ve both put a lot into it to ensure Hermione gets the best possible education she can.” Richard said, his voice firm as Lucille, for once, kept her mouth shut.

“Do you know what Emma plans on doing for work?” Derek asked, looking to his brother-in-law.

“No. Though I wouldn’t be all that surprised if she were to open her own business. She has a double major, one being business management. She also minored in accounting.” Richard answered, the others nodding in understanding.

“Will you be allowed to visit Hermione at least?” Cassandra asked, knowing that it’d hurt her son if he wasn’t able to at least see or speak to his only child.

“I think supervised visits will be allowed. Hermione’s sent me a few letters already. She and Emma are staying with a friend of Hermione’s from school.” Richard explained, shifting slightly as the others nodded.

Thankfully the conversation drifted away from him and his failed marriage. Thinking about his failed marriage also made him think about the contract he had signed with his lawyer. Emma had been right in that their divorce is very different from a normal divorce simply because their daughter is a Witch and both of them know about the existence of magic. Because he is a Muggle and won’t be the primary caregiver of Hermione, he’ll have his memory altered once the divorce is finalized. All his memories of magic will be erased and altered. Yes, he’ll know that Hermione is going to a private boarding school but instead of it being a school for magic it will become a school for the gifted. Yes, he’ll remember his…anger towards Hermione attending her school but he won’t remember that it
was due to magic. Admittedly it was rather…daunting. He didn’t like the idea of his memory being tampered but he knew that it’s for the safety of the Magical world and their need for secrecy. If his sister were to learn about the truth behind Hermione and her schooling then it’d be all over the news and there was no telling what would happen.

Richard was pulled out of his thoughts by his sister announcing it time for dessert. Sarah reappeared from upstairs and they made their way back to the dining room where Lucille presented them with pie. Derek and Lucille talked about their plans for their summer vacation, to which Sarah was over the moon about the idea of going on a cruise with her parents. Richard admitted that he was thinking about selling the house after the divorce is finalized, in which his parents and sister all suggested various other places he could move into that are closer to them. He reminded them that he has every intention of keeping the business so he’ll be looking for a place in-between them and his business. After dessert was finished, Richard said his goodbyes and hugged his mother, sister and niece. He quickly made plans for them to visit him the day before Sarah has to return to school and wished his niece luck on her project.

“I really hope he knows what he’s doing.” Lucille said, frowning as she heard her brother pull out of the driveway.

“It sounds like he does, dear. He has a finical advisor and it sounds like it’s a mutual parting.” Derek said, wrapping an arm around his wife’s waist.

“Aunt Emma was never good enough for Uncle Richard anyway. He’ll move on and find someone else.” Sarah said, not noticing the frowns from her grandparents.

-I really hope she loses that attitude. If not then it’ll cause her trouble in the future.- Cassandra thought, watching as Sarah flounced back up to her room once more.

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Amelia smiled as she watched Susan tell the House Elves what she wanted for supper that evening. She was honestly surprised at the changes in her niece. Susan had always been such a shy, withdrawn young girl and Amelia had been worried about her niece’s ability to make friends. Hogwarts is such an important time in a child’s life because they can make friendships that’ll last them their entire lives and those friendships can bring connections that her niece might not be able to get on her own. When Susan had written home asking if she could have a New Years party with all her friends, Amelia had been shocked. Her shock only increased when she saw the names of the friends that Susan wanted to invite. Yes, she had been slightly worried when she saw Millicent Bulstrode, Daphne Greengrass, Tracy Davis and Blaise Zabini on that list, but she also knew that her niece is a good judge of character. So, she figured that if her niece trusts these children then she’ll give them the benefit of the doubt and monitor how her niece interacts with the group.

“I’m here!”

Susan and Amelia turned and Susan squealed in happiness when Hannah hurried into the room with a bag on her arm. Amelia smiled and watched as the two girls hugged and bounced up and down in excitement. Seeing her niece so happy and excited to see all her friends was a heartwarming sight for Amelia. Her niece is doing great in school; one of the top students in her House, and has made some great friends by the sound of things.

“Auntie is letting us use the ballroom for the party.” Susan said, Hannah’s eyes widening before she beamed and looked at Amelia.
“Thank you for letting us have this party ma’am.” She said, making Amelia smile gently at the girl.

“It’s no problem, Hannah. It’s nice knowing that you two have so many friends now.” She said, the girls nodding happily.

“Daphne, Tracy and Blaise aren’t part of our main group of close friends but we’ve gotten close to them thanks to Millie. It’s nice that Millie’s bringing her little brother William with her. We didn’t want to exclude him from any parties that his sister is invited to.” Susan explained, Amelia nodding in understanding.

“I think it’s a really nice thing you’re doing for Millicent. Now, I’ll let you continue getting ready for the party. Remember that everyone is going to be arriving around five tonight.” She said, heading towards the door.

“We know, Auntie.” Susan called, making her aunt chuckle softly.

Amelia headed up to her private office to get some paperwork done. So far things have been going well this year. Yes, she had worked on Christmas Eve, but she had gotten to spend the actual holiday with her niece which didn’t happen all that often. She’ll always be grateful to the Abbotts for being so willing to look after Susan whenever she has to go into work. Edmund and Marcie have been her friends since her own time in Hogwarts and they adored having Susan around since it meant that Hannah was happy. They also understood how taxing her job is so they never complained about the sudden calls at random times during the day asking if Susan could come over and spend some time there. Marcie has also been helping her with getting the Bones finance’s back in order. Her brother had made some…less than wise decisions when investing in various businesses before his death. After the war had ended much of the family fortune was gone and nearly all of the businesses he had invested in had been destroyed during the war or were doing poorly. Now, however, she’s building things back up so when Susan comes of age she’ll have a good amount of money behind her.

Downstairs, Susan and Hannah hurried to the ballroom and soon had two House Elves decorating the large room to their liking. Susan mentally thanked her aunt for having the manor modernized since it allowed them to listen to music on the stereo system without needing to hire a band to play. Once the ballroom was being decorated, Susan and Hannah hurried up to Susan’s bedroom to get ready. Hannah pulled out shrunken, wrapped presents from her bag which would be put in the ballroom. All of them had agreed that they’ll exchange Christmas presents tonight since they’ll all be together instead of sending them through the mail. Susan pulled out her own pile of gifts to her friends before she took a quick shower and began going through her closet to find the perfect outfit for the evening. Of course like all girls Susan tried on three different outfit combinations before settling on the first one she had tried on. After dressing, they did each other’s hair and makeup before hurrying downstairs just as Amelia was about to call for them.

It wasn’t long after that when their guests began arriving. Harry, Dean, Fred, George and Hermione arrived first with a younger girl with medium blonde colored hair and golden eyes. She was quickly introduced as Harry’s younger sister Eliza and she was more than happy to eagerly hug Susan and Hannah before thanking them profusely for allowing her to come. Instead of heading to the ballroom, they stayed in the entrance hall to see their other friends. Millicent arrived next with a boy with the same black hair as her though he has deep green eyes instead of blue. Eliza was glad that she has someone closer to her age, as William is only a year younger than her. Millicent and William was more than thankful that they were both allowed to come and William was soon chatting away with Eliza happily. Fred and George were resisting all their urges to prank the others, especially with Amelia there. The last thing they wanted was to piss of the head of the D.M.L.E.

Next to arrive was Daphne and Tracy, who were much like Susan and Hannah in their friendship
and the fact that they do just about everything together. Next came Neville, in which he apologized for being a bit late but Shade hadn’t wanted to be without him and he had to wait until the pup went to sleep before he could leave. The last to arrive was Blaise, in which he apologized as well though his excuse was that his mother had been fussing over him until the last minute. Susan and Hannah took the group of friends around the first floor showing them the living room, den, sun room, kitchen, formal dining room and the first floor of the library. Thankfully, Hermione curbed her eagerness to explore the library and stuck with her friends when they finally went into the ballroom. All of them were impressed by the festive banners and the bright colors that adorned the walls and tables. They loved the buffet style and the large round table which will sit all of them.

“Auntie will you be going to the Ministry New Years party?” Susan asked, looking at her aunt as her friends wandered around the ballroom and got refreshments.

“I don’t know, Susan…”

“We’ll be okay on our own! Fred and George can watch over us and the House Elves are here too.” Susan said, watching as her aunt shifted and sighed.

Amelia could see how excited her niece is for the chance to have her friends over and to actually begin branching out on her own. In a way, it would be nice to get to spend the evening at the Ministry party, which is likely were all of the parents of the children are. However, a part of her still wants to stay and watch over her niece and the other children that are now in her care. Yes, the twins can be responsible according to Susan but they’re still only thirteen and will be in charge of a good sized group of preteens and two young children. Looking at her niece, Amelia sighed and nodded, making Susan squeal happily before she ran over to the twins and dragged them over to her aunt. Fred and George were shocked when Amelia explained things to them and they promised to watch over the group and keep everyone safe. Amelia promised to be back a little after midnight before saying goodbye to her niece. She relayed orders to the House Elves to ensure that everyone was safe and they were to get to the safe room if anything happened.

The twins relayed the information to the others, in which the younger teens promised to be good and listen to the twins and Susan. After the moment of seriousness, the party fully got underway. There was plenty of socializing, in which Harry and his main group of friends learned more about Daphne, Tracy and Blaise. They learned that the Italian Wizard lives with his mother after his father had died when he was a few months old. His mother has remarried a few times, but none of the other men in her life stuck around very long. Blaise told them about a family curse which has been in the family for many generations. The women were destined to find their true love early in life but after they gave birth to their first child it wasn’t long before their partner died to an unknown illness. The curse thankfully doesn’t seem to effect any males in the family but it made his aunts reluctant to have children of their own and his mother had been heartbroken after the death of his father. A side effect of the curse was that any other suitors never stuck around long and feelings of unease or dread would begin to fill them the longer they stayed with the woman.

“Has your family tried to break the curse?” Hermione asked, horror and worry in her voice as Blaise sighed.

“They’ve tried many times but it’s impossible to find out who had even cast the curse. My great-great-grandmother had been the last one who knew anything about the curse and she died before telling anyone else. My relatives are still attempting to find something in the family vaults and the old files and journals.” He explained, the others listening with sadness and sympathy.

“If there’s anything we can do just ask.” Harry said, Blaise smiling lightly in acceptance.

The party continued and the group of friends had a lot of fun dancing and goofing off. Eliza and
William stuck together for most of the party and eventually managed to convince their siblings to go outside with them where they all had a great snowball war. All of them had a great time just goofing off and being kids; especially since they didn’t have to worry about school or the stress of classes. After spending an hour and a half outside, they finally trooped back inside where the Elves dried them off and provided hot chocolate to help warm them up. It was during this time when Susan announced it was time to exchange gifts. Heading over to the table, the House Elves brought over the large pile of presents and divided them up between each person. Susan was elected to open her gifts first because she’s the hostess of the party, which made the shy Hufflepuff blush but she smiled none-the-less.

Susan loved all of her gifts, and she was especially touched by the handmade card from William since the young boy hadn’t been able to buy her anything. Harry and Dean had gotten her charms for her bracelet and had even gotten her some new toys for her pet rabbit. Hannah and Millicent also got their own charm bracelets, while Fred and George were given simple necklaces with a single golden disc with their birthstone on it. The twins were shocked and nearly began crying when Harry, Dean, Neville and Hermione presented them with new, state-of-the-art Beaters armor. The current armor that they’ve been using had been purchased in a second-hand shop and it does little in way of protecting them during the games. They also explained to the others that their parents, Bill and Charlie had gotten them decent brooms for playing Quidditch. The current brooms that they’ve been using were purchased in a second-hand shop and they were so worn down that their parents knew that they needed new ones in order to keep playing less the brooms fail on them during a game. They’re now proud owners of the new Cleansweep sevens.

Eliana, Millicent and Jillian were now proud owners of their own new charm bracelets, as was Hannah. Daphne and Tracy weren’t as close to the group as Millicent has become, so they weren’t offended in the slightest by not getting a charm bracelet. Rather, they were very pleased with the necklace and earring set that the boys had gotten them. Blaise was rather pleased with a set of formal dueling robes as the dark skinned boy was a prodigy in Defense like Harry. He had told them before that his mum had him taught by special tutors and they had told her about his skills in the field and had even suggested that he begin to learn dueling over the summer. After the gifts were all opened and stored away in their rooms for the evening, the group spent the rest of the evening laughing, dancing and chatting away the hours. Millicent and Harry kept a careful watch over their younger siblings and they were pleased that Eliza and William were having so much fun even though they’re hanging out with older teens. The twins kept true to their promise to Amelia and kept a close eye on their friends. Thankfully the group was rather responsible and knew what they could and couldn’t do.

Time seemed to fly by for the group and it wasn’t long before Susan had them bundled up in their winter cloaks and ushered them outside. Outside, the House Elves had cleared a patch of snow and had lined up fireworks from P&M along with some normal Muggle fireworks. They were given magical sparklers, which were far safer and much more fun than normal Muggle sparklers. The group laughed and ran around with the sparklers in hand, drawing patterns and writing in the air. As it neared midnight, they extinguished the sparklers and gathered near the fireworks. It wasn’t long before they were counting down and Eliza and William were bouncing in excitement as they looked at the clear night sky.

“Five…four…three…two…one…Happy New Year!!” All of them cried, cheering as the fireworks were lit and shot into the sky.

They all marveled over the colors and patterns that filled the night sky; their eyes reflecting the bright colors gleaming in the darkness. The display lasted a good ten minutes before they were ushered inside by the House Elves. With cups of hot chocolate, they sleepily headed up to their rooms and, after changing, headed to sleep. Susan attempted to stay up to see her aunt arrive home, but Nippy,
one of the elves, finally convinced her to head up to her room and fall asleep. The House Elves moved silently throughout the manor; cleaning and straightening everything and getting rid of the decorations and getting rid of the trash. A House Elf stood near the door when they felt someone enter the wards. He happily greeted Amelia as she walked through the front door and began removing her cloak and shoes.

“How was the evening, Miles?” Amelia asked, handing the House Elf her cloak.

“It went smoothly, Madame. Masters Weasley kept a careful watch over everyone as you asked them to.” Miles responded, Amelia nodding her head in agreement and happiness.

“Is Susan awake?” She asked, looking down at her head House Elf.

“No, Madame. She wanted to stay awake but after the excitement of the evening she was very tired and we sent her to bed.” He said, folding her cloak and watching as she headed to the stairs.

“Thank you, Miles. I will be heading to bed soon myself.” She said, the House Elf nodding.

“Very well, Madame. I will turn down your bed.” He said, popping away.

Amelia headed up to the third floor where the family members slept. She first stopped at Hannah’s room, in which the young girl had been given her own room years ago due to her close friendship with Susan. Opening the door silently, she smiled at the sight of the brunette sleeping soundly in bed. Amelia backed out of the room and headed further down the hallway to her niece’s room. Opening the door, she slipped into the room and smiled when she saw Susan sleeping in her bed. Smiling gently, Amelia caught sight of Susan’s charm bracelet and instantly saw that it now has a few more charms on it. When Harry and Dean had approached her for her niece’s birthday about the enchanted bracelet, she had wanted to refuse such an expensive gift. However, the boys simply explained that they wanted to keep their friends protected and would be doing the same thing for all of their female friends. She had finally relented; especially since she hasn’t had the time to get Susan’s heiress ring enchanted.

“Goodnight, Susan.” Amelia whispered, bending down and pressing a kiss to her niece’s forehead.

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January 3rd

Sirius sighed as he went over the files on his desk. For years now he’s been investigating what had happened to Frank and Alice Longbottom. He had worked closely with the couple during his time in the Auror department and they had been highly respected Aurors during their service. Since their admittance into St. Mungo’s, he’s been attempting to learn what had fully happened on the night of the attack on Longbottom Manor. Master Auror Alastar Moody had been a good source of information since the man had been the leader of the snap response team that had gone to Longbottom Manor after Frank had sent out the distress signal. Alastar had explained that Bellatrix and her husband had already had Frank down by the time they arrived and had Alice under what they presumed to be the Cruciatus curse. However, Alastar had explained that, now that he’s thought about it, there was a strange, sickly purple glow surrounding Alice as she was being tortured.

Now, as a part of Auror training, all cadets were placed under the Cruciatus curse for a few seconds so they understood what kind of pain their enemies could and likely would inflict upon them. Many thought of their training as hardcore and sometimes inhumane but it was needed. He knows that the Cruciatus curse is a deep red colored curse and left no spell light upon the person being held under said curse. He then approached Augusta with the idea of becoming allied Houses and, after she had
accepted, asked if he could see the medical records of her son and daughter-in-law. She had been understandably suspicious and had been hesitant to allow him to see the records but he explained that he had his suspicions that it wasn’t the Cruciatus curse which drove Frank and Alice into their catatonic state. She was shocked at hearing that, but she had relented and had given him their medical records after he swore an oath to never reveal what was in those records without her permission to do so first.

Now, after a year of studying and searching, he believes he has finally reached a breakthrough in the case. It took some digging through the vast Black library, which has increased since the death of his cousins, aunts and uncles, but he had found an ancient book on Dark Magic. Reading the book had made him feel sick to his stomach, but he had read through it so he could understand what some of the spells the Death Eaters might use. Reading it also helped him understand how Bellatrix had become such a powerful and deadly Death Eater. There was no doubt that she had read the book since it had belonged to her, Narcissa and Andromeda’s parents when they had been alive. After a short conversation with Andromeda, where she confirmed that she had caught her sister reading the book a few times, and Sirius had been able to narrow the spell down to two possibilities as to what the curse could be. He had also asked Amelia if he could speak with his deranged cousin. Amelia had been surprised at his request, but when he explained that he was doing something to possibly help Frank and Alice, she relented and granted him permission to speak with the woman.

Going to Azkaban was an experience in itself. He had surrendered his wand to one of the guards in the main entrance room of the prison before they gave him an armband which showed that he’s a visitor. The guards had been curious as to why he wanted to speak with his bloodthirsty cousin, but had simply led him to a visitation room. It had taken a few minutes for the door on the other side of the room opened and two heavily armed guards, who were armed with pistols, walked in with Bellatrix shuffling along between them. Her arms were chained to her waist which had a chain around it while a chain tether allowed her feet to move only a few inches apart. She looked healthier and a little less insane since he had last seen her at her second trial. She was dressed in the deep grey and silver prisoner uniform that all prisoners are made to wear. As soon as she had seen him, she had sneered mightily at him and had looked like all she wanted to do was leap across the table and strangle him.

Bellatrix had been very reluctant to talk about the night she had been brought down. She had been shocked when Sirius listed the two spells that she could’ve possibly used against the Longbottoms. However, after Sirius goaded and taunted his cousin she finally snapped and spat out which curse she had used against the former Aurors. Before he stood to leave, he kindly informed her that he had disowned her from the Black family and recalled her dowry and all debts that the Lestrange family owed to the Black family. It resulted in the closure of the Lestrange vaults and Sirius had claimed all treasure inside the vault as well; including her Master’s precious cup that he had entrusted to Bellatrix. Needless to say the guards had to restrain and drag Bellatrix from the room as she ranted and raved at her ‘former’ cousin. Her screams of deranged curses and threats could be heard throughout the entire prison until they were silenced by the guards tossing her back into her cell and activated the silencing ward around the cell.

Since then, he’s been studying the curse Bellatrix and her husband had used and the counter to the curse. The curse itself caused an immense amount of pain to continuously assault a person’s entire body and all of their senses. It forced the victim to withdraw into their minds in order to escape insanity or death by the amount of pain they were going through and, once they had retreated inside their minds, locked them there. The curse also drained their magical cores and caused their body to rapidly age over time. Those who used the curse normally performed its counter only when the victim’s family paid whatever debt was owed or agreed to whatever terms they had imposed on the family. The recovery for the victims of the curse depended on how long the victim had been held under the curse. Their magic would slowly gain strength and their bodies will slowly ‘de-age’ so to
speak. Inside the book he also found a number of potions which would help to heal the victim from the effects of the curse.

“Now I need to get Augusta to agree to transfer Frank and Alice to the estate.” Sirius said, sighing as he ran a hand through his hair.

He wanted Frank and Alice to be examined by June since she has the training to identify more curses than the Healers at St. Mungo’s. She also might know different potions which might further help the Longbottom’s recover from their ordeal. Nodding to himself, Sirius gathered the files he compiled and sealed them along with grabbing the book which has the curse and its counter inside. Kano is already at the estate training the kids which is why he was taking the time to work on this project. However, now that he has everything in order, he plans on speaking with June before talking with Augusta and offering her the potential cure to her son’s and daughter-in-law’s plight. Heading out of his office, Sirius told his head House Elf where he’ll be for the next few hours before heading down to the parlor where he flooed over to the estate. He was greeted by Jarvis, the head House Elf for the family.

“How can I help you Lord Black?” Jarvis asked, accepting Sirius’ robe.

“Is Healer June in the infirmary? I wish to speak with her about an important matter.” Sirius said, watching as Jarvis appeared to think for a minute.

“She is in the potions room attached to the infirmary. Fluffy is telling her you wish to speak with her. Just head to the infirmary and she will greet you there.” He said, Sirius smiling as he bowed his head to the House Elf.

“Thank you, Jarvis. If Lord and/or Lady Othello is available can you inform them that what I will be telling Healer June is something I wish for them to know?” He asked, Jarvis nodding.

“I will tell my Mistress. Master is currently away on business.”

“Thank you.”

Sirius headed in the direction of the infirmary and was soon stepping into the large wing. Like Jarvis had said, June was standing nearby waiting for him. She looked at him quizzically, especially when he asked her to wait for Delilah to arrive and saw the files and book in his arms. They were quickly joined by Delilah who looked just as intrigued as June does. June led them to her office, which is a decently sized room with her desk, a few comfortable chairs in front of that, and four filing cabinets where she kept patient records. There was also a floor to ceiling bookcase which is fairly groaning underneath the weight of all of the books and scrolls on its shelves. Once they were all settled in the chairs and a House Elf served them some tea, the two women looked at Sirius.

“What is it, Sirius?” Delilah asked, her voice soft as Sirius set down the folder and opened it.

“Ever since Frank and Alice were injured and hospitalized, I’ve been curious about what happened to them. I refuse to believe that absolutely nothing can be done for them, even by Muggle means. I’ve become even more serious about this since Harry and Neville have become close friends and Augusta has signed an alliance with the House of Black. I’ve spoken with Alastor Moody, a Master and Senior Auror, who was there in response to Frank and Alice’s distress call that fateful night. Through him and I discovered that Frank and Alice were surrounded by a deep, sickly purple glow.

Now the Crucius curse doesn’t surround the victim with any kind of glow. I then began investigating the old books and tomes in the Black library…especially the ones filled with Dark Magic. I narrowed my search down to two possible curses.
“I went to Azkaban to speak with Bellatrix about that night. She was highly reluctant to talk about it but she finally did. She told me what curse she and her husband had used on the Longbottoms before they were captured and arrested. She also told me what the curse did to the victim and that it is reversible. With that information, I found it in a book and wrote down everything about it and its counter. I want your advice, June. You know more about injuries both to the body and mind than any Healer I know. As Neville is an Assassin, I want you to be involved in this as well, Delilah. I would like to have Frank and Alice brought here for their treatment as St. Mungo’s would likely frown upon the cure having been found in such a book and would ask too many questions.” He explained, sliding the book and files over to June.

June eagerly poured through Sirius’ notes and flipped open the book to the correct page. She was surprised to see Frank and Alice’s medical records, though she compared their records and ‘symptoms’ to what the curse caused. Pulling over a piece of paper and a pencil, she began writing her own notes, often pausing to check over the various files and papers Sirius had written. Sirius could see what she was writing down questions, though those questions were being crossed off the further she read. Delilah moved over to stand behind June and the two women whispered softly to each other and June pointed out certain things to the other woman; making Delilah nod or frown lightly. Sirius admitted to himself that it’s kind of unnerving having the two formidable women go over his research, but it was needed. He wasn’t about to present Augusta with a half-hearted plan that might work. The woman and Neville deserve the best and that’s what he hoped he would be able to present to them.

It was nearly ten minutes later when June and Delilah finished looking over everything and looked at Sirius. The nervous lord swallowed thickly at the unreadable expressions on their faces. However, he nearly sagged in relief when June grinned at him while Delilah smiled.

“This is very impressive, Sirius. You have certainly gone above and beyond what we would’ve thought of.” Delilah said, June nodding in agreement.

“You’ve studied this curse extensively and its counter. While the book has listed potions and other natural remedies to help the victim recover, you’ve researched other potions and remedies that should work in case the originals don’t. I think this will work and will work splendidly.” June added, making Sirius grin.

Delilah looked to the clock on the wall and nodded. She explained that Neville should be done with training in ten minutes and there will be an hour break before his next training session. She also explained that Augusta has been staying with them since the second to spend more time with her grandson and learn more about Assassins in general. While they waited, Sirius and Delilah talked about Harry’s lessons and the fact that the twins, Hermione and Neville have finally received their ‘true’ wands. Fred had ended up with a wand made of redwood with cores of Werewolf saliva and Unicorn hair. George had, surprisingly, gotten an identical wand and his cores were from the exact same Werewolf and Unicorn that had supplied the cores of his brother’s wand. Neville had gotten a wand made from rowan with a core of a Hippogriff feather while Hermione had gotten a wand made of walnut and Mermaid hair. All of them were still getting used to the massive power increase and had promised to keep their new wands a secret from others expect for their trainers and other Assassins here at the estate.

When the clock chimed, Delilah called on Fluffy and asked her to tell Augusta and Neville that she, June and Sirius would like to speak with them here in June’s office. Fluffy eagerly popped away to deliver the message while Delilah drafted a letter to her husband about what Sirius discovered and the fact that they’re most likely going to go through with the healing process described. It didn’t take long before Augusta and Neville walked into the office following June who had gone out to meet them. They looked confused when they saw Delilah and Sirius sitting there, though they accepted a
cup of tea from Delilah and sat down after Sirius conjured them chairs.

“What’s this about?” Augusta asked, looking at the trio as she added some sugar to her tea.

“Augusta, Neville, for some time now I’ve been investigating into Frank and Alice’s condition. I know that the Healers at St. Mungo’s have done their best to find a potential cure for them, and they’ve received great care from them. However, they were looking to cure the wrong thing.” Sirius began, the two Longbottoms looking at him with surprise.

“What?” Neville asked, his voice shaky as he carefully set down his cup.

Sirius told his tale of his investigation into Frank and Alice and where it led him. Augusta and Neville were in shock when they learned that Frank and Alice weren’t suffering from prolonged exposure to the Crucius curse but were suffering from a completely different curse. As Sirius and June spoke, hope sparked in Neville’s mind and he could feel happiness and hope fill his entire being the more June and Sirius spoke. They were talking of curing his parents, of bringing them back to top health and allowing him to actually have his parents back. Looking over at his grandmother, he could see the hope in her eyes, though there was also suspicion and weariness there too. He knows that she had been promised that his parents will recover before. The Healers at St. Mungo’s had been so sure of themselves when his parents had been first admitted but that assurance quickly dried up within the first four months when they didn’t respond to any kind of potential cure or treatment they tried on the couple. However, this is real. He could hear the sincerity in Sirius’ and June’s voices.

“Do you really think they can be cured?” He asked, leaning forward as Sirius smiled gently at him.

“Neville, Augusta, I wouldn’t have presented this option to you if June and Delilah hadn’t approved of it. June is one of the best healers I know, and I’ve been in a medical wing many times in my life so far.” Sirius said, chuckling softly as Neville grinned while Augusta looked to June.

“This is the most promising thing I’ve ever seen, Augusta. Frank and Alice have all the symptoms of suffering through this curse and Bellatrix herself confirmed that she and her husband cast it on them. I know I can heal them. I can bring them back. Yes, it will be a slow process, especially on how long they’ve been under the curse. However, I have the means to make all the potions they’ll need during their recovery and you and Neville can stay here during their recovery. Of course, Neville will still have to attend Hogwarts, but I’m sure he could visit on a weekend or two so long as it doesn’t negatively impact his lessons. There’s also Easter break between here and the end of the schoolyear.” June said, smiling as Neville beamed at her.

Augusta looked over what curse had been cast on her son and daughter-in-law before going over Sirius’ notes. Neville read over her shoulder and she could sense his joy and hope growing. His magic was practically thrumming around him due to his high emotions and, the more she read, the more she couldn’t blame him. The research seemed sound and she knew that this had the highest potential to work. After years of seeing her dear son and beloved daughter-in-law wither away and become mere husks of their former selves, Augusta knew that she has nothing to lose and everything to gain. Looking at Neville, she saw his happiness and pleading for her to give this a chance, and she offered him a small smile which made his eyes widening in surprise and then delight.

“Alright, let’s do this.” Augusta said, nodding firmly as the others beamed.

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January 6th

Head Healer Anthony Wilkins was a rather stern man who accepted no nonsense from anyone. He
had been promoted to Head Healer of St. Mungo’s in his early forties after he proved himself to be highly skilled in taking charge in highly stressful situations. Not only that, but he could easily think on the spot and was highly skilled in his abilities as a healer. When Madame Longbottom had her son and daughter-in-law admitted into St. Mungo’s, he had promised her the best care they could possibly supply and had kept true to his word if you were to ask him. He and a team of specialists had studied and attempted to cure the Longbottoms of their affliction; though everything they had tried had failed. They had even brought in two mind healers to see if they could reach the inner subconscious of the former Aurors. However, when they entered their minds, they had instantly withdrawn upon fear of losing themselves in the chaos that ran rampant in Frank and Alice’s minds. He had even agreed to having the couple seen by Muggleborn Healers who worked in the Non-Magical world to see if Muggle treatments could help the couple, but nothing worked.

Madame Longbottom had thanked him for his attempts to do what was best for her family and had accepted the fact that her son and daughter-in-law will likely never be the same as they once were. However, when his assistant informed him that Madame Longbottom is withdrawing Frank and Alice from St. Mungo’s, he couldn’t help but wonder what has happened to make her change her mind. Getting up from his desk, he walked the familiar route to the Longbottom’s room where he found four people whom he presumed where Healers judging by their white and golden colored robes. However, he was shocked to see the symbol for Golden Heart Clinic: two wands crossed with a heart in the background.

“What is going on here?” He asked, his voice firm as the four Healers paused and looked at him.

“I can answer your questions.” Augusta said, making Anthony look at her with a frown and narrowed eyes.

He watched as two of his own Healers anxiously hovered around the four Healers while they carefully coaxed Frank and Alice onto stretchers to easier transport them.

“I’m moving Frank and Alice to a private place. A few Healers at Golden Heart Clinic believe they may be able to do something to help my son and daughter-in-law. If not, then I will be bringing them back to Longbottom Manor where a nurse will be helping me care for them.” Augusta explained, making the man frown.

“Madame Longbottom, having them in Longbottom Manor can possibly hamper them and any kind of progress they might make.” He explained, watching as Augusta sighed.

“I have spoken with a few Mind Healers who had seen something like this before. He believes that nothing negative will happen to my children. It’s not that I doubt you, Healer Wilkins. You’ve done your best to care for them and I have been very happy and very grateful for the care that they’ve received from you and your Healers and nurses. However, I feel it’s time for something new.” Augusta explained, making Anthony frown lightly.

“Very well. Though, if a cure is discovered will the other Healers inform us as to how it came about? We have others here who have suffered from mental damage due to prolonged exposure to the Cruciatius curse.” He explained, blinking when one of the new Healers looked at him.

“Of course we will. Though it will also depend on what Madame Longbottom allows us to share with you. We’ve been trying to develop cures for Cruciatius victims for awhile now. Potions Master Prince has since developed a potion to nullify the effects of the curse though-”

“It’s only for people who have been briefly held under it; we’ve been using it for Aurors who have been brought in after missions.” Wilkins said, the others nodding.
Anthony watched as the Healers strapped Frank and Alice down after giving them a Calming Draught. They were soon wheeled out of the room they’ve occupied for the past nine and a half years and disappeared around a corner. He knew that the Daily Prophet would soon learn of this and there would be questions aimed at St Mungo’s about their ability to treat their patients. He was just glad that Madame Longbottom was willing to release a statement stating how pleased she is with their treatment and care for her son and daughter-in-law. Also, the caregiver in him couldn’t deny the fact that he hoped to see Frank and Alice return to their normal, lively selves sometime in the future. If they could cure what is ailing Frank and Alice, it could mean that there is hope for a dozen other victims who have been here in the long-term spell damage ward for a number of years. Looking at the few nurses who are still standing around he nodded gently at them.

“Prepare this room for any future patients. What’s done is done and I am very pleased that you all have taken care of Lord and Lady Longbottom for so long.” He said, the two nurses smiling gently and nodding.

They began working on cleaning the room and turning it back into what it once was. All of Frank and Alice’s effects had been collected and packed away before Anthony had arrived so all they had to do was clean the room and do some minor repairs. His assistant walked over and handed him the paperwork Madame Longbottom had filled out to transfer Frank and Alice, which he read over before nodding and heading back to his office to file the paperwork. He had a feeling that Albus Dumbledore would be by soon. The man had always been concerned about the welfare of the Longbottoms. Apparently they had been a part of the Order of the Phoenix and had been part in fighting against Voldemort. He knows that he has many people who are loyal and are considered ‘friends’ of Albus and they’ll likely hear the news that Frank and Alice are no longer here in the hospital and will pass it along to the aged Wizard.

-So long as he doesn’t try to start something.- He thought, sitting down at his desk and returning to his work.

Meanwhile, Augusta watched as the four Healers portkeyed away with Frank and Alice before using her own portkey to return to Othello Estate. The four healers had been selected by June to help her prepare Frank and Alice for their recovery. They had talked about everything the night that she and Neville had learned about the possible cure. All of them had agreed that it would be best for Frank and Alice to be placed in a magical induced coma during their recovery. This will allow their bodies and magic to heal properly without fear of them becoming too stressed or accidently doing harm to themselves. June had explained that she would use an I.V. in order to give them the potions that will help their bodies heal faster instead of using spells to get them to swallow the potions. Sirius is also getting Andromeda to cast the counter to the curse with him; having stated that it would be even more powerful with two Blacks casting it rather than one. Andromeda had been more than willing to offer her assistance, especially since it was her younger sister who had done this to Frank and Alice.

Arriving at Othello Estate, Augusta walked into the infirmary and watched as her son and daughter-in-law were moved into one of the private rooms in the wing. She followed the group and stood in the doorway as the healers carefully moved the couple onto hospital beds which had been placed side-by-side. June had a long table with various I.V. bags which were labeled depending on which potion was inside of them. Two heart monitors were beside the beds and the healers quickly began checking on Frank and Alice’s vitals and writing them down on a chart.

“Vitals are good. There are no negative effects from the transport.” One healer said, the others nodding.

June looks to Augusta and, when the formidable woman nodded, she and the others began putting Frank and Alice into a magical coma. It didn’t take long for the spell to take effect and the couple
was soon lying down and looked to be sleeping peacefully. June and another healer hurried to get the
first I.V. into a vein and set the first potion, a nutrient potion, going through the tube while the others
worked to get the heart monitors going. Soon the air was filled with the rhythmic beeping of the
machines once they were set up. The other healers and June stepped back, allowing Sirius and
Andromeda to stand at the foot of the beds.

“Ready?” Sirius asked, looking at his cousin.

“Ready.” Andromeda said, nodding firmly with a look of determination on her face.

“Shall we?” He asked, looking back at Augusta.

“Go ahead.” She said, her voice wrought with emotion as Sirius and Andromeda drew in deep
breaths before beginning the spell.

Sirius and Andromeda chanted softly as they waved their wands in an intricate pattern above Frank
and Alice. It sounded as if they were singing and everyone else held their breaths in anticipation. The
longer Sirius and Andromeda chanted, the more Frank and Alice began to change. Their breathing
became easier, the lines and wrinkles slowly began disappearing and they slowly began putting on
more weight. The color returned to their pale skin and their overall health seemed to steadily
improve. As this happened, a bright golden glow enveloped the couple and slowly sunk into their
bodies as the counter to the curse took effect. When the spell was finished, Sirius and Andromeda
tiredly lowered their wands and gladly accepted the Pepper-Up potions from June. The four healers
stepped forward and performed more scans, their eyes bright as they marked down the changes that
have taken place in Frank and Alice.

“This is very promising. Their magic is steadily spreading through their bodies whereas it had been
bound. Not only that, but the mental scans show more activity.” June said, smiling as she looked
over the new scans.

“How long should they be in a coma?” Augusta asked, worry in her voice as she looked at her
family.

“I would like to keep them in a coma at least for the rest of the month. Their bodies have to adjust to
their cores being unbound and I want to ensure that their immune systems are strong. When we do
wake them, then we might have to have them go through physical therapy for a little while in order
to get them used to walking. Because they’ve been trapped inside their minds, their bodies were on
autopilot in a way. They moved, but they were conscious about it. It’ll also take them time learning
about everything that has happened since the night of the attack. When we do wake them, I want you
here and Neville waiting in the next room. It’ll be a huge shock to go from being in mortal danger
to suddenly waking up and finding yourself in a strange place without any danger nearby.” June
answered, Augusta nodding in understanding.

“Thank you, all of you.” Augusta said, her voice filled with emotion as she looked at June, the other
healers, Sirius and Andromeda.

June finished a few more scans while the other healers spoke with Sirius and the Wizard allowed
them to copy the various curses and cures in the book he had found. Soon, it was just Augusta in the
private room. Lucas and Delilah had already given her, her own apartment in the manor and her
personal House Elf, Nipsy, had brought in her personal effects from Longbottom Manor. She has
ever intention of being here until her son and daughter-in-law are well enough to return to
Longbottom Manor. As she sat there watching Frank and Alice sleep peacefully, Augusta allowed
her emotions to spill over and the tears came thick and fast. Two years ago she had just about given
up all hope in ever seeing Frank and Alice healthy and ‘sane’. Neville had gotten used to the fact that
his parents would never know him; that he would never feel the arms of his mother holding him close in her embrace or seeing the pride in his father’s eyes when he brought home a girlfriend or brought home great grades.

However, Sirius just brought back a surge of hope in both her and Neville. He and Andromeda had brought back her son and daughter-in-law. Neville had been hard pressed to head back to Hogwarts though Harry and his other friends had gently coaxed Neville back to school and onto the express. Neville had practically demanded that he get updates on his parents’ wellbeing throughout the month though Lucas and Delilah had promised that he would be there when they woke. That had thankfully appeased Neville and she knew that her grandson would be constantly looking for an owl stating that his parents would soon awaken.

“Oh, Frank, Alice…so many things have changed.” She sighed, moving her chair closer to her son’s bedside and gently patting his hand.

“Neville is a sweet boy. He was very shy and quiet, and sadly my foolish brother bullied him because Neville never really had many bouts of accidental magic. You should’ve been there when Algernon ‘dropped’ Neville from a second story window. I was so angry I hexed him until he could hardly move. He wouldn’t allow the House Elves to help him until I was sure Neville was safe. Thankfully, his magic had protected him; causing him to slow down in midair and he bounced down the walkway in the garden. I was so relieved that he was safe and Algernon was…impressed that his great-nephew didn’t get hurt. He gave Neville a toad…yes Alice, I know, a toad. The poor lad had very little self-confidence no matter what I tried. However, he has your talent in Herbology, my dear. Neville flourishes in the greenhouses and around nature. I can see a bright future in his life; especially if he excels in Potions.” She said, smiling gently as she leaned back in her chair and settled down to talk for some time.

An hour later Nipsy popped into the room with a tea service. Now, she’s been serving the Longbottom family since Master Frank was a young boy. She was one of the Elves who had taken young master Neville into the pantry when the nasty Death Eaters had attacked. After Master Frank and Mistress Alice had been taken to the hospital, she had taken charge of taking care of young master Neville until Mistress Augusta was able to fully devote her time to the young master. She remembers all of the times that Mistress Augusta would cry in her room asking why Frank and Alice had been taken from her. There had been times when she feared that Mistress Augusta would be mean to young master Neville, but those fears had thankfully been unfounded. If anything, Mistress Augusta had been overprotective of young master Neville and had coddled him.

Now that young master Neville is at school, Mistress Augusta has been rather lonely. She had been slightly worried for Mistress Augusta, but now that Master Frank and Mistress Alice are getting better, she knows that things will be better. All of the House Elves had sensed the returning health of their master and mistress and there was a new heightened sense of hope in the manor. Rooms that had been locked up due to not being used were now being opened up and cleaned. Master Frank’s and Mistress Alice’s things were being pulled down from the attic where they had been stored. She knew that Mistress Alice wouldn’t be too happy seeing the state of the greenhouses, since they had been allowed to be abandoned besides the one that young master Neville is now using. Mistress Alice had loved nature and she would always be outside in the greenhouse tending to her plants and it was common for her to have some dirt on her face and she always have numerous vases filled with fresh, fragrant flowers from one of the greenhouses.

It had been lonely without Master Frank and Mistress Alice. The manor had seemed to…radiate the sadness and tragedy that had happened on its grounds. However, maybe now things will brighten up at the manor when its owners returned. She hoped that Mistress Alice will be able to get all the greenhouses back up and flourishing. The manor will hopefully be filled with the laughter of Master
Frank and the sounds of him talking and laughing with friends and visitors. All of them are eagerly waiting for the day when Mistress Augusta brings back Master Frank and Mistress Alice. With the return of their master and mistress, things will hopefully return to what they had once been like before that horrible night. No more sadness, no more frustration and loneliness.

“What is it Nipsy?” Augusta asked, bringing her House Elf out of her thoughts.

“Mistress Alice and Master Frank…they’re getting better, yes?” Nipsy asked, carrying a tea service over to her mistress.

“Yes. They’ll be better by the end of the month.” Augusta said, smiling as Nipsy beamed at her.

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A/N: Very long section.

The start of the new term at Hogwarts brought some changes to the school. Fifth and Seventh Years are beginning to panic as their professors drove home the fact that O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s are rapidly approaching. The other students were more relaxed, though the Fourth and Sixth Years are slightly worried since they’ll be in the same position as the Fifth and Seventh Years are in next year. Of course the Second and Third Years aren’t too worried, though some of the First Years are since this is the first year of exams. Harry, Dean, Neville, Eliana and Jillian managed to convince Hermione to hold off studying until it gets closer to when they’ll have to take their exams, though she wasn’t too happy with the fact that Susan, Hannah and Millicent agreed with the others on this. Oliver Wood was ecstatic to see the twins with new brooms and new armor; his response was to call a snap Quidditch team practice for the next morning much to the teams’ displeasure since they had been hoping for the chance to sleep in.

Ronald was gloating about his Christmas spent with Seamus and his family, in which the twins thanked Seamus for taking their little brother in; something that Percy did as well. It was also noticeable that Percy had gotten much closer to his girlfriend Penelope and they could often be found walking hand-in-hand around the grounds and Percy could also be found escorting the beautiful ‘Claw to her classes like any true gentleman. Of course, the biggest change, however, is in Draco Malfoy. His brash and arrogant behavior has seemed to have been curbed for some reason and he could often be found sitting quietly reading or writing. Pansy was never far from his side and was seen giving him concerned looks or talking to him quietly about something. Draco and Pansy’s friends never spoke of what was wrong with the blonde boy, but, if watched carefully, even they had looks of concern whenever they looked at Draco.

All of this, all of these changes, were noticed by a few of the more observant students; one of those being a Slytherin Fourth Year by the name of Spencer Dowell. Spencer has always been a quiet and thoughtful boy. His hair is white and has always been kept short and neat. Piercing hazel eyes seemed to stare straight through a person and has always unnerved even the toughest of student until they willingly backed away and allowed Spencer to go on his way without harassing him. His mannerisms always seem…decisive and sure; as if every single thing he does has been planned out in advance beforehand. His manner of speaking is nearly identical to that of his Head of House; soft but still commanding attention that made a person shut-up and listen in fear of missing something vital. While Spencer is not from an old Pureblood family like many Slytherins pride themselves to be from, he is from a newer generation of Purebloods. His talents in his classes and his dominating aura had rightfully earned him the title as the King of Slytherin; a title that had previously belonged to one Marcus Flint.

Spencer had gotten his new title earlier in the year when Marcus had challenged him to a duel. Now, things in Slytherin are handled much differently than in other Houses. When two students had a
score to settle, they didn’t argue about it. No, they settled it in an honor duel. There is a hidden room in the Slytherin common room found by pressing a specific stone on one of the walls. The wall opened to reveal a dueling arena surrounded by stands for the rest of the House to watch. The Head of House is always alerted to when a duel is about to take place and is always there to watch over said duel. Nearly everything is allowed in the duel except for the Unforgivable’s of course and the duelers cannot be killed. There have been many times when the Head of House has had to nearly carry off one student from the arena because of the severities of their injuries. Marcus had been one such student after dueling Spencer for only five minutes. The young teen was highly skilled in dueling and had an arsenal of spells that had shocked his entire House.

Yes, there had been some challengers already; they wanted the much coveted title as the King/Queen of Slytherin for themselves but so far none have been able to best Spencer in a duel for the right. In fact, many of the older girls have begun attempting to get close to him in hopes of catching his eye and getting the right to claim the title as his girlfriend or even betrothed. Spencer, of course, knew of this and found it highly amusing. However, most of his attention this year has been on the famous Harry James Potter-Othello. It wasn’t every day when the fabled hero of the Wizarding World begins school. Of course Spencer has done all of the possible reading up on the lad and has talked to many older students. All of them told him that James Potter had been a troublemaker but had been very devoted to Lily; perusing her since their Second Year no matter how many times she shot him down.

He had also learned that while, yes, Lily had been a Muggleborn, she had also been the brightest Witch of her age. Searching into the past academic records had shown that Lily Potter nee Evans had broken three records of academic achievements during her time as a student; which wasn’t anything to sneeze at. Watching Harry, Spencer saw both influences of his birth parents and his adopted parents in the boy. Sadly, the Othello family is still much of a mystery to him no matter his contacts inside and outside of the school. His parents had encouraged him to keep an eye on the lad, though he knew that he will need someone to watch over Harry when he cannot. At first he had thought about reaching out to Blaise Zabini. The Italian boy was rather intelligent and certainly had plenty of cunning and guile. However, he quickly found out that Zabini had spent the end of the Winter holiday in the company of Harry and was even considered a friend of his. While that would be an ideal slot for a potential spy to be in, he knew that Zabini would likely chose his friendship over becoming a spy.

Spencer was rather surprised that Millicent Bulstrode had quickly become friends with Harry and his group. He had even heard that she had spent the New Years with them and other influential heirs and heiresses at Bones Manor. Now those were connections he would love to have. However, he knew that Madame Bones was much too…observant to form an alliance with his family and young Susan is already in a group of friends that she is very close with. No; instead he will have to choose someone from his own House. If he was honest with himself Draco had been one of his first choices.

His parents and allies had told him much about Lucius Malfoy and how the man was the prime example of everything a Slytherin should be. In fact, Lucius had started off as Prince of Slytherin in his First Year and had risen to become King of Slytherin by the time he was in his Fifth Year. Narcissa Malfoy nee Black had been right beside Lucius from the start, even though he was two years ahead of her. However, when Draco had arrived Spencer had been…disappointed to say the least.

Draco, while cunning, was brash and allowed his emotions to rule him. The blonde Slytherin has all the arrogance of an old Pureblood and yet none of the subtlety that others displayed. Draco had obviously come to Hogwarts expecting to instantly become the Prince of Slytherin, but those dreams had quickly been dashed by the older students in Slytherin. They told him, rather brutally, that he was not what their House was looking for in a Prince. Draco had a very unbecoming habit of attempting to bait Harry and his friends only to be verbally smacked down hard by them. Not only that, but he had gotten detentions and points lost due to his callous and rash behavior; something that
none of the appreciated. When Draco started bragging about his ‘talents’, especially those in Quidditch, Marcus had threatened to never allow the boy to try out for the team. Draco had thankfully shut up, especially since he apparently has dreams of being captain of the team in his future.

Spencer could see the potential in the blonde, however. Draco hadn’t had the chance to learn what he needed to know because of his father’s imprisonment. Though there had been high hopes that his mother could instill some of the qualities that the House of snakes were looking for. Thankfully the blonde is intelligent and has thus far been in the top five of the First Years for their grades. With the right coaching and influence, Draco could become a rather powerful young man and could easily have all the doors in the world opened to him. However, it would take a few years for Draco to become that person.

-Well…I am looking for my successor.- Spencer thought, watching Draco from his spot on one of the couches in the Slytherin common room.

The blonde is seated at one of the study tables across the large room working on a letter from the looks of it. He’s noticed the way the blonde has become quiet and withdrawn and has already sent out a letter to his father asking for information. With their contacts and allies it shouldn’t be long before he-

“My King, a letter is here for you.”

Spencer blinked and looked at the pretty brunette girl next to him. She’s a Sixth Year and one of the many girls who has attempted to catch his eye and his favor. Looking to her hands, he saw that she’s holding his own mailbox which had been on the coffee table in front of him. Nodding to her, he accepted the box which made her respectfully turn away so she couldn’t see what was inside. With a faint smirk on his lips, Spencer opened his mailbox and spotted the letter inside. Pulling it out, he closed the lid and set his mailbox down on the coffee table.

“Privacy ward, please, Valerie.” He said, watching as the older girl blushed heavily before her wand appeared in her hand and she erected the ward around him.

“I shall leave you my King.” She said, bowing her head submissively towards the Fourth Year.

“No, stay my dear. Just do not speak of what you might glimpse at.” He said, the girl’s eyes widening in shock before she nodded and busied herself with making him a cup of tea.

*My son,*

*Our allies have returned with the information you are seeking about the Malfoy family. Sometime before the Yule holiday Lady Narcissa Malfoy contracted an unknown illness. It is not known if this illness is due to an unfriendly curse or by natural means. However, her health has been declining rapidly over the following weeks and their Healer has not been able to find a cure. She is very weak and has been bed ridden according to our reports.*

*As you may know, the Malfoys are very loyal to their family. Since Lord Lucius Malfoy has been imprisoned, Draconis has been raised by his mother and therefore has an extremely close relationship with her. Not only that, but both he and his mother had been struck from the Black family for years now due to Lord Sirius Black kicking them out of the family because of Lord Lucius’ Death Eater activities. Should Lady Narcissa pass away, Draconis will become an ‘orphan’ and will be sent to live in the orphanage instead of inside his family home. Like many children of Death Eaters, the family assets will be locked down until he comes of age. It is very likely that his betrothed’s family will no longer want anything to do with him and will end the contract between*
him and Miss Pansy Parkinson.

However, we do have the means of curing Lady Malfoy. Our Healers have discovered an ancient potion which will steadily heal her of her illness and will return her to good health. Looking at Lord Lucius’ ‘record’ since he’s been imprisoned also shows that we may be able to get him released early due to upstanding behavior. He has never participated in any of the three prisoner riots and hasn’t even been seen speaking with anyone of suspect.

Get close to Draconis. Take him under your wing and show him the ways of a true Slytherin. Gain his trust and respect and lure him closer with the promise of having his father’s case investigated.

Let him know that your family has highly trained personal healers that may be able to help his mother and that I am a lawyer who might be able to get his father released early. Our family and Order could use the backing of the Malfoy name and fortune.

Your father,

Oliver Dowell

May the Father of Understanding guide you

Spencer raised an eyebrow when he saw the imprint of the red cross beside his father’s name. However, he nodded and quickly folded the letter from his father and tucked it away into an inner robe pocket. He was pleased to see that Valerie hadn’t looked at the letter once while he was reading it; rather she had busied herself by reading her Ancient Runes course book. Clearing his throat, she looked up from her book before quickly marking her place and setting it down on her lap.

“Could you please bring Draconis to me?” He asked, watching as Valerie’s eyes widened in shock before she looked at said blonde.

When she turned to look back at Spencer, her mouth opened slightly as if to question him about his request, her mouth quickly snapped shut when she saw the look in Spencer’s eyes. Standing, she hurried over to Draco and lightly tapped the blonde on his shoulder. Draco frowned and looked up, blinking in surprise when he saw Valerie standing beside him.

“Our King wishes to speak with you.” She said, confusion in her voice as if she couldn’t believe the request herself.

Beside him, Pansy gasped in shock and not a little amount of fear at the request. However, Draco swallowed thickly and quickly packed his things into his school bag. Pansy shot him a fearful glance, but Draco simply patted her hand before rising and making his way over to where Spencer is seated.

He could feel the eyes of everyone in the common room on him; all of them wondering what Spencer would want with him of all people. Spencer stood as Draco approached and picked up his mailbox before shrinking it and slipping it into a pocket of his pants. He easily brought down Valerie’s privacy ward and he smiled faintly at the young blonde.

“Walk with me Draconis.” He said, heading towards the entrance to the common room.

Draco swallowed heavily but followed the older Slytherin. They headed out of the common room and walked through the dungeons. Much to contrary belief the dungeons spread throughout the entire castle except in some parts. It’s a labyrinth of halls and empty classrooms that weren’t in use. Heading down one of the hallways, the pair walked in silence for a few minutes before Spencer drew his wand and erected a privacy ward around them.

“Now, Draconis, I’m sure you’re curious as to why I wished to speak with you.” He said, glancing
down at the blonde as Draco looked at him.

“I am.” He said, knowing that it’s best for him to be blunt with the older student.

“I overheard your problems at home, Draconis. I am terribly sorry to hear that your dear mother is ill.” Spencer said, sorrow in his voice as Draco’s eyes widened.

Draco hadn’t told anyone besides, Pansy, Sabrina, Theo, Vincent and Gregory about his problems at home. Even though Vincent and Gregory only act like brainless oafs, they’re actually rather intelligent and thoughtful. None of them would tell anyone about his mother’s illness. Pansy was loyal to him and knew the importance of keeping such news a secret from others though...Theo might have told someone if they pressured him too much. Swallowing thickly, he glanced up at the older Slytherin and was rather surprised to see understanding in Spencer’s eyes and not the spark of opportunity or malice he had expected.

“Now, I don’t know if you are aware, but my family has a team of highly talented Healers employed by them. My father actually runs a successful Non-Magical hospital and my mother is a Healer herself. I’m sure that my parents would be willing to help you and your mother out.” Spencer said, inwardly smirking when he saw the suspicion in Draco’s eyes.

“What would it cost me?” Draco asked, frowning as Spencer raised an eyebrow.

“Now Draconis, why would you think it would cost you anything?”

“Because you’re the King of Slytherin for a reason. We only make deals or offer things for something in return.” Draco said, huffing when Spencer chuckled softly and lightly clapped his hands.

“Very good, Draconis, very good. You’re learning.” He said, amusement in his voice as Draco scowled at him.

“Now, since your mother has trained you to never accept anything without questioning the motives behind them you know I want something back. However, not only am I offering a chance for specialized Healers to look at your mother but I am also offering to have my father, who is also an extremely respected Magical lawyer, to see if he can get your father out of Azkaban on good behavior. Of course Lord Malfoy would be under close supervision and would likely have to report in to the Ministry every so often, but he would be free so long as he didn’t do anything suspicious.” Spencer explained, pausing in his stride when he noticed that Draco was no longer beside him.

Looking back, he saw Draco staring at him with wide eyes. The Malfoy family may be known for their...suspicious dealings and are known for their cold demeanors and they were often said to be cold and cruel to others. However, family was everything to the Malfoy family. If there was anything that was more precious to the Malfoys it is their family. His parents may seem cold and aloof in the public eye, but in the privacy of their home they showed their emotions and ‘came to life’ so to speak. His mother would tell him stories about the times when she and his father would let loose and laugh and chase each other around or when his father would sing as she played the piano or harp.

He has precious memories from his mother that he often views every chance he gets. These memories show the proud Pureblood Lord that is Lucius Malfoy on his knees laughing and playing with his infant son. He has vague memories of his father’s laugh; sparkling silver eyes and a warm smile. His mother had done her best in attempting to teach him everything that his father might, but she could only do so much. His godfather had stepped in a lot and had helped to teach him many things but Severus still wasn’t his father. The idea, no, the possibility of getting his father back in his life was absolutely amazing. He knows that his mother is lonely and misses his father, though what
would be the price for such precious gifts? If his mother never recovered then he’d likely be headed for the orphanage where many children of Death Eaters who have their only remaining parent in Azkaban, are living until they come of age. With his mother having been kicked out of the Black family he has no real ties to his last remaining aunt or his cousin Lord Black.

“W-What do you need me to do?” Draco asked, swallowing back his emotions as he walked over to Spencer.

“Your alliance, young Draconis.” Spencer said, making the blonde frown.

“What?”

“When I leave here, the position of King of Slytherin will be vacant; free to anyone who has enough popularity to claim it. However, I don’t want that. I want someone who is the very embodiment of what Salazar Slytherin was said to value in the members of his House. I see promise in you, Draconis. With the proper training and handling, you could make a great Silver Prince.” Spencer said, watching as Draco frowned lightly.

“But-

“Now, now, Draconis, let’s be honest with ourselves. You are not very Slytherin besides your intelligence and some cunning. You rush ahead in your confrontations with Heir Potter-Othello and his little group and have never come out on top in any of those confrontations. You need to learn how to properly work from the shadows; how to make people loyal to you and gain favors from others in order to have them do tasks for you. Lord Malfoy has this down in spades; you’ve heard rumors of what your father had been like. He could charm a bird to think that flying was for the cats and it was meant to walk on the ground.

“I gained my title by working from the shadows. I used to be nothing. Fellow Housemates who have come from older Pureblood lines sneered at me. However, I kept quiet and worked in the darkness. I built up a reputation for myself and became respected by my year-mates first. Next came the younger years and then the older years. I became the Silver Prince first and then took my place as King last September as you remember. With an alliance between our Houses and with you under my tutelage, you can learn the very skills that your parents cultivated and can make a name for yourself here in Slytherin instead of being a name remembered when points are lost or, worse yet, a name that is laughed at because of your failed confrontations with the Lions. Yes, your father is the only one who can officially claim an alliance between Houses, but think of the connections we can bring each other.” Spencer exclaimed, his eyes gleaming in the low light of the hallway.

Of course Draco has heard of the Dowell family. While not nearly as old as the Malfoy family in terms of their bloodline, Lord Dowell and his father and grandfather had made a name and reputation for their family. While they have many connections in the Muggle world, they also have many connections in the Wizarding world with families like the Bloodstone, Storm, Masters and Fessenden. They also had connections overseas that other families could only dream of. Honestly, an alliance like that could greatly help restore the Malfoy name and reputation and the idea of becoming the true Silver Prince was greatly appealing to Draco. He also liked the idea of taking over as King once Spencer graduates in a few years. Honestly, Severus hasn’t had much time to see him and his godfather had expressed his displeasure in his attempts to bait Potter and his little group. If he could prove himself and gain the title of the Silver Prince then his parents and his godfather would be proud of him and so many more doors would be open to him.

Looking up at Spencer, he saw the endless patience in the older teen’s eyes. He knew that things wouldn’t be easy and Spencer would likely drive him insane sometimes, but it was a small price to pay for what Spencer was promising.
“I accept.” He said, holding out his hand to the King of Slytherin.

“Wonderful. I will send a letter to my father as soon as we return to the common room. You will report me to once classes have ended every evening for your training.” Spencer said, grasping Draco’s hand strongly.

They shook hands before Draco was dismissed. As the blonde walked away, a sly smirk graced the King of Slytherin’s lips.

“You’ll make a fine Templar with the proper training my little Dragon.”

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It wasn’t long after the new term started when Harry and Dean managed to tell the twins, Hermione and Neville about the mission Lucas and Delilah had given them. Hermione was instantly concerned; especially since Professors Snape and McGonagall told them about the traps that lay in wait for anyone who tries to get the stone. Not only that, but she was especially frightened about the idea of
Voldemort being in the school or even trying to get inside the school. Neville and the twins were worried about this as well, though they accepted the fact that they had been given the mission and it was critical that it was accomplished.

“Think about it, ‘Mione. If V-Riddle gets the stone then it’ll mean his resurrection. Our society might be on much better footing but we’re not ready for the horrors of another war with Riddle.” Fred said, his brother nodding his head in agreement.

“Bill still has memories of the first war. He was eleven when Harry’s mum and dad were in their last year here. He and Charlie and even Percy remember on how frightened our Mum used to be whenever Dad was out of the house and beyond the wards. Mum’s brothers: Gideon and Fabien, were killed in the war. So many old families were killed off because they didn’t support Riddle and his…ideals. The term blood traitor was actually created by Riddle.” George explained, Hermione’s eyes widening in shock.

“People who had once been respected and thought highly of were now being dubbed blood traitors because they didn’t support Riddle. Riddle and his death munchers made it so other families were terrified of being seen associating with any blood traitors less they suddenly be called one. To become a blood traitor would see all your allies abandoning you and any support you had would suddenly disappear. Thankfully some families didn’t buy into that crap and they banded together to help support each other.” Fred added, watching as Hermione closed her eyes and shook her head.

“Things were really hard for us back then. The Ministry was in turmoil because you didn’t know who to trust. Dad had to constantly watch his back and there was always a fear of attack. It was really thanks to the Potters that we survived and had food on the table. Because we had been labeled as blood traitors, Dad’s boss had been hard pressed to give him any hours and he was only working around four hours a day.” George said, making Hermione and Neville blink and look to Harry.

“The Weasley’s are one of the many families that owe my House a debt. My father and godfather have been keeping track of my accounts for me since I’m a minor but they’ve made sure I’m well aware of who owes my family and how to take care of my vaults and fortune. I’ll eventually call in some of the debts that are owed to my House and some I may ‘forgive’ so to say.” Harry explained, Hermione frowning lightly as Neville nodded.

“I know my House owes yours a pretty good amount. Gran has been teaching me the same thing and our account keeper has been helping me learn as well.” Neville said, Harry smiling gently as he nodded.

“By calling in some of the debts that are owed to my House, I could actually bankrupt some families. My father and godfather haven’t allowed me to call in any of those debts; rather I should wait until calling in those debts would come in handy.” Harry explained, making the brunette Witch frown.

“What do you mean?”

“Think of it this way, Hermione: if Riddle does come back and rise to power, many old Pureblood families who were allied with Riddle owe me a debt. If I call in those debts I could potentially bankrupt those families and make it impossible for them to help finically support Riddle. They’ll be of almost no use to him and it’ll make things harder for Riddle. He won’t be able to hire mercenaries or Hit Wizards like he had in the last war. Riddle was practically unstoppable in the last war and had everyone living in terror. Then again it certainly didn’t help that everyone seemed to forget the fact that each of them holds a potentially lethal weapon that they carry around on their person at all times.” Harry said, rolling his eyes while the twins nodded.

“I know there are some dangerous spells but—“
“Think, Hermione. A simple levitation spell could be used to levitate a person over the edge of a cliff or over something dangerous. A banishing charm could be used to banish rocks or other projectiles in the direction of incoming attackers. A well placed cutting charm could be used to cut off a limb. Many low ‘level’ spells could become dangerous if you know the right way to use them.” Dean interrupted, making Hermione swallow thickly as it finally hit home.

It was certainly easy to think of practical uses for the various spells they’ve learned in class. However, it’s a completely different thing to think of the lethal possibilities for the spells. Dean made those possibilities come to the forefront of her mind and made her wonder about the other spells that they had learned and how they could be used to cause harm. She didn’t know if this was a good thing or a bad thing to know. It was a relief when the conversation drifted to their training, which she was more than happy to talk about. Their training is exhausting and both she and Neville are still leaving the training room tired and sore, but they’re slowly getting better. The twins were proud that their trainers were pleased with their ability to think ‘outside the box’ so to speak. When it came to stealth and hiding this ability came in handy. Hermione, on the other hand, found herself struggling with finding creative ways to hide and get away from pursuers. She knows that it’ll take her awhile and her trainers have already reassured her that it doesn’t matter if it’ll take some extra time. Sadly, even though she knows this it doesn’t make it any less frustrating for the brunette.

Fred and George offered Harry and Dean their assistance with their mission, which Neville and Hermione offered their help as well. Harry and Dean certainly appreciated the help, though they didn’t want to have to depend on too much help. Fred and George agreed to keep an eye out for any suspicious activity among the students, which Neville and Hermione quickly offered their assistance with this task as well. There’s no telling if Riddle is already in the school, especially since Lucas and Delilah had informed the two boys that it’s entirely possible though unlikely. Next came the questions about their other friends. Jillian and Eliana were slowly becoming suspicious as to why Hermione has joined Harry and Dean in their extremely early morning workouts and Hermione hasn’t been able to come up with too solid of an excuse.

“I know it’s important to keep things a secret to protect the Brotherhood, but sometimes I just wish we could tell our close friends.” Hermione sighed, the others nodding in agreement and understanding.

“I know how hard it is, Mia. Dean and I have been friends with Susan and Hannah since before Hogwarts. However, we need permission from my parents in order to tell anyone who isn’t a part of the Brotherhood. It would take about a month before they even considered allowing us to tell anyone because they’ll need to have background checks and will have to be judged if they can be trustworthy enough to keep the secret of the Brotherhood.” Harry explained, Hermione nodding lightly even though she didn’t look too happy.

“Do you think your parents will ever tell anyone else?” She asked, watching as Harry tilted his head thoughtfully.

“Honestly? I think he might. He’s been talking about telling Madame Bones about the Brotherhood. If things become harder as the year goes on I’ll tell my parents about our friends becoming suspicious.” Harry explained, Hermione nodding her head gratefully.

“Thankfully Eliana and Jillian don’t want to be early risers. Hannah and Susan are easier to deal with since they aren’t in our House, same with Millie.” Hermione said, shifting in her seat and getting more comfortable.

Conversation shifted again and Neville happily informed them about the progress on his parents’ health. Apparently their health is rapidly progressing and their cores are getting stronger every day.
He couldn’t wait to see and speak to his parents for the first time in ten years. Of course he paused and looked at Harry with sorrow in his eyes. Harry, though, just smiled gently at his godbrother.

“It’s alright, Nev. I’m happy that you’re getting your parents back. I will always miss my birth parents but Sirius, Remus, Severus and a few others help me remember them. I’m more than happy with the parents I have. I have a little sister who I adore and I couldn’t ask for more.” Harry said, his voice soft as Neville nodded gently.

Fred and George took over with the information about the new Burrow. Apparently the house is almost completed, which greatly surprised Hermione. However, when the guys explained all the spells that are used when constructing a new house and the fact that many construction companies use the help of House Elves, it helped her realize how quickly everything got done. They were glad that their dad is giving them their own work room between their bedrooms even though they figure that their mum will attempt to sneak into the room every so often in an attempt to figure out what they’re developing.

“She’s still hung up on us getting ‘respectable’ jobs. It doesn’t matter that we’re already getting money for helping Padfoot and Moony.” Fred said, sighing as George nodded.

“We plan on using some of the secrecy spells Bill taught us last year when he visited for the summer. They’re Curse Breaker level which means Mum won’t be able to break through them. It’ll also protect our notes and such from Ronnie and Ginny.” George added, the others frowning lightly.

“Why would you need to hide your notes?” Dean asked, taking a sip of his Butterbeer.

“One time we found Ronnikins snooping around in our room for something. He thought we had snitched his comic books and wouldn’t believe us when we told him we didn’t. An hour later Mum stormed into our room waving around some of our prank ideas ranting and raving about us causing trouble and how she wouldn’t have it in her house. Turns out Ronnie had found some of our plans and showed Mum when we refused to return what we stole from him. Mum found his comics in the garden underneath one of the bushes but we were still grounded. Ginny did something similar when she was missing her dolls.” Fred growled, scowling as he thought of his younger siblings.

“You know, I thought that Percy would be someone who would snitch; not Ron or Ginny.” Neville said, frowning lightly as the twins shrugged.

“Percy scolds us himself. As the eldest one in the house besides Mum and Dad we supposedly have to listen to him. Ginny likes our pranks but she’s not afraid to use her cunning against us.” George explained, the others nodding lightly.

“So, in a way she’d make a pretty good Slytherin.” Hermione said, smiling as Fred and George looked at each other and nodded.

“In a way. She’s not very sneaky though and she’s nearly as bad as Ron when it comes to her temper. Thankfully she doesn’t explode at a drop of a hat, though.” Fred said, shrugging lightly.

“Though we were supposedly destined for Slytherin too.” George added, grinning as Neville looked at them wide eyed.

“W-What??”

“Of course!” Hermione cried, her eyes bright as the twins grinned at her.

“And what has our little lioness figured out?” George asked, making Fred chuckle while Hermione rolled her eyes.
You’re both very smart and highly cunning. You’ve been ‘dumbing’ down your grades for the past two years in order to avoid getting a Ministry job and you’ve been coming up with ways to avoid professors and Mister Filch. It takes a lot of cunning and guile in order to do that. Not only that, but you’re both highly ambitious which is shown by your determination to continue creating new and improved prank items.” Hermione said, smirking as the twins chuckled while Neville looked at them with surprise and realization.

“Very true, Mione.”

“The sorting hat did want to put us in Slytherin.”

“But Mum would have a fit if we were in that House.”

“So we begged the hat to sort us into Gryffindor.”

“We also threatened to turn it pink for a month and make it speak in a high pitched girly voice.”

The others laughed at this; knowing full well that the twins would’ve found a way to carry out their threats against the sorting hat. It was sad, though, that the twins had to hide from their true House just because their mum would be angry at them. Yes, a lot of the ‘hatred’ against Slytherin has been getting better, especially since they’ve become friends with Millicent, Daphne, Tracy and Blaise. However, there are still many people who think that Slytherin’s can’t be trusted and are just ‘Dark’ Wizards and Witches in training. Sadly some of the older Slytherin’s didn’t help things along with their attitudes and beliefs. They also talked about Malfoy’s new attitude; something that everyone in the school has noticed. The blonde hasn’t made a move towards Harry and his friends since the first week they returned. He’s become more…subdued though Hermione and Jillian have caught him sneering at them in class and in the hallways.

They ended their little meeting and headed back out to meet up with their friends. Fred and George headed off to find Lee and talk about the upcoming Quidditch game while Harry, Dean, Hermione and Neville headed off to find Millicent and the others. Harry actually ducked into a hidden passage to bring out the map and find them instead of having them wander around the entire castle. Harry grinned when he spotted the others down by the lake enjoying the warming weather. Stepping out of the hidden passage, he led the others through the castle and outside to where the others were sitting on a few benches. Joining their friends, they happily joined in on the conversations and found out that the others were talking about Draco and his latest attitude change.

“It’s because the King of Slytherin has taken Malfoy under his wing so to speak.” Millicent said, making the others pause and look at her in confusion.

“King of Slytherin?” Susan asked, frowning as the black haired girl nodded.

“There’s a kind of…hierarchy in Slytherin. You have the Prince of Slytherin who is normally between eleven and thirteen and then the King of Slytherin who is normally between fifteen and seventeen. The King and Prince are considered the top students who display the exact traits that Salazar Slytherin himself prided in. Malfoy used to think himself as the Prince of Slytherin but he didn’t have the smarts or the popularity to claim the title. A Fourth Year by the name of Spencer Dowell is the Slytherin King. Believe me, he earned the title.” Millicent muttered, shuddering as she thought of the duel which made the others looked at each other in confusion.

“Anyway, Spencer has taken Malfoy under his wing and is teaching him how to be a ‘proper’ Slytherin. We think he has plans for Malfoy to become the Prince of Slytherin and take over his slot as King of Slytherin upon his graduation. It’s become common to see Draco and his friends studying in the common room or in the library more. He’s also stopped bragging so much and has been seen
walking around with Spencer. There’s a rumor going around the House that Draco’s mother is ill and
Spencer’s family is going to help provide her private medical care.” She continued, the others
looking surprised at the information.

“Poor, Draco.” Hermione muttered, sighing softly as the others nodded.

“So he’s learned that if his mother passes away he’ll become an ‘orphan’ because his dad’s in prison.
That must’ve been a bitter potion to swallow.” Dean said, shaking his head as Hermione scowled at
him.

“What?! It’s not like I wish Lady Malfoy death. She’s a very talented artist and musician from what
I’ve seen. I just wish she would’ve raised Malfoy to be less of a prat.” Dean said, Harry nodding
while Hermione sighed and rolled her eyes.

“Honestly.” Hermione muttered, shaking her head as Jillian patted her arm.

The month of January passed by smoothly for the staff and students of Hogwarts. Sure enough, near
the end of the month Neville received a letter from his grandmother telling him that his parents were
ready to wake up. He was practically floating through the last classes of the week since his
grandmother was taking him out of school for the weekend so he’ll have time to spend with his
parents. Professor McGonagall had been all too happy to allow him permission in order to leave the
school for the weekend. Of course she has no intention of telling Albus why, only that it’s a family
matter. It had already annoyed her that the aged Wizard had learned of the Longbottoms being
removed from St. Mungo’s a day after they had been moved to Othello Estate. However, it had been
rather interesting seeing the shock and worry on his face. Apparently he had attempted to floo call
Augusta to find out why she had felt it was necessary to remove the couple from the hospital when
they were getting perfectly good care there. She later heard that the House Elf who denied Albus
from accessing entrance to the manor was given her own stock of fabric to create her own clothes
which would last her a month; something that pleased the little being to no end.

After classes ended, Neville hurriedly packed up for his time at the estate before hurrying out of his
dorm and into the common room. Harry and Dean clapped him on the back and told him to take care
and remember to call them. The twins encouraged him to pull a few pranks for them while he’s gone.
Hermione, Eliana and Jillian hugged him, making the blonde blush; especially when they fawned on
him for a little bit. He finally managed to pull away from his friends after saying goodbye and hurried
out of the tower. He nearly sprinted down to Professor McGonagall’s office where the woman called
him inside as soon as he knocked. Stepping into the office, Neville beamed when he saw his
grandmother. Augusta smiled and chuckled softly when she saw her grandson nearly vibrating in
excitement.

“We’ll see you back Monday morning.” Minerva said, fighting back the urge to smile at seeing one
of her lion cub’s so excited.

“He’ll be here in time for breakfast.” Augusta promised, Neville nodding as he inched his way
towards the fireplace.

Heading through the floo, Neville eagerly looked around as he stepped out of the fireplace and into
the parlor of Othello Estate. He had the rather interesting experience of Eliza shooting out of one of the
chairs and slamming into him, making the blonde stumble as he wrapped an arm around the
younger girl’s waist. He managed to move Eliza out of the way as his grandmother came through the
floo with Shade next to her. Shade bounded over and nearly tackled Eliza to the ground, barking and licking at her face.

“Down, Shade!” Neville called, making his pup whine though she listened none the less.

“How did Albus respond to you bringing Shade into the school?” Eliza asked, patting the pup’s head with a smile.

“He and Ronald tried to get me to send Shade home but I simply showed them the letter from the owner of the pet shop where I got her which helped to prove that Shade is my familiar. Familiars are the exception to the rule of only having cats, toads and owls.” Neville answered, Eliza nodding in understanding.

A House Elf arrived and took Neville’s bag. Augusta explained that they were going to be staying here at the Estate for the weekend and it’ll likely be the first of February when Frank and Alice are finally moved back to Longbottom Manor. Eliza followed them until they reached the Infirmary where she hugged Neville before taking Shade outside to run around and use the bathroom. Stepping into the infirmary, Healer June and Sirius greeted them. Healer June explained that it would be best for Neville to remain outside of the private room when Frank and Alice wake up. Because the last thing they remember is the attack, they might freak out and still think that they’re under attack. It’ll give Augusta time to calm them down and explain how much time has passed since they were cursed and what all has changed over the years. Only when Augusta calls for him will Neville be allowed inside the room. Neville wasn’t too happy, but he understood that his parents will be freaked out by how much time has passed.

Moving over to the private room, Neville sat down on a chair Healer June conjured for him and watched as his grandmother disappeared into his parent’s room. Augusta swallowed heavily as she looked at the sleeping forms of her son and daughter-in-law. Looking to Healer June, Healer Curtis from the Golden Heart Clinic and Sirius, she nodded and mentally readied herself for what was about to happen. The two healers pulled out their wands and, after removing the I.V. drips and detaching the monitors from the couple, cast the spell to allow them to wake from their coma. Both of the Longbottom’s breathed deeply before they slowly started shifting. Frank was the first to open his eyes, and Augusta nearly wept when she saw the life and intelligence which had been vacant from his eyes had finally returned. Frank suddenly gasped and sat up, his eyes wide with fear, alarm and shock. He looked around, his eyes locking on his mother and Sirius with shock and confusion. However, before he could speak, his head whipped around when he heard his wife’s voice.

“F-Frank?”

The overwhelmed Wizard reached over and gently cupped his wife’s cheek as her eyes opened and she looked up at him. There was worry in her eyes alongside fear. However, those emotions quickly gave way to relief when she saw him safe and seemingly unharmed. Alice slowly sat up and closed her eyes, leaning into her husband as Frank wrapped his arms around her and held her close.

“Frank, Alice, how are you feeling?” Sirius asked, making the couple open their eyes and look at him.

“Sirius?! Is that really you?” Frank asked, shock in his voice as he looked at the other man.

Instead of answering, Sirius turned into Padfoot and back again, making the pair stare at him in shock before they looked to Augusta.

“W-What happened?” Alice asked, her voice soft as tears slowly fell from her mother-in-law’s eyes.
“You and Frankie were tortured by that mad bitch Bellatrix and her family. She placed you both under a Black family curse which caused you to become trapped in your minds and withered away your bodies and magic. We didn’t know about the curse until Christmas break and had thought that they used the Cruciatuus curse and tortured you into insanity. I had you both placed in St. Mungo’s in hopes that they would be able to heal you. Sirius is the one who learned about the curse and made the connections. You’ve been in a magical coma while your bodies and magic healed.”

Augusta explained, the couple looking at her in alarm and shock.

“How long?” Frank asked, making Augusta and Sirius look at Healer June.

“Mum, how long were we ‘out’?” Frank demanded, watching as the aged woman sighed and closed her eyes.

“Ten and a half years.”

Alice and Frank stared in shock at Augusta, their minds reeling at the influx of information. Nearly eleven years...eleven years of their lives had been wasted and of being trapped in their minds. What is the Magical world like? Who is Minister? What ever happened to the Potters? The last they had heard was that there had been an attack on Godric’s Hallow but that was it. Where is Harry? Wait... where is Neville?!

“Neville! Where is he?” Frank asked, looking around the room frantically as if his son was hiding.

“Frank, Alice-”

“Where’s my baby?!” Alice asked, desperation and a hint of fear in her voice.

Before anyone could say anything, the door to the room opened and Neville stepped in. Frank and Alice froze in shock at the sight of their son. The last they had ever seen of Neville was when he was just a little over a year old. Seeing him standing there as an eleven-year old was startling though they both felt such relief in seeing their precious son alive and healthy. With tears in her eyes, Alice spread her arms open towards her son. Neville let out a sob and rushed over to the beds, wrapping his arms around his mother and holding onto her tightly. Alice wrapped his arms around her son, rocking him as she gently stroked his hair and soothed him as he sobbed into her shoulder. Frank had tears in his eyes as he reached over and, with surprising strength, pulled Neville onto the bed and pulled his son and wife into his arms. Augusta was soon beckoned over to the family embrace and nearly collapsed at feeling her son’s arms around her once more. Sirius, June and Curtis stepped out of the room, letting the family have their time to comfort each other.

Augusta and Neville gradually brought Frank and Alice up to speed on what had happened while they had been hospitalized. Frank and Alice were shocked in learning about the various reforms that their world has gone through, though at the same time they were glad that things have improved so much. The news about Albus being untrustworthy was hard to accept, but Alice had been like Lily in that she had never fully trusted the aged Wizard. They were surprised to learn about Harry and his family, though they were grateful on how quickly they had taken Harry in and wished that they could see the other boy. They continued talking for a little while longer before the door opened and Sirius, June, Delilah and Lucas walked into the room. Frank and Alice thanked the group for their kindness and support, to which the group just smiled and said that it was no problem. June ran a few scans on the couple just to ensure that they’re doing well and nothing had happened while they had talked.

“Alice, Frank, there’s much that we still need to discuss.” Lucas said, conjuring a chair with a flick of his hand and sitting down.
“What about?” Frank asked, shifting on his bed and accepting a glass of water from June.

Lucas and Delilah looked at each other before nodding and that made Neville realize that they were going to tell his parents about Assassins and Templars. Sure enough, Lucas and Delilah began explaining what they are and what their son is. Frank and Alice listened with rapt attention; Frank’s eyes widening as he learned more about the two hidden societies. Needless to say, the couple was shocked in learning that Neville has the abilities to become an Assassin and has already begun his training. Neville proudly confirmed what Lucas and Delilah were saying and happily chatted away about his training and what he has learned so far. Frank and Alice were greatly interested in learning more about Neville’s schooling and his friends; in which they fought back a smile when Neville flushed slightly when he mentioned Hermione and the other girls he’s made friends with. It was easy to see that their son is still slightly shy, though apparently not as shy as he was before school from what Augusta had said. Neither of them were too happy when they learned that Algernon had bullied their son, but thankfully the man has changed his opinion. As Lucas and Delilah continued to explain things, they were rather surprised to see that Alice was rather calm about the fact that she’s surrounded by Assassins and is currently staying in their main compound.

“Alice…did you already know about Assassins?” Lucas asked, making the woman sigh and nod; shocking her husband and son.

“What?!” Frank asked, making his wife smile sheepishly at him.

“My mother was part of the French Assassin Brotherhood. You know I’m from France and I came to Hogwarts instead of going to Beauxbatons Academy. I didn't have the abilities to become an Assassin myself but I figured that was a high chance that any child I might have might hold the potential to become one.” She explained, making Augusta and Frank stare at her.

“Why did you never tell me?” Frank asked, frowning lightly as Alice sighed and rolled her eyes.

“And how exactly would I have explained something like that without sounding completely insane?” She asked, raising an eyebrow as Frank opened his mouth before closing it.

Frank shook his head and calmed himself. Looking to Neville, he looked his son up and down with a critical eye. Neville certainly does look good; his body is filling out and any baby fat he has is easily fading the more Neville works out. He also listened as Neville told him and Alice about his training and workouts with his friends. It was surprising hearing how many Assassins are actually attending Hogwarts, though they figured that it was a good thing. Though the fact that there are likely as many Templar trainees attending the school was alarming to say the least. Frank and Alice saw the pride in Neville’s voice and eyes whenever he talked about his training. He also showed them his ‘true’ wand; something that surprised them considering neither of them had ever thought that Assassins would have a specially made wand just for them that doesn’t have the trace on it.

Even though they worried about their son and knew that, should he decide to continue and eventually finish his Assassin training, he’ll be going on missions, they couldn’t deny that it’s helped their son become more confident and sure of himself. They both agreed to allow Neville to continue his training, which made their son beam at them. Neville stepped out of the room and called for Shade, in which his pup came skidding into the infirmary and happily followed her human into the private room. Alice cooed over Shade, gushing about her son’s familiar while Frank chuckled and shook his head. Shade love the attention though when Neville held his hand in a fist above her head she sat down beside the bed and remained there while Neville spent more time with his parents.

“You’ve been working on her training, I see.” Augusta said, smiling as she looked down at the pup.

“Well, I have been.” Frank said, as he watched Shade do as he was told. Frank looked to Neville and said, “You can teach her that.”

“Yeah. It helps that I can send her images through our mental link showing what I want her to do. It
still takes her a little but she’s getting the hang of it.” Neville explained, reaching down and lightly scratching Shade’s head.

“Alright, everyone, it’s time for these two to rest. Too much excitement isn’t good for them.” June said, making Neville groan even though his parents smiled at him.

“If they get enough rest and feel strong enough they should be able to join everyone tomorrow afternoon for lunch in the dining room.” June said, smirking when she saw the excitement in Neville’s eyes.

Neville hugged his parents, flushing slightly when Alice kissed his forehead. Augusta hugged her son and daughter-in-law next before Sirius shook their hands and promised to speak with them later.

All of them headed out of the private room and headed out of the infirmary. Neville hugged his grandmother tightly before heading up to his room to get some of his assignments done. Augusta, however, walked with Lucas, Delilah and Sirius to Lucas’ private study. There, they talked about possibilities and what they should do now that Frank and Alice are awake and have been restored to their proper appearances and magical levels. Augusta wasn’t too sure on making the news of their restoration public so quickly, but Sirius made her see the advantages of doing so. Frank and Alice will soon be strong enough to go outside and the public would be shocked at seeing them without knowing what had happened. She agreed with that and Lucas also explained what the news article should contain. Sirius agreed that he will help other people who might have been cursed using the same hex by his mad cousin which made things easier for what they wanted to do.

All of them agreed that the article should contain praise for St. Mungo’s and their long-term treatment and care of Frank and Alice. Augusta explained that she had been pleased with how the healers at St. Mungo’s had been hard pressed to give up on hoping to treat Frank and Alice; only having given up when they exhausted all means. They also planned on praising the healers of Golden Heart Clinic, in which June is registered as one of the head healers of the clinic and she often helps out there whenever she doesn’t have anything to do here at the estate.

“All right, I’ll call the Daily Prophet and ask to speak with one of their more…respectable reporters. We’ll let the reporter speak with Frank and Alice themselves and ask for it to be released the first of February.” Lucas said, the others nodding in agreement.

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Neville was rather reluctant to return to Hogwarts early on Monday morning. He had spent nearly the entire weekend with his parents talking and just spending time with them nearby. Frank was quickly brought up to speed on the matters of House Longbottom and thanked his mother for taking care of their assets. He happily agreed to form an alliance with Sirius, especially after what the other lord had done for their family. He also made plans to reinstate himself in the Wizengamot after the article was released to the public since he wanted to finally take his rightful place on the Wizengamot, something that he hadn’t been able to do before the attack due to the large target over him and his family. One thing that he and Alice decided was that they wouldn’t return to the Auror corps. After everything that has happened the last thing they wanted to do was partake in a career that will put them in danger once more. They both figured that they had sacrificed enough for their world and it’s time for them to relax and spend time with their son and friends.

When Neville returned to Hogwarts, his friends all saw the pure happiness radiating from him. He barely contained his excitement throughout their classes and eagerly led the way to the Room when they had a free period. Inside the Room he eagerly told them about his parents and everything that happened. Everyone was happy for him, though Susan, Hannah, Millicent, Eliana and Jillian were given the slightly altered version that his parents had been staying at Golden Heart Clinic instead of
Dear Harry,

We cannot thank you enough for reaching out and making friends with our son. From what Neville himself and Augusta told us Neville had been a very shy and insecure boy before he became friends with you and the others. Augusta often told us that Neville is nearly completely unrecognizable from the boy she had sent off to Hogwarts last year. We know that his change and newfound confidence is because of you and your close friend Mister Dean Thomas-Woods.

Thank you so much for helping our son find himself. We can’t wait to meet you and the others on Easter break where we will be staying at Othello Estate so Neville won’t have to constantly floo or portkey over to continue his training. From what Lucas and Delilah have told us and from the pictures we’ve seen, you are, without a doubt, your parents’ son. They would be so proud of you.

Harry and I know that they’re happy with all that you’ve accomplished so far in your life.

We would certainly like to continue the alliance between our Houses and would love to have you spend some time at Longbottom Manor during the summer. Of course Dean will be invited too; Delilah and Lucas told us how close you two boys are. In fact, we would also love to meet all of your friends. Neville told us all about them and while it is surprising that most of his friends are girls, we’re still pleased that there are so many who are willing to stand by our son.

Love,

Aunt Alice and Uncle Frank

Harry beamed at Neville, making his friend grin before he shared some of what had been written with the others. Everyone was beyond happy for Neville and explained that they would love to meet his parents sometime during the summer. Fred and George also talked about a letter they had gotten from their parents explaining that the new house is finished and they’re steadily filling up the new rooms with their restored furniture and also new furniture since not all pieces could be refinished and repaired. Of course their dad and sent pictures and the twins happily enlarged the pictures so everyone could see the new house. The transformation was even more startling since Fred also produced some pictures of the old Burrow. Instead of the house reaching several stories and each floor jutting out like a giant child who had played with building blocks, was a rather beautiful house with four stories. The outside is painted a beautiful off white color with a warm red trim. There is a wrap-around porch around the entire house and a picture of the backyard showed that the back of the porch had enough room to entertain guests and had an attached deck which wrapped around the aboveground pool.

There’s a two door garage, in which the twins explained that their dad owns a car and was thinking of getting a new one since their current one is rather old and the expansion charms on the inside were beginning to wear off. There are two impressive looking greenhouses in the back yard as well, towards the back and behind those are rows of different fruit trees. The entire property was surrounded by a low stone wall and there were plenty of large trees dotted around the grounds to provide plenty of shade during the warmer months. In a more heavily concealed area was the Quidditch pitch and a small broom shed.

“It-It’s such a huge difference.” Hermione breathed, looking between the ‘before’ and ‘after’ pictures with shock.

“Wait until you see the inside.” George said, grinning as he pulled out more pictures.

The first floor was stunning. The front door opened to the mudroom which then opened to a large,
open floor plan. A large living room was to the left of the main floor and to the right, separated by a
large, sturdy staircase, was a large dining room which led to a huge kitchen. Fred and George
explained that there was a half-bath between the living room and kitchen for guests. There’s also a
rather stunning sun room in the back of the first floor with two glass walls which looked over the
garden and back yard. Up the stairs is a wide, long hallway with various doors. Fred and George
explained that their parents’ room is on this floor along with their private bathroom. Ginny’s room
and bathroom is on the floor along with Ron’s room and bathroom. Their father’s private study is at
the back of the hallway and they explained that their dad has already warded the room so no one but
him can access it.

On the third floor are their rooms, shared bathroom and their workroom. There are also two guest
bedrooms, with a shared bathroom between them, a bedroom for Bill and a bedroom for Charlie with
a bathroom between them. Percy’s room is also on this floor and it has its own bathroom as well. At
the end of the hallway is a hatch which led up to the new attic which is mostly a huge play space for
Ron and Ginny. The attic also has a smaller room inside that is used for storage. Back on the first
floor the twins showed them entrance to the basement and showed them the pictures of the large
basement. There’s a potions lab, which their mother is barred from for the time being, along with
more storage areas and a workroom for Arthur to work on his experiments.

“It’s amazing.” Susan said, smiling as the twins grinned and nodded.

“We’re glad that things are looking up for our family. For all her faults, Mum has done her best to
clothe and feed us and Dad has always worked his arse off in order to attempt to provide for us.
We’ve secretly transferred some of our earnings to the family vault to help pay for the renovations
and to buy new furniture.” Fred explained, the others smiling and nodding in understanding and
agreement.

The twins happily talked about future prank items they wanted to develop, in which the others
happily gave their advice and offered their help in testing some of the products for the twins after
they created the items. Hermione also talked about the recent letter she had gotten from her mum.
Apparently Emma and Richard are now officially divorced. The others were surprised on how
quickly the divorce had been settled, but they were also happy for Hermione and Emma too.
Hermione explained that her mum is thinking of opening her own business sometime during the
summer though she doesn’t know what kind of business she wants to open just yet. The girls rallied
around Hermione to show their support as Hermione softly talked about how her father’s memories
have already been altered so he doesn’t remember anything about the Magical world.

“My father is thinking about moving from what Mum said. The house just has…too many memories
from what he told her. He did apologize and…I have a letter from him that he wrote before his
memories were altered. I…I haven’t opened it yet.” Hermione admitted, her voice soft as she leaned
into Susan’s side.

“Open it when you’re ready, Mione. There’s no pressure.” Neville said, Hermione nodding her head
as she sniffled softly.

The rest of the day was spent talking and just hanging out besides working on their assignments and
going to the last of their classes. Dinner was a rather entertaining affair as the twins had apparently
decided to prank Ron after his latest attempt to sabotage Hermione after their last class. Hermione
had complained to the twins about Ron knocking into her arm as he walked by which caused her to
overturn her inkwell which covered her class book. His excuse of having not looked where he was
going made the Professor relent and not deduct points, but Hermione had looked furious which they
couldn’t blame her for. Thankfully Percy had taught her a spell to clean the ink from her book and
restored it to normal. The twins, having learned about what their little brother had done, put a potion
in his drink at dinner which soon had him squealing like a pig as his nose turned into a pig’s snout and he sprouted a curly pink tail just above his pant line. The entire hall had erupted into laughter, especially when Ron squealed loudly and darted out of the Great Hall...not before snagging a chicken leg of course. Healer Briggs quickly followed Ron, though he frowned sharply at the twins as he hurried by.

The twins were never convicted of the prank against their brother, though everyone knew they had done it. Ron didn’t return until the morning since he had to wait the effects of the potion off. However, whenever he walked by someone they would make pig noises which caused the redhead to flush and hurry away in embarrassment. That morning when the mail arrived, the Great Hall suddenly fell silent as soon as the Daily Prophet arrived and was being read.

War Hero’s Awake!

By Cassandra Woods

In a remarkable event Lord Franklin Longbottom and Lady Alice Longbottom are fully awake and have made a remarkable recovery from their tragic time of being trapped inside their own minds as prisoners. Now, many of our older readers will remember that Lord and Lady Longbottom had been attacked on the first of November ten and a half years ago. Lord and Lady Longbottom were attacked by Bellatrix Lestrange, her husband, brother-in-law and two other Death Eaters. Sadly, by the time help arrived, the lord and lady were reduced to comatose states. They were rushed to St. Mungo’s where Head Healer Anthony Wilkins began treating them for their wounds and broken bones. The other Aurors who were rushed in for treatment told the Healers about the battle and what spells were used. All of them thought that Lord and Lady Longbottom had been held under the Cruciatus curse until they simply became comatose.

Lord and Lady Longbottom became long term residents in St. Mungo’s when the Healers realized that their normal treatments for exposure to this curse weren’t working. Mind Healers who had extensive experience in handling patients with this kind of affliction, tried to cure the couple but nothing seemed to work. Their bodies rapidly lost much needed nutrients and they were placed on extensive potion regimens in order to keep them alive and in some kind of healthy state. A few months after they were admitted into the hospital, they were well enough to walk around but they resembled former prisoners who had been ‘Kissed’ by Dementors.

However, in late-December Lord Sirius Black began looking into the symptoms that Lord and Lady Longbottom were displaying. He knew that the Healers had given up on treating the couple and didn’t want to take no for an answer. Looking though his family’s library, he soon came upon an ancient book on Black Magic and found a curse inside which caused the same symptoms that Lord and Lady Longbottom were displaying. To ensure that he had gotten his information correct, Lord Black went to Azkaban and confronted his ‘former’ cousin Bellatrix Lestrange where, after speaking with her, she confirmed that she had used the spell on the Longbottom’s. Lord Black then headed to Golden Heart Clinic with his findings where he confirmed that he can heal Lord and Lady Longbottom.

Madame Augusta Longbottom was soon contacted and she readily agreed to the treatment. She soon took her son and daughter-in-law out of St. Mungo’s and had them transferred them to a private room in the Golden Heart Clinic. Head Healer June Weathers along with three others placed Lord and Lady Longbottom into a magical coma before allowing Lord Black and his cousin Andromeda Tonks nee Black cast the counter to the horrible curse and changes instantly began taking place to Lord and Lady Longbottom. They have regained their youthful appearance and look just as they had been before the curse ravaged their bodies and magical cores. Head Healer Weathers had this to say about the curse:
“This curse ravaged Lord and Lady Longbottom’s body and magical core. It sent such high pain signals to every nerve ending that it forced them to retreat into their minds where they were locked in. The spell then began destroying the nutrients inside of their bodies, thus aging them prematurely. Because their bodies were alive but their minds locked away they displayed the same behavior as victims of Dementors. We had them placed into a magical coma to allow their bodies to heal completely and their magical cores to heal and mend. There were some bouts of accidental magic coming from them while they were in the comas but it wasn’t anything we could handle.”

Healer Weathers also had this to say about the state of the Longbottom’s and their treatment at St. Mungo’s:

“Lord and Lady Longbottom were in great health considering everything when they arrived at our clinic. I have already reached out to head Healer Wilkins of St. Mungo’s in an attempt to one day, establish a program where our healers can help each other and learn from each other. Golden Heart Clinic uses more Non-Magical techniques while St. Mungo’s uses magical techniques.”

Madame Longbottom had this to say about the treatment her son and daughter-in-law received at St. Mungo’s and at Golden Heart Clinic:

“I am beyond pleased with Frank’s and Alice’s treatment that they received at St. Mungo’s. The healers there refused to give up until they exhausted all possible cures. Only then did they inform me that they couldn’t find anything to help cure my son and daughter. Instead, they did their best to ensure Frank and Alice were comfortable and had all of their needs tended to and even then, a Mind Healer constantly performed checkups in order to see if anything was improving with them. As for Golden Heart Clinic I am very pleased with the treatment Frank and Alice received from them and their ideas on how to further help my son and daughter. Putting them in a magical coma was something that I never would have thought of but it had been the best option as, when they woke, Frank and Alice were instantly alarmed since the last thing they remembered was being attacked. The magical coma allowed them to fully heal without allowing them to harm themselves by worrying about what has happened.”

Lord and Lady Longbottom are currently resting and regaining their strength at Longbottom Manor. They are currently having sessions with a Mind Healer from St. Mungo’s to ensure that they haven’t suffered any mental harm during their time under the curse’s effects. They were unavailable for an interview but Madame Longbottom has stated that neither of them will be returning to the Auror department. Madame Amelia Bones, head of the D.M.L.E. has plans to present awards to Lord and Lady Longbottom for their actions during the war. A date for the awards ceremony has not been set and will depend on the wellbeing of Lord and Lady Longbottom and when they feel ready enough to make a public appearance.

Below the article are two pictures: one of Frank and Alice before they had been cured and another one that shows them after being cured. The difference between the two pictures was startling and really drove home on how much damage the curse had done to the pair. Another smaller article a few pages in talked about how four other long-term residents of St. Mungo’s had been healed thanks to Sirius and Andromeda. There was talk of giving the pair an award for finding a cure to a curse that had affected so many and giving life back to so many people. However, Sirius and Andromeda refused and simply asked that, if they had to be rewarded, for a donation to be made to both St. Mungo’s and Golden Heart Clinic to further help fund their research and enable them to continue to help people.

Neville flushed when he heard the other students talking and whispering about the article and many were looking at him in surprise. Harry had a look of pride on his face and he was very happy that his godfather had gotten the notice he deserved for helping so many people. Yes, it was a bit of a risk
mentioning June but she is actually one of the head healers at Golden Heart and the clinic didn’t often get much publicity in the Magical world. It’s mostly thought of as a joke since it’s located in the Muggle world and mostly caters to Muggleborns and the relatives of Muggleborns and Halfbloods. This will give the clinic some much deserved recognition. Harry glanced up at the head table and saw that many of the professors looked shocked though happy at the article. However, looking at Professor Dumbledore, Harry frowned when he saw a troubled look in the aged Wizard’s eyes. Surely Dumbledore would be happy that two former members of his Order are back to normal and are perfectly healthy…right?

February soon arrived and everyone was soon beginning to long for Easter break. The Fifth and Seventh Years were steadily beginning to panic as their exams came closer and it was rather common to see groups of them studying together and asking what might be on the O.W.L.s or N.E.W.T.s respectively. Of course the Sixth Years helped to point the Fifth Years towards the right books that they should begin studying from though reminded them that there’s still time before the exams will actually take place. The Seventh Years also began sending out applications to colleges and were often called to their Head of Houses’ office for career advice and where their grades stand and what they need to do in order to bring them up to be noticed by colleges. Hannah, Susan, Jillian, Eliana and Millicent worked hard to keep Hermione from stressing about her future and would often distract her whenever an older students nearby began worrying about their exams and futures. Harry, Dean and Neville tried to help out, though Neville was slowly getting nervous himself.

Thankfully Fred and George managed to calm everyone down and lift the mood in the entire school by playing pranks. Harry and Dean got in on the spirit of pranking others and actually snuck outside using a hidden passageway during the night and rigged the shower rooms for all four Houses. It was hilarious watching the Quidditch teams come into the Great Hall after practice with their hair and skin dyed various colors. Of course everyone suspected Fred and George behind the pranks no matter how much they denied any involvement. Even they were victims of the prank and entered the hall one more supporting neon blue hair and dark green skin. It was a colorful week for the students; especially when various walls in the hallways began flashing different colors throughout a week.

Hermione scolded Harry and Dean after they revealed themselves as the pranksters to their friends. However, after she finished scolding them she practically demanded to know how they had caused the walls in the hallways to flash different colors. Needless to say she was stuck speechless when Harry and Dean revealed that they had done it by casting a long last charm that they had created. They then further explained that Harry’s parents and their various tutors had begun teaching them advanced charms, spells and jinxes before they had come to Hogwarts. Fred and George explained that spell creation didn’t get taught to anyone outside of Ancient Runes and Arithmancy and normally that was taught near the end of Sixth Year and throughout Seventh Year. Harry and Dean appeased Hermione’s thirst for knowledge by promising that their tutors will likely teach both her and Neville during the summer.

On the ninth Millicent, Daphne, Tracy and Blaise all noticed that Draco was missing. They found this strange though they instantly became worried that something had happened to his mother. However, Vincent and Gregory quickly explained that Draco had been called out of the school for something concerning his father. The four Snakes quickly passed on the message to Harry and his group, which greatly worried Harry and Dean. Yes, there had been articles concerning Azkaban and some prisoner riots and disturbances throughout the years but nothing that caused any major concern. During lunch everyone noticed that Professor Dumbledore wasn’t there and Professor McGonagall had to step up when she saw the student body becoming worried about the absence of their headmaster.
“Headmaster Dumbledore is away due to duties pertaining to his position on the Wizengamot. He will be back late this evening or early tomorrow morning. In his absence I shall be taking his place.”
She explained, watching as everyone listened closely before chatting quietly about the news.

Later that night Harry got a call from his dad. He had just finished reading a chapter in his Transfiguration book when he felt his communications mirror go off. He hurriedly threw a pillow through the curtains towards Dean’s bed before snagging his mirror and activating it. Dean hurried over and sealed the curtains around Harry’s bed before sitting down beside the other boy.

“Dad?” Harry asked, frowning as he enlarged the mirror so he and Dean could see better.

“Lucius Malfoy is out of Azkaban.”

“What?!” Harry and Dean cried, their eyes wide as Lucas sighed and nodded.

“A lawyer by the name of Oliver Dowell managed to get Lucius released on good behavior. Malfoy has kept his nose clean since his sentence and had been a ‘model’ prisoner. He also presented the fact that Narcissa Malfoy is in declining health and Draco will essentially become an orphan should his mother pass and his father still be in prison. Of course after the trial Lucius released the information that his wife will be admitted into a private clinic for treatment for her illness.” Lucas explained, the boys looking at each other in horror.

“W-What about the Malfoy seat?” Dean asked, swallowing thickly as Lucas ran a hand through his hair.

“Because of the new law that was passed a few months ago, former prisoners cannot sit upon the Wizengamot. The Malfoy seat will still be there for Draco to inherit should he keep his head down and his nose clean. One of the conditions of Malfoy’s release is that he has to report to the D.M.L.E. every two weeks, cannot travel outside of the country, and is susceptible to snap house inspections by the D.M.L.E. at random. His lawyer tried to get that revoked but it was either that or Malfoy remain behind bars. Amelia quietly revealed to me that Lucius had a tracking rune engraved onto his collar bone during his last medical evaluation. This way they’ll be able to keep an eye on his movements, even if he does decide to break his parole and flee the country. It’s undetectable and Malfoy was knocked out during the procedure.” Lucas explained, the boys nodding lightly.

“So the Daily Prophet will have the story out by tomorrow morning.” Dean said, Lucas nodding.

“Dowell tried pinning some of the blame for Lucius being released on Sirius. He stated that if Sirius hadn’t kicked Narcissa and Draco out of the Black family he could’ve helped Narcissa and the whole thing never would’ve happened. Sirius simply pulled out the marriage contract between Narcissa and Lucius and pointed out the clause which said that the contract would become void if either of the party joined any group which threatened the Magical world. Sirius was rather pleased to have smacked Dowell soundly and further explained that he had kicked Narcissa out of the family because she had supported the ideals that Lucius’ former master spouted and Draco was a known bully in Hogwarts that frequently targeted you. He took great joy in reminding everyone that, until he has a child of his own, you are his heir and he doesn’t want any of the Black fortune going to the Malfoy’s.”

“I bet that shut Dowell up real quick.” Harry smirked, snickering as Lucas chuckled and nodded.

“Anyway, warn Neville, the twins and Hermione before breakfast. The story will be front page and will likely cause some trouble. Keep a watch on Malfoy’s son too.” Lucas said, Harry and Dean nodding in understanding.
“Well, Malfoy junior has been keeping his nose clean. He’s been taken under an older Slytherin’s... guidance...wait, Spencer Dowell! Does Oliver Dowell have a son?” Harry asked, making Lucas blink.

“As far as I know he has three children: Spencer, Tristian and Sara.” Lucas said, raising and eyebrow as Dean and Harry looked at each other.

Harry and Dean explained what Millicent had told them about Draco and Spencer. Lucas was certainly slightly concerned in learning that Draco is being ‘trained’ to become the perfect Slytherin. However, he reminded them to just keep out of trouble and keep on top of their work. The boys promised to do so and ended the conversation. Instead of going to bed, Harry and Dean called Neville over and hurriedly explained what was going on to the blonde. Neville was shocked and rather worried about the release of Lucius Malfoy though he quickly became relieved when he was told about the restrictions that Malfoy senior is now under. Neville called Hermione and the twins using his communications mirror. All three of them were shocked and concerned, though they were glad that there was so many restrictions on the cruel man. Of course they knew that Draco would become insufferable with his dad free.

“We just need to watch our backs. There’s something about Spencer that puts me on edge.” Dean said, shuddering lightly as the others nodded in agreement.

“The good thing is that Millie, Daph, Tracy and Blaise are our inside to the Snake pit. I’m sure they’ll warn us if something stirs up.” Harry said, making Hermione sigh.

“It makes me feel like we’re using them...” She muttered, blinking when the others voided that.

“We’re not using them, Mione. Susan and Hannah would warn us if something was happening in Hufflepuff just like we would warn the others about anything happening in Gryffindor.” Harry explained, watching as Hermione sighed but nodded in understanding and agreement.

They soon ended the conversation and headed to bed. The next morning, after their morning workout, the trainee Assassins headed down to the Great Hall and joined their friends at the Hufflepuff table. Hermione felt slightly bad that they had an advantage over the others; especially since she, Harry, Dean, Neville and the twins know about what’s going to be in the papers. She forced herself to remain cheerful and happily struck up a conversation about the upcoming Easter break and their classes. As always, halfway through the meal the post owls began arriving. As the student body began reading their mail and the Daily Prophet, another hush fell over the hall as they began reading the main article of the newspaper.

Lucius Malfoy released on parole!

By Matthew Scott

In a shocking turn of events yesterday afternoon Lucius Malfoy, who had been incarcerated due to his actions as a Death Eater, was released from Azkaban due to good behavior. The Wizengamot, however, has enacted a set of rules that Mister Malfoy must abide by less he be arrested and placed back in prison. Mister Malfoy will be subject to snap Auror inspections of his home and other properties, must report to the Auror Department every two weeks and cannot travel outside of the country. He will have to follow these ‘rules’ for two years and even after that he will have to report back into the Ministry every month.

Mister Malfoy was released from his incarceration due to the declining health of his wife: Lady Narcissa Malfoy. Sometime during the previous winter, Lady Malfoy had fallen ill and none of the Healers at St. Mungo’s have been able to find out what illness has afflicted her. With her health in
decline, Heir Draconis Malfoy (11), reach out to a fellow housemate whose father is a well-
respected lawyer. Mister Oliver Dowell was rather concerned to learn about the potential fate of
Heir Malfoy should his mother pass away.

“Heir Malfoy would have been sent to one of the two orphanages here in our world. It is known to
many that Lord Black has removed Lady Malfoy from the Black family and has also removed her
son from the family. Because of this it is extremely likely that Lord Black wouldn’t have helped Heir
Malfoy if his mother is overtaken by her illness. Miss Andromeda Tonks had stated that she is,
unfortunately, much too busy to raise another child since her own daughter: Nymphadora Tonks
(17), is a Metamorphmagus and will hopefully be joining the Auror corps. Too many children, heirs
and heiresses are already living in an orphanage because their parents and/or guardians are locked
away in Azkaban and I refuse to allow another prominent heir fall into the same category as the
others.”

Mister Malfoy has already reunited with his son and, after a health evaluation at St. Mungo’s, has
been released to Malfoy Manor where he is now caring for his wife. Lord Dowell has also extended
an olive branch towards other families who have a loved one currently residing in Azkaban but he
has also set limits as to whom he will help.

“Mister Malfoy was a model prisoner during his incarceration in Azkaban. There have been five
reported riots and attempted uprisings in the prison. Mister Malfoy was not a part of any of those
riots and uprisings. The guards have confirmed that Mister Malfoy has been nothing but polite and
quiet during his time at Azkaban and has only requested various books of different subjects to read
from in an attempt to continue to educate himself about what is changing in our society. I will only
help other prisoners who have displayed the same model behavior. People who are showing true
remorse and are attempting to better themselves deserve to be helped and rewarded. As such, I will
only help prisoners who have ‘kept their noses clean’ so to say.”

It has also been confirmed that Mister Malfoy, having been convicted of criminal behavior, will not
be allowed to retake the mantel of Lord Malfoy or take his seat on the Wizengamot. This is also due
to a law that had been past a year ago which prevents convicted criminals from sitting on the
Wizengamot in any capacity. The Malfoy lordship and seat will remain vacant until Heir Malfoy
comes of age to inherit the title and seat.

Lord Dowell has not yet revealed which families he will be able to help get on parole. There will be
more to come as this story develops.

Much of the student body turned their eyes towards the Slytherin table. Sure enough, Draco sat with
his group of friend calmly eating his morning meal. However, the sense of dread which had hung
around him since his return from the Christmas holidays has disappeared; the worry lines on his face
have vanished and he was more animated when speaking with his friends and betrothed. Many of the
students who have suffered the loss of family and friends due to the war were angry and looked as if
they wanted to hex Draco. However, the staff had obviously picked up on those feelings and wands
were soon placed on the table beside their plates in a clear message to the student body. Others who
had a parent or even both parents, who had been Death Eaters, saw a spark of hope return to them.
This could potentially mean the release of their parent(s) from Azkaban. However, it also made them
wonder and hope that their parent(s) had remained out of trouble during their sentence. If their
parent(s) get out of Azkaban then they can finally go back to their homes and some semblance of a
normal life. Harry and the others looked to Millicent and saw that there was very little emotion on her
face as she re-read the article.

“Millie?” Susan asked, her voice soft as the large Slytherin sighed and folded her copy of the paper.
“I know you’re wondering how I’m handling the news. Honestly…I hope my dad doesn’t get out of Azkaban. I… I wouldn’t want to live with him if he did. I love my dad, don’t get me wrong, but he murdered and tortured others. Just because he’s sorry for what he did doesn’t mean he should be given praise for behaving well in prison. If Lord Dowell approaches me about getting my dad released I will refuse.” She explained, the others looking at her in surprise.

However, they didn’t say anything more as Millicent returned to her meal. Instead, they changed the topic to their assignments and projects in their classes. Hermione and Eliana gushed about going to see another of the Wizarding towns while Jillian, Neville, Millicent and Susan happily talked about their upcoming trip to Buckingham Palace. Harry, Dean and Hannah grinned as they listened to the excitement spreading throughout their friends. Harry and Dean were especially glad that the tense atmosphere was quickly being swept away. The fact that Lucius Malfoy is now free is very worrying and it made them worry about how many other Death Eaters will be released. However, one of the good things is that the Malfoy’s still don’t have nearly enough money to offer up to anyone who wants to make a huge change in the laws and such. They simply don’t have the money to bribe people without having to seriously consider on how much they’ll have to offer. Draco still has to have his schooling paid for along with supplies. Not only that but there’s the general living expenses that everyone goes through and needs.

-I’m just glad that Sirius found that one Horcrux in Grimmauld Place.- Harry thought, finishing up the last of his breakfast.

With the destruction of another of Riddle’s Horcruxes they officially have three down. The Goblins are still trying to find a way to harness the magical signature in the former Horcruxes to locate the others. Lucas and Delilah have a small team of Assassins combing the country in an attempt to learn more about Riddle and where any possible Horcruxes may be. As soon as Riddle becomes mortal again, Harry can issue the command for someone to kill Riddle and it’ll still fulfill the prophecy since Harry had been the one to issue the command; thus Riddle would still technically die by Harry’s hand. However, they had to make sure that all of the Horcruxes were destroyed before attempting to find and kill Riddle. None of them wanted to take a chance at the Dark Lord only to have him come back time and time again.

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Valentine’s Day came and Harry, Dean, Neville and Blaise gave each of the girls their own personalized card, some sweets and a new charm for their bracelets. Daphne, Tracy and Blaise were officially brought into their ever growing circle of friends and thus, were shown the Room of Requirement. The trio was in awe over the room and took turns showing the others their homes by having the room turn into an exact copy of their homes. Their classes were steadily getting more and more difficult and their professors were quizzing them and slowly getting them ready for exams. Some of their classmates and even a few from other Houses came to them asking questions about Defense and what they could do to better themselves. At the urging of Professor McGonagall, Harry and Dean offered their services as tutors to their fellow First Years and soon found themselves tutoring a decent group of First Years from Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw. Dean was even more shocked when Lavender and Parvati showed up to his tutoring sessions.

It was late-February when Harry managed to visit Hagrid. The snow was all but melted though the weather is still clinging to the last chill of winter and the days were frequently spent inside due to rain or thunderstorms. Even though it’s overcast, Harry and Mira set out to Hagrid’s hut where the kindly man was sitting on a large tree stump whittling a decent sized block of wood. Fang slept nearby while Norbert perched on Hagrid’s shoulder peering down at what his bonded human was doing with great interest. However, Norbert looked out and let out a happy, squalling cry when he saw Mira flying towards them. Hagrid looked over and beamed when his familiar took off to greet Mira.
while Harry trotted towards him.

“It’s good to see ya’ ‘arry.” Hagrid said, smiling brightly as Harry grinned up at him.

“How have you been, Hagrid?” Harry asked, happily sitting down on the steps to Hagrid’s hut.

“I’ve been good! Got me a new wand an’ everythin’ after my lawyer settled the mat’er ‘bout me expulsion. ‘m allowed to take some classes now an’ Professor McGonagall an’ a few others are gonna teach me over the summer; start gettin’ me caught up.” Hagrid explained, proudly pulling out a rather handsome chestnut wand.

“That’s great Hagrid! I’m glad things are looking up for you.” Harry said, beaming as the large man smiled happily and put his wand away once more.

Hagrid happily told Harry about the various creatures he’s spotted in the forest. He talked about the health of the Fire Lizards living near the lake and informed them that some of them have officially moved away and likely went to Harry’s family’s estate. He also mentioned the arrival of several new Fire Lizards, in which Harry told him that they’re likely from the estate. However, Harry became concerned when Hagrid sadly mentioned that something appears to be hunting some of the Unicorns in the forest. He found a faint trail of Unicorn blood one evening and two nights later Rowan had come and had taken him further into the forest where they had discovered the dead body of a male Unicorn. Neither the Centaurs nor Hagrid have been able to discover what had attacked and killed the stallion.

“Were there any wounds on the body?” Harry asked, frowning as Hagrid sighed and tilted his head.

“It looked like someone was drinkin’ the Unicorn’s blood. Norbert said he could sense death an’ decay around the Unicorn but it didn’t belong to the Unicorn.” Hagrid said, lightly scratching his head as he puzzled over his familiar’s words.

“So something other than the Unicorn was radiating death and decay; likely the attacker.” Harry said, Hagrid blinking before he nodded lightly.

“I suppose.”

They talked for a while longer about Harry’s classes, his friends; in which Hagrid was surprised and proud that he’s making friends with Slytherins as well, the latest articles in the paper and various other topics. However, Harry was shocked when Hagrid appeared to suddenly remember something and pulled out a crudely wrapped package. He raised an eyebrow when the large, gentle man handed the package to him.

“Hagrid?” He asked, looking at the small package before looking up at Hagrid.

“It’s a gift; somethin’ to say thank ya for helpin’ me find Norbert an’ gettin’ the mat’er settled with me schooling.” Hagrid said, watching as Harry’s face softened and he smiled softly.

“You don’t have to thank me, Hagrid. You’re my friend.” Harry said, though he pulled out a small pocket knife Sirius had gotten him for Christmas and cut off the rope which held together the paper.

Mira flew over and perched on his shoulders, peering down at the present with interest while Norbert landed on Hagrid’s shoulders and rumbled in content. Tearing off the paper, Harry’s eyes widened when he saw a small, brown leather pouch with two pull ties. However, the ties were in such a way that they could be connected on the other ends and form a kind of necklace. Harry could feel the magic radiating from the pouch and instantly knew that this wasn’t an ordinary pouch at all.
“It’s a Mokeskin pouch an’ it’s bottomless too. Thought ya’d like it more than some book or somethin’.” Hagrid said, smiling as Harry looked up at him and beamed.

“Thanks, Hagrid! This—This is an amazing gift.” Harry said, already thinking of everything he could keep safe and hidden in the bag.

[You could keep many things hidden from others. I would have your father look at all the enchantments on the bag.] Mira suggest, Harry nodding slightly.

[I need to give Hagrid something for this. This…this is priceless! I was wondering where I would hide the Sorcerer’s Stone when I finally got it. This answers that question.] Harry responded, Mira rumbling in agreement.

Harry spent some more time with Hagrid and learned more about what the gentle half-Giant liked to do in his free time. He happily took Hagrid up on his offer for lunch and stepped inside the slightly camped but welcoming hut. Hagrid soon had a plate of rather…interesting looking sandwiches and what seemed like a bowl of tea. Though the bowl is actually a mug that had simply been made to be a proper size for someone of Hagrid’s size. Harry sent a note with Mira to Dean so none of his friends would worry about where he is, though he knew Dean wouldn’t worry too much since he has his own map and could easily find him. Hagrid’s cooking skills were…slightly lacking and Harry instantly knew what to get the large man. Hagrid admitted that he enjoys cooking even though he doesn’t look like he would. Harry made a note to order a few different cookbooks for Hagrid since he figures that the man would benefit from learning how to make some actual good tasting food that’s edible to others besides himself.

After lunch, Harry finally said his goodbyes and promised to stop by again soon. Heading back to the castle, Harry met up with the others in the library where he told them about the pouch Hagrid had given him. All of them were happy that Hagrid has a wand and will be continuing his education during the summer. It was Daphne who really pointed out the many uses for a Mokeskin pouch like Harry was given and all of them agreed that it was a great gift. Hermione felt rather guilty for not having visited Hagrid as much as she should’ve, to which Dean and Neville agreed. Once their assignments were completed, they headed back up to the Room to work on some of the new spells the twins had taught them. Daphne’s parents had also given her a rather interesting book on various cantrips for beautifying oneself and getting ready for photos. All of them had a ton of fun testing out the various charms like the teeth glint and blushing charms along with various hair styling charms. The twins demanded to try a charm which made your cloak billow and had the others nearly on the ground as they strutted around the room striking various poses.

It was while his friends were distracted by the twins did Harry write a note to his parents and give the note and the Mokeskin pouch to Mira. If his parents thought that the pouch would effectively hide the Sorcerer’s Stone then that’s where he’ll keep it once he manages to somehow acquire it. Since bringing Hermione, Neville and the twins in on the mission, Hermione has been trying to help him find a solid way to effectively convince the headmaster that the stone had been destroyed. None of them know if the stone would appear out of the mirror if it was destroyed or if the destruction of the mirror would mean the destruction of the stone. They don’t want to take any chances when it comes to convincing Dumbledore that the stone is destroyed and it would lift the large target that Dumbledore had placed over Hogwarts. Merlin, it will remove the target off of the Flamels as well.

All of them settled down and eventually got back to finishing the last of their assignments and little projects. The twins made good use of the potions stations which the Room provided and they were also extremely grateful for the ingredients that were provided as well. Since they’ve stopped ‘fudging’ their classwork, their grades have skyrocketed even though they had gotten a letter from their Mum scolding them for dropping Care of Magical Creatures and Divination. Instead they
decided to take Ancient Runes and Arithmancy which will only help them further in their desired
career choice. Hermione, Blaise and Millicent loved watching the twins and asked them plenty of
questions about what they were making and the properties of the potion or salve that they’re
brewing. Thankfully the twins didn’t mind answering their questions and often had them help
prepare various ingredients for them.

It was during the last bit of their study time when Mira teleported in with a short note from his
parents. Harry waved off the concerns and curious looks from his friends and tucked his new pouch
into one of his pockets. Casting a privacy charm around him, Harry opened the note and began
reading:

Harry,

This pouch could be highly useful for you and your friends. We had two of our Enchanters examine
the pouch and it is heavily enchanted. No one but yourself can open the pouch and, it is indeed
bottomless and weightless. Not only that, but it essentially takes the item and places it into its own
magic space, making it undetectable by anyone else no matter what spells are used to try and detect
something on a person’s body. Our Enchanters have layered an invisibility ward onto the bag. Once
it touches your skin it will turn invisible to everyone aside from yourself.

Both of us think that this is an ideal thing to use for hiding the Sorcerer’s Stone. Nickolas is working
on a fake stone for you to destroy. It will take a lot to convince Albus that the stone was destroyed.
We should have a suitable replacement after Easter. Nickolas and his wife are working together and
are getting their affairs in order. They plan on safely destroying the stone once you and Dean
complete the mission. They both agree that they have lived long enough and it’s time to move onto
the next great adventure.

On a less serious note: your mother and I are extremely proud of your grades. Minerva has
approached us about possibly placing you in advanced classes but we both know that that will only
draw more attention to you; attention that you don’t want. The Daily Prophet has been asking for an
article about how you’re schooling is going thus far but we’ve managed to hold them off by
reminding them that we have a contract with them that can easily be broken and we can easily sign
a contact with other papers such as the Quibbler. You can imagine how they responded to that.

As for your continued concerns about Quirrell and his ability to teach, we’ve sent your concerns to
Augusta and Lord Abbott. Both of them have attempted to speak with Albus but he is adamant that
the scores in Defense are just fine. I have one of our people in the Department of Education trying to
look into the notes and scores of the different classes and years. Lord Abbott and Augusta can only
step in if the scores show a sharp decline. It is our hope that they’re able to find something that
warrants Quirrell’s dismissal.

Keep up the good work and don’t forget to write. Tell Dean to write his mother and siblings more;
to call them better yet. He seems to have forgotten to call and write as often as he promised to.

Love,

Your dad

Harry tucked away the note for later though he gave Dean, Hermione, Neville, Fred and George a
meaningful look to which they nodded slightly. With Nickolas and his wife working on a
replacement stone, that took a lot of stress and worry off of them. Besides, Nickolas obviously
knows more about the stone than any of them possibly could and could, therefore, better replicate it
and what it would look like when destroyed. All he had to hope for was a way to either release his
magic in a powerful enough burst to destroy the copy or find a way to fire a spell strong enough to
shatter it. If he was dueling with someone for the stone he’d have an easier way and reason to fire a spell and have it ‘stray’ enough to hit the stone. The others were rather curious about what the note said, though they didn’t ask him about it; figuring that if it was something important then he’d tell them.

“So, Harry, Dean was telling us that you’re skilled at Quidditch.” Blaise said, grinning as the black haired boy looked at him.

“Yeah, I’m not that bad as a Seeker.” Harry said, rolling his eyes as Dean snorted.

“Not that bad?! Harry, you’re bloody brilliant as Seeker. One time he caught a Snitch in less than two minutes! His mum refuses to watch him on a broom because he pulls tricks and stunts that only professionals will dare to try.” Dean exclaimed, grinning as Harry’s face turned red in embarrassment.

“He’s already promised to try out for the team next year.” Fred said, pride in his voice as Hermione shook her head.

“Honestly, boys.” She huffed, making Dean, Neville and Blaise laugh.

“Flint’s captain of the Slytherin team. I can tell you already that he doesn’t let girls on the team and mostly picks brawn over brains. So long as you’re excellent at dodging, you’ll stand a good chance against our team.” Tracy said, scowling as she thought of the large, older Slytherin.

“We’ll see what happens.” Harry said, shrugging lightly as Dean chuckled and shook his head at his friend’s modesty.

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March arrived and the last of the snow finally melted much to the relief of the students. Fifth and Seventh Years especially took to the warmer weather and many were often seen outside wandering around the lawns in an attempt to distract themselves from their impending exams. Neville was more than happy to receive frequent letters and calls from his parents. Apparently his great uncle Algie had been shocked when he learned that his parents are awake and perfectly healthy. Algernon hadn’t wanted to believe it but when Alice sent him a howler scolding him for his past treatment towards Neville, he was forced to admit that the Daily Prophet hadn’t been lying and had sent Neville a long letter apologizing for the way he treated his great nephew. There were some stories about a few Death Eaters who were appealing to Lord Dowell about getting their sentences reduced or getting on parole, though the lawyer was proving to be rather picky about which cases he took on. True to his word, though, he point-blank refused to take cases of those Death Eaters who rioted against the guards or caused trouble in prison.

Draco seemed much happier and was, once more, strutting around with confidence and a higher-than-thou attitude. There were a few incidents where he sneered and attempted to sabotage Harry, Neville and Hermione. However, he seemed to be learning from Spencer and was beginning to get others to attempt to attack Harry and his friends. He apparently loved winding Ronald up and somehow managed to point the redhead towards Harry, Hermione and Neville. Fred and George were all too happy to distract Percy or some of the professors in order for Harry, Dean and even Jillian and Eliana to prank their little, annoying brother. They were also more than happy to take the fall for their younger friends. Harry honestly began to dread the end of the year since that meant that Ginerva would be old enough to finally attend Hogwarts and he’ll have to deal with the little redhead making cow eyes at him.

Plans were also being made for Easter break. The twins, sadly, couldn’t escape the clutches of their
mother and honestly did want to go home for the week. Harry completely understood, though he made sure that the twins understood that they’ll be expected to keep up their training and workouts on their own time. Hermione and Neville will be returning to the estate with Harry and Dean though much of Neville’s time will be spent with his parents who were going to be spending the week at the estate to get to know Harry better. Susan and Hannah were planning on going on vacation to Italy with Hannah’s parents and Amelia will be joining them for a few days. Daphne, Tracy and Millicent weren’t going anywhere special, just spending more time with their family. Blaise explained that he and his mum will be heading to Italy as well to visit some relatives, in which Susan and Hannah were more than happy to attempt to plan to meet up with the dark skinned Italian. Jillian complained about some of the meetings her mother will likely be in, though they have to go to Romania because of said meetings so she won’t be completely bored. Eliana had to deal with the same thing, though her family is going to head to Greece in order to meet up with another group of Sirens and some of her relatives.

There was a noticeable excitement in the air of the school the closer April thirteenth came. On the thirteenth students going home left early in the morning and would remain home until the twentieth when the Hogwarts Express brought them back. The week home was much needed, especially with the ever looming exams. Sadly, Albus couldn’t keep his crooked nose out of Harry’s business and Harry found himself, once more, summoned to the headmaster’s office. It wasn’t that surprising when Albus attempted to dismiss Minerva when he saw her enter his office but she and Harry were quick to remind him, once more, that she has to stay. Harry was rather annoyed when the headmaster tried to ‘convince’ him that it wasn’t safe for him to go home for the holiday.

“Professor, once again you have no say as to where I spend my holidays. As for my safety, I have one question to ask you: how can you continue to claim my family’s estate isn’t safe when you have never been able to locate it? No one outside of my family and close friends has ever set foot on our estate. Unless, of course, you’re telling me that you’ve had people attempting to spy on my family?” Harry asked, narrowing his eyes as Albus’ eyes widened in shock.

“N-No, of course not, Harry-”

“Then the family estate should be just as safe as it always has been. Also, Headmaster, I’ve told you time and time again that I do not appreciate the familiarity you take with me. Unless, of course, you’re giving me leave to use your name, Albus.” Harry said, fighting back the urge to smirk as the headmaster looked rather flustered.

“Mind your tone, Potter! You’re just as arrogant as your father.” Severus snapped, loathing in his voice as Harry looked at the pale man with a raised eyebrow.

“Considering I never knew my biological father you have no base to insult me like that, Professor. My adopted father is a very kind and fair man.” Harry said, watching as a faint flicker of pride flashed through Severus’ eyes even though his scowl deepened.

“Now H-Mister Potter.” Albus admonished, making Harry roll his eyes.

“It’s Potter-Othello, Headmaster. Just like I told you last time. Now, unless there’s an honest reason for me being here then I have some assignments to finish.” Harry said, meeting the Headmaster’s gaze dead-on.

He easily batted away the Legilimency probe which made Albus flinch slightly. However, Albus wisely dismissed Harry and Minerva, making them shake their heads as they walked out of the office. Harry was rather disturbed that the headmaster continued to try and keep him away from his family, though he also understood why he’d want to do that. His family has always been one of the few who aren’t firmly in the headmaster’s ‘camp’ so to say. Professor Snape had told him that Albus
was surprised that he hadn’t attempted to get onto the Quidditch team this year and the aged Wizard is actually wondering if he has his dad’s talent in flying and Quidditch. Harry had scoffed at that and was greatly disturbed with how the headmaster has a tendency to compare him to his parents. Many of the senior staff members have been talking about his grades already and Professor McGonagall has already told him that they’re wondering if he’ll be like his mother had been when he’s finally old enough for their classes.

It’s annoying that so many people seem content to compare him to his parents. Yes, he understands that they’re war heroes but that doesn’t suddenly give them the right to compare him to them. He’s his own person and has his strengths and weaknesses just like everyone else does. Yes, his parents were powerful and were great people, but they had their flaws and it’s one of his pet peeves being compared to them all the time. It’s one of the main reasons why he hates being called the Boy-Who-Lived. It’s a constant reminder that his parents had died and he had survived. What people also tend to forget is that it had likely been his mother’s work that allowed him to survive the killing curse. He’s just glad that his dad had gotten his birth parents honored with Orders of Merlin which are now in his family vault in places of honor. He has plans to have the medals moved to whichever Potter property he’ll call home when he comes of age.

“He’ll never quit, will he?” Harry asked, looking up at his Head of House.

“No, I don’t think he will. You play a major role in all of his plans. Without you, they’ll crash and burn and, in his mind, so will our world. I believe he no longer thinks you have a Horcrux trapped behind your scar. He was rather…alarmed and shocked when you arrived at school without your famous scar.” Minerva said, making Harry snort and shake his head.

“He’s a fool. He believes that he’s the only one who can know everything about Riddle and what he did to remain alive. I bet he hasn’t even been looking for any other Horcruxes.” Harry said, disgust in his voice as Minerva nodded lightly.

“Severus told me that Sirius had found one in Grimmauld Place a while ago. A locket that had once belonged to Slytherin I believe?” She asked, Harry nodding his head.

“Yeah. He found it hidden in Kreacher’s old ‘room’. He brought it to Dad and they, with the help of the Goblins, removed Riddle’s soul piece. This time, though, they trapped it and the Goblins are trying to use it to hunt down the others. They want to see Riddle’s destruction just as much as we do.” Harry answered, making his professor shake her head.

“I would be more cautious, Mister Potter-Othello.”

Minerva and Harry turned and watched as Severus walked towards them, his cloak billowing behind him as always.

“What do you mean?” Harry asked, frowning as Severus flicked his hand and expanded the privacy shield around them.

“Albus is becoming…frustrated with your lack of loyalty and admiration towards him. He had been hoping that you would see him as a kind of mentor and would respect him like many others do simply because of his name, titles and history. However, the fact that you’re not is-“

“Setting him on edge.” Harry finished, the Potions Master inclining his head slightly.

“My point is, watch your food and drinks. I advise that your friends do the same. He is also most… displeased that you haven’t made any move to become closer to Ronald Weasley. The plan was for the boy to chase away any other potential friends from getting close to you and he would keep you
humble because of his family’s lack of wealth. However, he is glad to see that you are at least friends with the twins though he wishes they were more…under his thumb.” Severus said, making Harry and Minerva shake their heads in disbelief.

“Mum and Dad taught Dean and I enough detection charms they poured from our ears. However, mine and Dean’s rings and the charm bracelets that the girls wear should protect them as well. Neville has his heir’s ring and so does Blaise. We’ll still keep a look out though. Thank you for the warning, Sir.” Harry said, Severus nodding slightly before he swept away down another hall.

“I wish I knew how he did that.” Harry said, frowning as he watched the man’s cloak snap around his heels and flare around him.

Minerva laughed softly at that, hiding her mouth behind her hand as Harry huffed. They eventually split up and Harry thanked Minerva for sticking by his side and ensuring that he wasn’t alone with the headmaster. He met up with his friend in the library and told them about the meeting with the headmaster. All of them were shocked at the sheer audacity that the headmaster had in trying to convince Harry that his own family couldn’t keep him safe. Hermione was very disturbed that the headmaster was taking a rather…unhealthy interest in Harry. It was hard for her to wrap her mind around the fact that Professor Dumbledore wasn’t everything that she had read about the man. Her ingrained trust and faith in authority has been seriously tested since coming to Hogwarts. The headmaster is more like a story-tale villain in the way he keeps trying to pull the strings behind the scene. She knows that the man has a lot of titles and power; something that can and has corrupted the best of men in history before. However, it’s…it’s just hard for her to accept some of the things he has tried to do to her friend in the past.

Thankfully life continued as normal as possible for children attending a school that taught magic. Hermione started panicking late March about exams and started coming up with a study schedule. Of course the others rallied around Hermione and attempted to calm her down; reminding her that there’s still plenty of time before exams since they aren’t until the first week of June. Fred and George, thankfully, came to the rescue by way of having Hermione help the Fifth and Seventh Years in their House come up with study schedules that’ll help them prepare for their O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s. It wasn’t uncommon to find Hermione talking to a group of older students with a calendar on the table while the older students had planners out on the table with quills in hand. This managed to stop Hermione from stressing about her own exams and she thankfully realized that her friends were right. Though she did get them to agree to let her make up a study schedule for all of them after Easter break.

April finally arrived and brought a pleasant surprise for Harry. Sirius and Kano had finally settled on a wedding date and he and his friends got to get out of the school during a Hogsmeade visit to see the grand opening of the second store of P&M Jokes and Games. Remus already plans on running this shop while Sirius handles the original shop in Diagon Alley. The owners of Zonko’s didn’t look too happy from where they stood watching the ceremony from the front door of their shop though they didn’t look hostile. Of course they knew that Gambol and Japes in Diagon Alley considered P&M huge competition. What made them nervous was the fact that the owners of Gambol and Japes had reported a huge loss in business because of P&M and they’ve actually had to downsize because of it. Now that competition has arrived here and they’ve already had competition from Wonderland Toys which is a rather nice toy shop that had opened a few years ago ever since more and more people began moving here to the village.

Fred and George were proud to see some of their products on the shelves in the store. Remus pulled them aside and reassured them that they’ll be getting a cut of the profit from each item they had helped to alter or had designed every time one was sold. The twins hugged the older man with tears in their eyes; hardly able to believe that their dreams really are coming true. Their Dad had set them
up with their own vault the day they had told him about the contract they had signed with Remus and Sirius. Now they won’t have to burden their parents with having to pay for their school supplies and sending them to college. They both want to get degrees in business and finance to better help them be prepared to become full partners with Remus and Sirius or even open up their own business in the future.

“Mum will go ballistic when she learns how much we’re making.” George said, watching as children and their schoolmates filled the shop and the noise level increased with their excitement.

“Dad will be happy for us though.” Fred said, his brother nodding in agreement as Hermione shook her head.

“I just can’t believe your mother would be so against you doing what you love. Being part of a big business is a great accomplishment and you’re also inventing products.” Hermione said, the twins shrugging lightly.

“She just thinks that in order to have a good, comfortable life you need to have a solid career in the Ministry. She’s only just realized that Charlie’s not going to quit his ‘hobby’ and get a job in the Ministry. He’s happiest with the Dragons and loves what he does; same with Bill. You can bet that she wasn’t too happy when he was snatched up by the Goblins. But Bill is one of the most sought after Curse Breakers now. Mum is steadily realizing that he’s well respected, even by the Ministry.” Fred explained, the others listening intently.

Harry was always rather shocked and, quite frankly, appalled whenever the twins told him and the others more about their mother. For a mother to try and push her children towards a career that she wants them to take is…well it’s horrible to think about. That will only drive the children away faster and he had a feeling that Bill and Charlie fled the country to get away from Molly’s iron fist. He was glad that Mister Weasley seemed to be taking control once more; a marriage should be a partnership not a dictatorship. He shuddered to think of what Ginerva is like and how she would be in any kind of romantic relationship. He had a feeling that she would try to take control of the relationship just like her mother does.

“We should start packing up for the holiday. There’s only three more days!” Jillian said, making the others chuckle at her excitement.

The thirteenth of April finally arrived and the students were up bright and early; eager to get away from the school for a week. There were very little people who plan on staying behind and Harry learned from Hagrid that those who are will actually be taken to Diagon Alley to stay in the Leaky Cauldron while the professors perform an inspection of the dorms and do some deep cleaning of the school. According to the gentle half-Giant, the entire castle gets fumigated during the summer holiday which is why no student is allowed to stay over the summer. After a hurried breakfast, the students all made their way out of the castle and to the waiting carriages. Susan led them to a compartment and they were glad that the Hogwarts Express is enchanted so its compartments actually expand so it can seat enough people. Fred and George stayed with them for a little while before they headed to another compartment with their other friends. Surprisingly, Draco and Ronald didn’t bother them at all during the entire train ride. It was a very welcomed change.

All of them were getting antsy the longer the train ride lasted and they began glancing at their watches or eagerly looking out the window as the world flew past them. Conversations were filled with what they hoped to do or see during the holiday or what they hoped to do for Easter. When the conductor came on the intercom and announced they’ll be arriving soon, everyone hurried to pack up whatever they had pulled out and to shrink their trunks and store them away safely. Peering outside,
they groaned when they saw the cloudy, overcast sky. Hermione cracked open the window and they could smell the tell-tale scent of impending rain. Shutting the window, they anxiously waited and watched as the train slowed down and finally pulled into the station before coming to a stop. Like always, it took a few minutes for them to get out onto the platform due to the crowds of students trying to push their way off of the train. On the platform, they all noticed that a lot of the adults were glancing towards a back section of the platform. The twins were the one to spot what was going on and hurriedly explained that Neville’s parents are on the platform. Neville quickly said his goodbyes to the others and hurried through the crowds to get to his parents, which made the others smile.

“Have fun at your new place.” Hermione said, smiling as she reached up and hugged Fred before hugging George.

“Thanks. Don’t stress about your exams yet.” George said, smirking as Hermione flushed and rolled her eyes at him.

“We’ll make sure she doesn’t.” Dean said, chuckling as Hermione punched his arm.

The twins headed off and rejoined their family, to which Harry spotted Molly fussing over Ronald while Ginerva kept looking around the platform as if she were searching for someone. Harry groaned softly; instantly knowing that she was likely hoping to catch sight of him. He, Dean and Hermione said goodbye to Jillian, Eliana, Hannah, Susan and the others. All of them promised to keep in touch before splitting up and heading through the crowds in order to find their parent(s) or guardian(s).

Harry, Dean and Hermione made their way in the direction Neville had gone in and soon found Sirius, Cassie and Emma waiting for them along with Frank and Alice. Neville happily introduced them to his parents and Harry found himself choked up at seeing his godmother standing there happy and healthy. Alice, instead of saying anything, smiling warmly at Harry and pulled him into a warm hug. Harry closed his eyes and swallowed back tears as he hugged her back. Pulling away, he swallowed heavily and smiled up at Alice, making her smile warmly back at him.

“Come on, let’s get out of here.” Sirius said, the others nodding their agreement.

Sirius pulled out a portkey and waited until all of them had a hold of it before activating the device. As soon as they touched down in the entry hall of the manor, Harry was bowled over by Eliza as she squealed his name. Dean found himself mobbed by his siblings and Ricki was soon jumping out of his human’s pocket and watching from a safe distance as was Mira while the two boys were hugged and bombarded by questions. Kano arrived when she heard the commotion and laughed when she saw her two students fending off questions. Harry, however, looked around for his parents before looking at Kano with a questioning glance.

“Business. I know it’s not fun, Harry.” She said, sympathy in her voice as Harry nodded.

“I know, I understand.” Harry said, his smile slightly strained as Eliza hugged him tightly while Sirius ruffled his godson’s hair.

Harry, Dean, Hermione and Neville headed off to their rooms, or in Dean’s case: house, to put away their things. Neville was pleased to see that they had been given a small ‘apartment’ in the manor for the holiday. Alice and Frank happily told their son about everything they’ve done so far, including the fact that Frank has retaken his seat on the Wizengamot and officially hand in their resignation to Amelia.

“The award ceremony will be a few days before Easter. Thankfully we won’t be expected to stay around for the entire ceremony.” Alice explained, Neville nodding his head in understanding and acceptance.
“Did you tell our other relatives?” Neville asked, Frank nodding as he watched his son unpack his supplies to study.

“Yes. Your aunt Nadine was shocked to see us but she was happy. Your cousin Markus didn’t really remember us since he was a newborn when he last saw us.” Alice answered, Neville listening intently.

“Will we be visiting them over the summer?”

“Of course. Lucas and Delilah explained that your training can take place after any trips we want to take. I know that Emma is hoping to take Hermione on a trip to France this summer and then there’s Sirius and Kano’s wedding at the end of the summer.” Alice explained, watching as her son smiled happily.

“Good. I know Harry wants to go to some of his homes this summer. He’s told us about the different houses and countries where his homes are located.” Neville said, excitement in his voice as his parents chuckled.

Meanwhile, Hermione happily answered her mum’s questions about how school is going. Emma smiled as her daughter chatted away about her friends, classes and professors. It’s such a nice change seeing her normally shy and quiet daughter to happy and bubbly. Hermione has completely changed from when she and Richard had sent her off on September. She had been shocked on how quickly and painlessly her divorce had been and everything had been finalized once she and Richard had settled their affairs. After that, their case had settled quickly and she’s now Emma Mayweather once more.

“Mum, is the divorce really finalized?” Hermione asked, making her mother blink a few times to clear her mind.

“Yes, it is. I’ve also opened a vault in Gringotts and got all of our money transferred there. You also have a separate vault for yourself which holds your school fund and the money Richard and I had put away for you as a college fund.” Emma explained, smiling gently as Hermione looked at her with surprise before hugging her.

“I’m glad things happened so quickly.” Hermione said, pulling back and smiling as her mum kissed her forehead.

“So am I, sweetie. Richard didn’t fight anything and has agreed on the amount for child support that our lawyers set. Apparently he’s going to sell the house and move closer to his sister. He also has to find some replacements for employees. Apparently Miranda, Chris and Piper didn’t take too well to his treatment of us and quit.” Emma explained, Hermione’s eyes widening in surprise.

“I…I didn’t expect that.” Hermione muttered, Emma nodding her head in agreement.

“I know. I feel bad for Richard so I gave him some recommendations to a few people who can take their place. I don’t want him to fail in the business.” Emma said, Hermione humming lightly as she went back to unpacking and put her dirty clothes into a hamper.

“So, how has your training been?” Emma asked, smiling as Hermione lit up and began chatting away about her training.

In his room, Harry sighed softly as he put his things away while Mira looked out the window. Yes, he knows that his parents have very important jobs and that he’ll likely have the very same job when he’s an adult. However, sometimes he wishes that his parents don’t have to go on missions. An
overwhelming sense of anxiety would fill him while his parents were out on missions and he couldn’t make himself relax until both of them came home. His parents had told him the dangers of their ‘jobs’ when he was old enough to understand. He knows that there is always the chance that a mission will go wrong and both of them could die during a mission. If that happened then Sirius would take full custody of him and Kano would take custody of Eliza. New leaders would be sought for the Brotherhood and life would carry on as normal. Harry never wanted Eliza to go through life without knowing her biological parents like he has. Yes, Sirius, Remus, his parents, Minerva and a few others have done their best to ensure he knows his biological parents. But…it just isn’t the same.

“How goes your mission?” Kano asked, making Harry look up at her sharply in surprise.

“Huh? Oh! It’s slow going, since Professors Snape and McGonagall haven’t noticed anything strange. Tonks has been helping Professor Snape train Dean and I in dueling and how to, hopefully, last long enough in case we find ourselves up against one of Riddle’s manic followers who is trying to steal the stone. Hopefully Dean and I can get in, find and acquire the stone, destroy the fake and get out without too much trouble. Hermione, Neville and the twins want to help us as well.” Harry explained, pulling out the last of his books and setting them on his desk neatly.

“Sometimes it’s good to be over prepared in a mission. All of us are very proud of how you’re doing in school and Minerva and Severus are very impressed with your training.” Kano said, pride in her voice as Harry flushed and looked down at the ground bashfully.

“I…I’ve noticed that Elliot has been falling behind in training.” Harry said, watching as Kano sighed and blew her bangs out of her eyes.

“Normally we don’t talk about the training of other trainees but Elliot is a part of your peer group. He is falling behind in his training and isn’t keeping up with his morning runs or other workouts. He knows that he needs to keep up his workouts and he hasn’t. Minerva and Severus are going to be speaking with his father about this tomorrow. If he continues to fall behind then he’ll likely be removed from training. He’s not taking things seriously and he’s also doing poorly in his classes.” Kano said, Harry frowning as he thought of the other boy.

“I just…I don’t understand him. Elliot has bothered Dean and I during training and when Hermione, Neville and the twins joined us he would make snide comments to them about how he so much more advanced than them. It’s kind of funny though, Hermione flattened him in sparring on her fourth day of training.” Harry said, smirking lightly at the memory.

“Mind yourself, Harry. It’s not nice to make fun of others.” Kano warned, watching as the boy flushed and ducked his head.

“Sorry.”

“Now, go shower and change. We’re going out tonight for dinner.” She said, standing up from the edge of the bed where she had been seated.

Meanwhile at the Burrow, Fred and George seriously contemplated diving for the fireplace in the living room and flooing to the Estate. They haven’t been home for more than two hours and already their mum is breathing down their backs about their rooms and workroom. She also snipped at them for their abhorrent behavior towards Ron and the fact that they haven’t done anything to get Harry to even begin to accept their little brother into his circle of friends. Thankfully Ronnikins had dug his own grave with that one. She had been harping about them when Ron had mentioned seeing them head off with Harry and his group of friends but Ron had interjected with a snide comment that made their mum turn her ire towards the youngest male Weasley.
“It’s not like I want to be a part of their group anymore. Sure Potter’s loaded and there’s a hot Siren but they’re constantly studying or exploring the school. Lavender and Parvati told me that the bookworm Granger has begun waking up early to go on morning runs and to workout in the gym with them. Bloody mental they are; getting up at five in the morning.” Ron scoffed, blinking when Molly turned towards him.

“If you would get up that early then you could have joined them, Ronald! Besides, according to Professor McGonagall you’re just barely passing your classes. What have your father and I told you about improving your grades?!” Molly hissed, her eyes narrowing as her youngest son slowly shrank down in his seat.

Fred and George had taken the opportunity presented to them and had booked it out of the kitchen and hurried up to their rooms. There they set about arranging the rooms to their liking and adding personal touches from the boxes of things that had been saved from the old house. Percy, the lucky git, had managed to escape to his new room a few minutes after they came home so had been blissfully spared their mother’s shrieking voice. The twins, after personalizing their rooms, met up in their workroom where they locked and warded the doors. Looking around, they were greatly pleased at what they saw. There are two potions workbenches with spots to hold three cauldrons on each bench. A door near the back of the room led to a small private storage room which also held a decent amount of potions ingredients already. There’s a counter at the back of the room with two cleaning stations and more cupboards for storage. There are also four more plain workbenches for them to work on various projects. The twins were also pleased to see stacks of journals and parchment along with Dicta-Quills so they can take notes about their projects.

“We have to repay Dad for this.” Fred said, looking around in wonder.

“Totally. No wonder why he hasn’t let Mum come in here. She’d go mental if she saw how much we can get done in here.” George muttered, grinning as he looked over the small storage room.

“We’ll, the door’s locked to our magical signatures and blood so none of them will be allowed inside. Dad’s already explained that we’re to keep this place clean.” Fred said, his twin nodding in agreement.

“Look, the builders also included a ventilation shaft.” Fred added, nodding towards the metal grating.

“Good thing too. Remember that one time when Mum found out we were experimenting due to the fumes coming from our room? We accidently rotted the floor below Ronnie’s bed.” George said, smirking while his twin laughed.

“Completely worth it.” They chimed, grinning as they high-fived each other.

Before they could do or say anything else, a knock came at one of the doors; from Fred’s room. Frowning, they looked at each other before they noticed a small painting on the wall between the two doors. It’s split in half and it took the twins a moment to realize that the painting looked out to both of their rooms: Fred’s on the right and George’s on the left. Fred’s half showed Ginny standing at the door to the workroom, a slight pout on her face as she tapped her foot on the floor.

“Fred, George, open up! Mum want’s us all downstairs to go over the new chores list.” Ginny called, knocking once more as the twins looked at each other.

“Neat.” They said, another smile crossing their faces before they walked to the door and opened it.

Ginny tried to peek into the twins’ workroom but was forced to back up less they knock her over. Looking up at them, she frowned when she saw the knowing looks on their faces. Instead of saying
anything, the little redhead huffed and walked out of the room and into the hallway. The twins rolled their eyes before they too headed out of the bedroom and downstairs.

“Definitely gonna have to keep her, Ronnikins and Mum out of the workroom.” George muttered, his brother nodding.

“Definitely.”

-XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX-
Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Harry Potter and co. don’t belong to me. Assassin’s Creed and co. don’t belong to me. I’m just taking some credit for the plot and original characters. Fire Lizards belong to the talented Anne McCaffrey. In no way, shape or form am I making money from this.

Main Story Warnings: A.U.-severe-, characters are OOC, canon is only a minor guideline, crossover, swearing, violence, gore, character death, Light Grey!Harry, Assassin!Harry, modern technology, OC’s abound, Ron!Molly!Ginny!Bashing, Dumbledore!Bashing

Pairings: James/Lily, Sirius/OFC, Remus/Surprise, Harry/Luna, Neville/Hermione, Dean/Millicent, others to be decided

Author’s Note: Hoo-boy! We’re here everyone! The final confrontation where everything comes to light! Now, as I mentioned in the last chapter I can only see one more chapter after this one; two if I really stretch it. I am using a lot of the dialogue from the actual book, especially Quirrell’s and Voldemort’s lines. Obviously things have been changed and I’ve taken some liberties with a few things but hopefully it’s worked!

Challenge: DZ2’s Way of the Warrior challenge. For more information look to the first chapter or DZ2’s forums.

-Thoughts-

[Parseltongue]

[Telepathic Speech]

Emphasis on words/Spells

Text

-Molly sighed as she watched her husband leave for work. Things between them have been…strained to put it nicely since Christmas. She had never thought that Harry and his parents would be able to detect the loyalty potion she had put in the mincemeat pies or the compulsion charm she had placed on the sweater. When Arthur had gotten the letter from Lord Othello warning him against it happening again, he had blown up. That was the maddest she had ever seen her normally calm and sweet minded husband get. Arthur had torn through the hotel room and had found the extra vials of-
potion she had kept and had destroyed them while ranting and raving at her for doing such a thing. She had attempted to placate him, but Arthur hadn’t backed down. Instead he made her swear an oath to never make another loyalty or love potion or to lace anything with any kind of emotion or mind altering spell/charm. She had tried to bluster her way through it but she had been shocked and terrified when Arthur explained that the Othellos would charge them with attempted line theft if something like that ever happened again.

Line theft is one of the worst things that a person or family could be charged with. A couple hundred years ago it was common for families to use love potions, loyalty potions and compulsion charms in order to get people to sign betrothal contracts which would allow one party to completely take over the other party’s assets and fortune. That family line would then be ‘absorbed’ into the other family and would be written off as extinct. The Ministry and Gringotts banded together and made laws which prevented such things from happening after the Founders passed away and their family lines were said to be extinct because they had been ‘absorbed’ into other families. Now certain families claim that they’re descended from the Founders though there’s a lack of proof unless they had an ancestry test performed at Gringotts which cost a pretty penny. Line theft now sees the accused family fined heavily and the person who instigated the crime thrown into prison for a minimum of ten years.

Arthur also sat Ginny down and explained that, if she wanted to date Harry, she would have to do it the old fashioned way of becoming his friend and winning his heart through interacting with him. He warned her that he will not tolerate any talk of her using love potions on the older boy. Ginny had promised that she wouldn’t, though hadn’t been made to take an oath since she doesn’t own a wand yet. Since then, Arthur has monitored what was stocked in the potions lab down in the basement and removed any recipe for any mind or emotion altering potion. He’s also taken away all of her Howler parchment, something she wasn’t too happy about. However, the worst insult had been when Arthur sat her down and explained that she now has an allowance instead of having unrestricted access to the family vault. That had hit hard. Since they were married she had never been restricted in what she could buy. Yes, some things needed her’s and Arthur’s signatures in order to buy but she was never truly restricted from the vault.

It also hurt that Bill and Charlie had been in complete agreement with the new changes that Arthur has implemented. Both of them had been shocked and horrified when they learned of what she had done and had expressed their feelings on the matter. She had also gotten, for the first time in her life, a Howler from the twins expressing their horror and disgust that she had attempted to control one of their friends. Arthur had made it worse by taking her wand away and forcing her to listen to the entire Howler while he and the children waited outside the room with a silencing charm on the door.

Of course Arthur isn’t as mad at her as he had been. However, it was painful to see the disappointment in her husband’s eyes whenever he thought she wasn’t looking. If only he knew of the plans Albus had in store for Harry and what needs to happen before the lad confronts You-Know-Who. Albus had completely backed her idea in having Harry and Ginny betrothed and wed as soon as Ginny turns seventeen. Her daughter won’t want for anything and the Potter line will remain strong and powerful. Molly had questioned James’ thinking when he had married Lily. After all, the Potters were an ancient Pureblood line that had always produced very strong and intelligent Wizards and Witches. She had learned from her parents that the Potters were rather…unconventional. They had mentioned rumors of Potters who had married Squibs or Halfbloods but she had never put much stock into it. She had been shocked when James had married a Muggleborn, even though Lily was said to be the brightest Witch of her age and rather powerful in her own right.

Now, however, it would be best for Harry to be with a Pureblood or Halfblood. It wouldn’t do for him to sire a Squib when he’s older; even though they’ve been given more rights and positions in their society. However, everything that she and Albus have done to try and nudge Harry towards her
family has been rebuffed by the Othello family and Harry himself. She had hoped that Ron would be able to get in as Harry’s friend first and would be able to keep any potential girlfriends away from the boy. Sadly, that’s not going to happen anytime soon. Now, she has to rely on the twins and their friendship with Harry in order to hopefully get Ginny into Harry’s circle of friends. Hopefully Ginny will catch Harry’s eye and discourage him from seeking romance with anyone else. With Harry marrying a Pureblood he’ll regain the respect his father had lost when he had married Lily.

“What’s Harry like?”

Molly blinked and watched as Ginny followed her brothers into the kitchen where they all took seats around the island.

“Potter’s an arrogant git.” Ron snapped, anger in his voice as Ginny looked at him with wide eyes.

“Only because he doesn’t put up with you being a prat.” Fred said, making his little brother scowl and glare at him something fierce.

“Yeah, ickle Ronnikins is just upset because Harry doesn’t let him bully Hermione and his other friends.” George said, smirking as his brother’s face steadily turned red.

“Not only that but Harry is loyal to his friends and isn’t about ready to drop them just because Ronnikins wants him to.” Fred added, Ginny listening with rapt attention.

Molly frowned lightly as she listened to all of this while plating the children’s breakfast. This just proves that she had been wrong in trying to get Ron to get close to Harry. She knows her youngest son is jealous and hasn’t quite yet gotten control of the ever famous Weasley temper. While Ginny is certainly still hot-headed, she isn’t nearly as bad as Ron. Not only that, but she knows how to control her temper and is much more subtle than her brother.

“Harrison is rather intelligent. He and his friends are the top students of their year so far. Miss Granger is also helping us older students who have O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T. s make up study schedules that’ll allow us to study and yet not over stress about things.” Percy explained, getting up to grab plates and cups for all of them.

“I think Hermione might try and sign up for tutoring next year. She’d be a great teacher.” Fred said, his twin and Percy nodding in agreement.

“And what classes will you two be continuing with?” Molly asked, looking shrewdly at her twin boys.

“We’re continuing with Ancient Runes and Arithmancy. We really like those classes and we’re doing well in them.” George answered, Fred nodding in agreement as their mum placed plates of bacon, toast, eggs, hash browns and fresh fruit on the island in front of them.

“And what about Care of Magical Creatures?” Molly asked, frowning lightly as she looked at the pair.

“We’ve dropped it.”

Molly narrowed her eyes at the twins but they quickly explained that they have no intent on picking up the class again. It’s their hope to go to college and get degrees in business and finance in order to continue to do what they love. Molly knew better than to try and convince the twins to go into a career in the Ministry. She has no idea why they’re still deadest on going into the business of making prank items and jokes. It certainly didn’t help that Arthur, Lord Black and Remus Lupin were helping and encouraging them. With their new workroom who knows what they’ll get up to in there.
What’s worse is that the workroom is warded to only allow the twins into the room. She had tried getting inside while the boys were outside playing Quidditch yesterday. She hopes that Ron will do well in school from now on so he can get a good career, hopefully in the Ministry. Of course she’s glad that Ron is doing better in school, though she wishes he’d do a little more to bring his grades up. According to Percy he doesn’t have too much time in order to keep a watch on Ron though apparently Ron’s friends are helping him improve on his study habits.

“Can a few friends come over today?” Fred asked, biting into a piece of bacon as Molly looked at him in surprise.

“Who do you want to come over?” She asked, surprised that her son wanted to have someone over.

“Harry, Hermione and Dean.” George said, making Molly’s eyes widened while Ginny dropped her fork in shock.

“H-Harry?!” Ginny gasped, shock and awe in her voice as the twins looked at each other.

Molly quickly got over her shock and gladly gave her permission to have the three children over. Ron wasn’t too happy at the thought of Hermione and Dean being over so he quickly asked if he could head over to Seamus’. Molly gave her consent and Ron happily hurried through his breakfast before running upstairs to shower and get dressed. Ginny was nearly trembling in excitement at the thought that she’ll finally be able to meet the Harry Potter. This might give her an opportunity to get close to him already without her even being in Hogwarts yet! When they all finished breakfast, Ginny quickly found herself helping her mum to clean the dishes and the kitchen while Fred and George called Harry on their communication mirrors in the living room.

“Hey, ‘Ry.” George said, grinning when Harry picked up.

“Hey, how’s break coming?” Harry asked, shifting slightly as the twins looked at each other.

“Good. Easter was great, we had a load of fun decorating eggs and such.” Fred said, watching as his brother enlarged the mirror slightly.

“So, we were wondering if you, ‘Mione and Dean would like to come over and hang out for a few hours?” George asked, watching as Harry looked at him in surprise.

“Um, let me check with them and our parents. It’d be nice to see your new house though.” Harry said, the twins nodding.

Inside the kitchen, Molly and Ginny tried not to appear to be hanging on every word that was said. Ron came back down and explained that he had called Seamus and his friend’s parents said that he could go over. Molly reminded him to behave and be back for dinner before her youngest son hurried to the fireplace and went through the floo. A few minutes later Harry confirmed that he, Dean and Hermione can come over. George happily gave their floo address to their friends before ending the connection. It was only a few minutes later when the fireplace in front of them flared and the trio walked out one at a time. Molly and Ginny hurriedly finished the dishes and dried their hands before turning and looking at the twins’ friends. Ginny instantly blushed fiercely when she saw Harry. She had expected to see a boy with messy black hair, stunning emerald eyes and a toned body. However, she wasn’t expecting this!

Harry is certainly toned; she could practically see the muscles moving underneath his shirt. His skin has a deep, golden tan which told her that her dream boy wasn’t a stranger to being outside for hours on end. His hair is shaggy and goes down to his shoulders. It looks silky and is pitch black with a few strands of blonde mixed in. However, his eyes were absolutely mesmerizing. Shockingly bright
emerald orbs which have a ring of ice blue around the outer edges. They weren’t hindered by any form of glasses and seemed to draw her in as she stared at him. He’s a decent height too, nearly matching Ron’s height though he has a more toned body than her brother. Beside him, much to her displeasure, is a rather pretty girl with brown, wavy hair and tanned skin. Her cinnamon brown eyes held intelligence and compassion and yet they were slightly guarded as well. On her other side is a rather handsome dark skinned boy. He’s taller than Harry by a few inches and his dark chocolate colored skin is stretched over muscles which only proved that what Ron said about them all working out was true. Black hair hung just past the boy’s shoulders and warm light brown eyes fairly sparkled with laughter and happiness.

“Harry, Hermione, Dean! It’s good to see you.” Fred said, clapping Harry and Dean on the shoulder before hugging Hermione.

“Same! This places looks just as great as those pictures.” Harry said, looking around with interest.

“I hope you’ve been keeping out of trouble.” Hermione admonished, hugging the twins as they chuckled and grinned.

“No now Mia-“

“Where’s the fun in that?”

“Guys, this is our mum and our little sister Ginny.” George said, stepping back so the trio could see the two female Weasleys.

Molly nearly flinched when Harry, Dean and Hermione looked at her with distrust, though she knows that she’s certainly deserved such a look. Ginny, however, was suddenly overwhelmed with an incredible bout of shyness and hid behind her mother. Hermione saw this and instantly came up with the plan of making Ginny comfortable and perhaps making the little redhead understand that Harry isn’t hers. Stepping forward, she smiled tightly at Missus Weasley before tilting her head to the side and smiling down at Ginny.

“Hello, Ginny. I’m Hermione Mayweather. Fred and George told us that you’re coming to Hogwarts in September.” She said, watching as Ginny lifted her head and looked at her.

“I am.” She said, her voice soft as Hermione smiled.

“Well, just so you don’t worry: we’re friends with a lot of students who aren’t in our House. Susan and Hannah are in Hufflepuff and Daphne, Millicent, Tracy and Blaise are in Slytherin. We study and hang out together all the time and we switch around during meals. We’re allowed to sit at other House’s tables during any meal so long as it’s not a feast.” Hermione explained, smiling as Ginny blinked and looked at her before glancing at Harry.

“T-Thanks.” She said, giving a small smile back.

“I’m Harry Potter-Othello.” Harry said, stepping up and smiling at Ginny though his eyes are slightly guarded.

“And I’m Dean Thomas-Woods.” Dean said, a light grin on his face as Ginny smiled timidly at him as she blushed lightly.

Harry, Dean and Hermione thanked Molly for letting them come over before the twins took them all on a tour around the house and grounds. All of them were impressed with the construction and design of the house and the twins admitted that it’s nice not having to fight over the bathroom in the mornings; especially since Ron took a long time in the bathroom and never bothered to be
considerate of the others. They proudly showed their friends their rooms and the workroom, to which Hermione eagerly looked around and asked plenty of questions about what they’re working on. George was more than happy to answer her questions as he followed her around the workroom which left Fred to talk with the boys.

“Our parent’s weren’t too keen on letting us come here but they know we’re protected by our rings and because we’ve been taking a Neutralizer Potion since Christmas.” Harry said, Fred nodding as he sighed.

“Dad tore into Mum and has removed all recipes that are about love potions or other potions that can be used to alter a person’s mind or emotions. He’s also put her on an allowance, something that he’s never done before. It was a shock to her and she’s terrified of what else might happen. Your dad’s threat of charging for line theft knocked some sense into her. Though she’s just been working on Gin more since she realizes that Ginny will have to ‘win’ you over the old fashioned way.” Fred said, making Harry scoff and shake his head.

“I have no desire to marry someone who loves me for my fame and fortune. I’m so much more than that.” He said, Dean and Fred nodding in agreement.

“Which is why Hermione introduced herself first, ‘Ry. She sent a message to Ginny that she’ll have to get through her in order to get to you. You can bet Jillie, Eli and the others will be the same way.” Dean said, grinning as Harry chuckled and nodded.

“Anyway, what should we do?” Harry asked, looking to Fred as George and Hermione rejoined them.

Harry, Hermione and Dean spent the day at the Burrow hanging out with the twins and even Percy. They ran around outside in the warm weather and even went swimming in the Weasley’s new pool thanks to the water being heated. Harry had called on Mira in order to get their swimsuits and also their brooms when they finished swimming. Ginny was constantly nearby, shyly watching Harry and Dean before running away with her cheeks a blazing red whenever they called out for her to join them. They also played a small game of Quidditch, was more like a game of tag on brooms. They had a great time just goofing off and hanging out outside and they even managed to watch a movie in the living room. When lunch time came around, Hermione insisted on helping Missus Weasley make lunch even though the woman protested since Hermione’s there as a guest. The others, bar Ginny, knew that Hermione was so persistent because she wanted to ensure that Molly didn’t try to slip anything into the food or drinks.

Lunch was casual; a plate of bologna sandwiches, fresh fruit and iced pumpkin juice. After lunch, they headed back outside and managed to convince Ginny to join them back in the pool. Her face was the same shade of her hair when she saw Harry and Dean without their shirts, though she finally managed to get a hold of her blush when the twins wouldn’t stop teasing her. Hermione, Harry and Dean laughed when Ginny kicked the twins, which made the two older teens yelp and hurry away from their little sister. Sadly, with Ginny’s blush in control, she seemed to become determined to try and get Harry to notice her by doing different dives into the pool or asking him for help with something. Harry didn’t want to come off as rude, so any time he helped her he kept his hands above her waist and any touches as friendly as possible. All of them could see the slight pout on her lips whenever this happened, though Hermione, Dean and the twins kept their silence and tried their best to help Harry as much as possible.

After swimming for a few hours, they headed back inside and showered off before the trio joined the twins in their workroom. There they were shown a hidden passage which led to a set of stairs that led
down. Hermione, Harry and Dean were in shock, even more so when they headed down the stairs after the twins and found themselves in a large training area. One wall had been made into a climbing wall with various sections jutting out at odd angles. There are training dummies, a target practice area and a dueling area in the room.

“Dad showed us this room. We’re actually inside the basement.” Fred said, grinning as the trio looked around.

“He made this so we can continue our training without Mum, Gin, Ron and Percy finding us. He’s the only other member of our family who knows of this room.” George explained, the trio nodding in understanding and wonder.

“We’ve been using this room for three hours a day. Masters Severus and Minerva gave us a routine to follow while we’re on break and unable to get to the estate.” Fred added, walking over to the low wall separating the target practice area and leaning against it.

“Your dad is amazing.” Dean said, the twins nodding proudly.

“He’s been very accepting of us and the fact that we’re Assassins. He’s also wondering if Bill might be one as well. Bill’s always been more…aware of things. However we don’t know if Bill would ever want to go through any training. He’s very devoted to his work; which is why Mum is so… frustrated with him. She would like grandchildren and has always hoped that Bill would’ve settled down by now. The fact that he hasn’t has her frustrated with him. Charlie’s the same way; very dedicated to his job and not really looking for any relationships right now.” George explained, Hermione shaking her head.

“There’s nothing wrong with being dedicated to your job. Bill and Charlie are still young; especially when you take into account that Magicals live longer than Muggles.” She said, the twins nodding in agreement.

“Mum’s always been about family. She loves having such a big family and the fact that Ginny is going to be gone for most of the year starting September is rather hard on her. She and Dad have mentioned the idea of adopting or even fostering children.” Fred said, though he watched as the trio gained thoughtful looks.

“You said that your mum is a great cook many times. And, even though some of the things she gave me had been…contaminated, what wasn’t, was rather delicious. What if she opened her own bakery? That would keep her busy and she’d be doing something she loved. Not only that but she’d be helping earn money for the family and any of her hobbies.” Harry suggested, watching as the twins looked at him before looking at each other with wide eyes.

“T-That’s bloody brilliant! It would keep Mum busy and we could buy the store for her!” George gushed, his eyes bright with happiness and eagerness at the idea.

“Bill and Charlie would, without a doubt, give us some to help buy the store and furnish it. It can be a birthday present to her! Ginny and Ron could even help Mum during the holidays if they wanted to earn some extra money. She’d be doing something she loves and Dad would be happy since this will hopefully help her tone down her meddling.” Fred added, the trio beaming at them.

“There are hundreds of cookbooks just for pastries, pies, cakes and other desserts. If she had plenty of those books then she’d have a large selection on what she could make for the bakery.” Dean said, the twins nodding eagerly.

They headed back upstairs and into the workout and then out to George’s room. There, Fred and
George wrote letters to their oldest brothers about the idea of a bakery for their mum. After sending the letters off, they called Percy into the room and told him about the idea. Percy was shocked at first, but after thinking about it for a moment agreed that it was a fine idea. Their mum could take a course in the local community college to learn how to properly run and own her own business. From what their dad had said their mum had been rather good in school and, even though it’s been some time, her school records should still be in the Ministry and, if her grades were good enough, she should be able to even get a scholarship. Percy agreed to help them out and promised to give them a check to help. He’s been working in the Ministry as a clerk in various departments since last year so he has a good amount of money saved up in his own vault.

Harry, Dean and Hermione had to leave not long after that and they made sure to thank Missus Weasley for allowing them to come over and hang out with the twins. She smiled and reminded them that they’re more than welcome to come over any time before they flooed back home. Back at the estate, Harry hurriedly reassured his parents that he’s fine and Missus Weasley hadn’t tried anything. Hermione and Dean confirmed this and told them what the twins had told them about Arthur’s blowup at his wife over what she had tried to do at Christmas. Lucas and Delilah were glad that Arthur was cracking down on his wife’s behavior which forced her to realize that her actions could affect the entire family and not just remain isolated. Lucas and Delilah were rather surprised about the idea of Molly owning her own bakery, though there was no doubt that she’d be good at it and would likely gain a lot of customers. There is only one bakery in Diagon Alley and the food there wasn’t too good.

The rest of the day passed by without much incident, though Dean managed to have a talk with his mum privately as his sisters and brother were out at their friend’s houses for the night. As was the normal, sadly, the topic was about Megan.

“She…She’s just not realizing that her actions have consequences. I’ve done everything I can think of.” Cassie sighed, leaning back in her chair as Dean looked at her.

“Is she still bullying others?” He asked, frowning as his mum sighed and nodded.

“Yes. I’ve gotten several calls from her headmistress about her actions. Megan has been put into an entirely new class because she kept bullying other girls and hardly paid any attention in class. She’s been separated from her friends; they don’t even see each other during lunch because they now have different lunch hours. I had to get Megan a tutor because she had fallen so far behind in class.” Cassie said, running a hand through her hair tiredly.

“I’ve already spoken to the headmistress at St. Brigid’s. I’m hoping that once she begins her magical schooling she’ll calm down.”

“Do you know why she’s acting out? Megan used to be so helpful.” Dean said, frowning as he thought of his oldest sister.

“I don’t know…maybe it’s because she doesn’t have a father figure? Or because you’re off at Hogwarts for most of the year? Andie thinks she’ll settle down given some time but…I don’t know.” Cassie said, accepting a cup of tea from a House Elf.

“I’ll talk to her. See if I can figure out what’s going on with her.” Dean said, smiling as his mum kissed his forehead.

“Thanks, hon.”

It wasn’t until two days before they were to return to school when Dean managed to find Megan alone in her room. Knocking on her door, he leaned in the doorway and watched as she looked up
from her desk where she was working on some last minute homework. Blinking, she frowned lightly and pulled off her headphones.

“What?”

“Mind if I come in? Talk for a little?” Dean asked, watching as Megan huffed lightly before nodding.

“Fine, whatever.” She muttered, looking back at her homework as Dean walked into her room and closed the door behind him.

Dean mentally sighed and sat down on the edge of his sister’s bed, watching as she continued to write.

“Meg, what’s up?” He asked, watching as she paused and glanced at him over her shoulder.

“What do you mean?” She asked, frowning as Dean cocked an eyebrow.

“You know exactly what I mean, Meg. Ever since the days leading up to my eleventh birthday you’ve been standoffish and…well bratty. You’re constantly arguing with Mum over everything and then you’ve been bullying other kids in school.” Dean said, making Megan scowl and roll her eyes.

“Megan, what the heck is going on? You were never like this.” He said, watching as his sister snorted.

“It’s not like you ever noticed.” She muttered, making her brother frown.

“What? Of course I noticed!” He said, his eyes widening as Megan spun around and glared at him.

“No you didn’t! You’re always off with Harry and your ‘trainers’! You don’t care about me or Sasha or Jessica or Sam! You’re just interested in the Brotherhood.” Megan spat, venom in her eyes as Dean started at her in shock.

“What?! Megan of course I care about you guys! Why do you-“

“No you don’t!” She cried, anger in her voice as the air crackled around her.

“Megan, I have always cared about all of you. Why do you think I sacrificed so much of my time and energy in taking care of all of you? When we were younger I used to make our lunches and help get you all ready for school, or did you forget about that? Even now I’m training to help keep you all and Mum safe. You think this is some game?! It’s not! Sasha and Jessica all seem to understand this and you’re ignoring this. You’re feeling sorry for yourself for some reason and you’re taking it out on everyone else around you. You seem to believe that nothing bad will happen even though you’re constantly pushing.” Dean snapped, Megan’s eyes widening as her brother’s magic crackled just like hers.

“Mum and I have tried, Megan. We’ve tried to be there for you and the others. Dad is gone and he’s not coming back. I know you miss him but you’re not the only one. We all miss him but you need to realize something; you’re lucky. You’re lucky because you, Sasha, mum and I remember Dad. We remember what it was like having him around; when everything was going well and Mum smiled all the time. Jessica and Sammy don’t remember him. All they have are stories and pictures. I don’t care if you’re pulling some little, childish tantrum but it needs to stop. You’re hurting Mum because of your attitude and you’re setting a horrible example for Sasha and Jessica. Mum’s not even sending you to Hogwarts anymore.” Dean snapped, Megan’s eyes widening as she gaped at her brother.

“…W-What?”
“Yeah. She’s sending you to St. Brigid’s. This is because she doesn’t trust you enough to go to a boarding school. She thinks you’ll abuse the fact that I’m in the same school by continuing to not care about your grades and bullying other students. She believes, and I agree, that you’ll expect me to protect you and keep you in line and help you with your grades. This is why you won’t be going to Hogwarts. Be glad she’s not sending to you Beauxbatons.” Dean said, watching as Megan swallowed thickly and fought down her tears.

“But that’s-“

“It is fair. She believes you need to be watched over and I agree with her. Unless you clean up your act, I doubt that Mum will let you go out with your friends. I’ve heard from Sasha that there’s a boy you like though I don’t think Mum would even let you hang out with him until you improve your attitude and grades.” Dean interrupted, watching as Megan looked down.

“J-Just go.” She muttered, making her brother raise an eyebrow but he stood none the less.

“If I were you I would seriously think about my past actions and how I can fix this mess. Mum doesn’t have much trust in you anymore; especially when she caught you trying to sneak out of the house to go hang out with some of the boys here on the estate.” Dean said, walking over to the door and opening it.

“We’re worried about you, Meg. We want you to go far in life.” He said, glancing back at her before walking out of her room.

Megan sat there at her desk, staring at the open door as her thoughts and emotions swirled around inside of her. With a cry of emotion, her magic released, causing her room to tremble as she got to her feet and slammed her door shut. Breathing heavily, she looked around her room before sweeping her things from her desk top, watching as they scattered around her room with a small sense of satisfaction. However, that slowly bled out of her, leaving her feeling terrible about all of the stress and worry she’s been putting her family through. With a soft sob, she slid down her door and pulled her knees to her chest, wrapping her arms around her legs and crying. Ever since Dean began his Assassin training she’s felt….so….so abandoned. Their mum has her new job at the clinic and Dean began spending more and more time with Harry and the other trainees. Yes, she has some friends around the estate but it wasn’t the same as when it had just been them. Her world had drastically changed and honestly…it scared her.

“How can I make things right?” She whispered, tears falling down her cheeks as she lifted her head.

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The last few days of the Easter holiday passed rather quietly. Dean and Cassie were shocked when Megan approached them and apologized for the way she’s been acting. She told her mum and brother about how she’s been feeling ever since they learned about Dean being an Assassin and magic. Cassie and Dean were shocked in learning how Megan felt and, after Megan vented everything, they were all crying and hugging. Sasha, Jessica and Sam overheard and came into the room where they all sat down as a family and talked things over. All of them agreed to begin seeing a family counselor once every two weeks in order to rebuild what they had once had before all of this happened. Cassie floo called Minerva and explained what was going on and the formidable woman agreed that Dean can leave the school every other weekend to attend the sessions and spend time with his family. Hermione, Neville and Harry all rallied around their friend and his family, offering them support and encouraging them that this is what needed to be done.

Returning to school saw all their professors begin to really crack down on their studies and emphasize on the fact that exams are the first week of June. Hermione officially began panicking and
her friends finally allowed her to devise a study schedule for them. Dean and Harry were steadily getting more and more anxious as the rest April steadily passed. Something was in the air and that something could be either good or bad. However, they and some of the other students could tell that something big was going to happen sooner or later. Severus and Minerva began focusing on dueling in their training, in which all of them were benefiting from the sudden change. Severus and Minerva also began teaching them how to draw in magic from the air around them and how to ‘flare’ their magic which made them seem even more powerful than they actually are.

They also learned that, even though their exams are taken during the first week of June, they won’t be going home until the twentieth. Hermione was shocked in learning this, though it was Percy who told them one evening that it was because the Fifth and Seventh Years don’t finish with their exams until the tenth. Then there’s the graduation ceremony on the nineteenth for the Seventh Years which had their parents/guardians and relatives coming to school for the ceremony which took place on the grounds. They learned that the top two students of that year got the honor of making a speech in front of everyone.

May arrived sooner than anyone thought and brought trouble for the Gryffindor House. Ron, Seamus, Lavender and Parvati were caught wandering the forbidden corridor and trying to get into the room that has the Cerberus in it. Professor McGonagall was furious at the group and ended up taking away one hundred and fifty points in total. Needless to say, Ron and his friends were very unpopular with the rest of their House, especially since they had been in the clear for winning the House cup this year for the first time in quite some time. Percy, Fred and George were quick to scold their brother, though they also defended him and his friends from a few of their Housemates who wanted revenge for putting them in fourth place. Many of the other House members were struggling to earn enough points to at least place them back into third or even second place. Even the twins were doing their hardest to gain back points during the month. Gryffindor had until the End of the Year feast on the eighth to earn back a hundred and fifty points to put them back into the lead, or at least to tie with Slytherin.

It was on the twenty-sixth of May when something happened that alerted Harry that something, or rather, someone was in the school that posed a great threat to the student body. Harry lounged back in his bed, a book on his lap and his bedside lamp turned on low so he wouldn’t disturb the other boys. The curtains around Neville’s and Dean’s beds are drawn as the pair have already gone to bed though Seamus is still awake and reading a sports magazine while Ron snored loudly on his bed. Harry shifted in bed and glanced at the open window to his right. Mira had gone out for a late night fly; though she had said that some of the Fire Lizards living near the edge of the lake seemed uneasy about something. They were apparently talking about a dark figure that was often seen prowling through the forest and Hagrid has reported finding more and more injured Unicorns and he had even found a dead Unicorn a few weeks ago. That was certainly something to worry about since Unicorn blood is a very rare and very dangerous thing.

[Harry quickly!]

[Huh? Mira?!] Harry asked, quickly marking his place in his book.

Before he could do anything, Harry found his conscious pulled through the link he shares with his familiar. He soon found himself looking through Mira’s eyes, and what he saw shocked and terrified him. A black cloaked figure moved silently across the ground of the Forbidden Forest, stalking a gravely injured Unicorn. What looked like a black tendril of smoke lashed out from the cloaked figure and struck down the Unicorn, causing Harry to gasp as Mira silently flew above. She landed high in a tree branch, using her powers to remain unseen by whatever had attacked the Unicorn. The figure seemed to slither over the ground as it approached the fallen creature before it bent low over the Unicorn’s side. Horror slammed through Harry when he realized that this…this thing is drinking
the Unicorn’s blood. He continued watching in horror as the thing drank from the Unicorn. However, the sound of thundering hooves filled the air and the creature/thing was soon surrounded by several Centaurs. Rowan was in the lead and he reared at the creature/thing, causing it to hiss and hurry away.

The other Centaurs shifted and pawed at the ground nervously, though Rowan looked up at the trees and stared directly at Mira. She and Harry were shocked at the action, though Mira allowed herself to be seen once more and she flew over to the group and landed on a fallen log in front of them.

“You are Harry Potter’s familiar, aren’t you?” Rowan asked, stepping closer to Mira as she eyed him.

[Yes. Why do you ask?] She asked, opening the connection even more so the Centaurs could hear her speak.

“A darkness is already inside Hogwarts. It seeks to restore life.” Rowan said, walking closer to Mira as she stared at him.

[Darkness? You mean Riddle, don’t you?] She asked, watching as a few of the other Centaurs shifted and pawed at the ground nervously.

“It lurks among the staff, a parasite, unnatural and wanting to be whole.” A female said, her golden hide fairly glowing in the pale moonlight that came through the trees.

[The staff? You mean…one of the staff members is helping Riddle?] Mira asked, watching as two of the Centaurs looked to the sky and observed the stars.

“Mars is bright tonight.” One of them said, making the others look to the sky as well.

“Go with the warning to Harry Potter. No doubt he will be able to do something.” Rowan said, turning and leading his group back through the trees.

Mira remained sitting on the log for a moment longer before she lifted into flight and headed back towards the castle. She could sense Harry’s confusion, shock and anger. He couldn’t believe that a member of the staff is apparently helping Riddle by trying to get the stone. Not only that, but the parasite comment worried him. Has Riddle’s soul attached itself to one of the professors? He knows that if a person drinks Unicorn blood then they’re cursed. Yes, the Unicorn’s blood can save them from death but they’re forever cursed unless the blood is freely given. They’ll need more and more Unicorn blood to survive and it’s considered an unthinkable sin to slay such a powerful and pure creature.

[I think you just saw whichever professor is housing Riddle’s spirit, Mira] He said, making Mira growl low in her throat.

[I could sense something…unnatural about it. However, I couldn’t get close enough to get the person’s scent or else I could’ve told you which Professor it is.] Mira admitted, shame in her voice before Harry sent waves of understanding through their bond.

[It would’ve been a great risk to you, Mira. I value your life above any kind of information you could’ve gotten. I’ll pass on what we’ve learned to Masters Severus and Minerva tomorrow morning during our training.] Harry explained, Mira nodding her head as she flew up towards the open window.

[When you and the others go after the Stone, I’m coming with you. You should also have both wands on you just in case something happens. It’s better to be over prepared than under prepared.] She
said, soaring through the window and landing on the bed beside her bonded human.

Harry dug through his bedside drawer and pulled out a special oil that had been crafted by Severus to soothe any dryness on Fire Lizard’s scales. It didn’t happen often since the Fire Lizards know how to take care of themselves, but sometimes they need some help in order to take care of their scales and skin. Pulling out a soft cloth, Harry poured some oil onto the cloth and began the meticulous task of gently rubbing Mira down. Happy rumbles left his familiar as she preened and arched into the cloth. She happily extended her wings in order for Harry to gently rub them down and get at the underside of the joint. It was during this time when Harry took note of any scars, damaged scales or any wounds his familiar had gotten. She often fought with some of the other Fire Lizards near the lake, mostly fending off any potential suitors that she didn’t want or telling a few of the hatchlings off whenever they got too rowdy.

“What happened?” Harry asked, frowning when he found a closed but mostly new wound on the underside of Mira’s front right leg.

[One of the males attempted to court me. He didn’t want to take no for an answer. Believe me, he came off worse.] She said, watching as Harry pulled out a special healing balm he had made under Severus’ guidance.

Harry carefully cleaned the wound with some water and applied the balm, making Mira rumble slightly as the balm disinfected the wound. She allowed Harry to bandage the wound before Harry put away everything and closed the curtains around his bed. Pulling out his wand, he casted the privacy spells around his bed, sighing happily as the sounds of Ron’s snoring instantly stopped. Turning off the light, Harry hunkered down in bed, smiling softly as Mira settled down on his chest; her inner warmth reaching him through the blanket. She watched as Harry closed his eyes and slowly fell asleep, listening as his breathing deepened. It was a nightly ritual of her’s: making sure Harry fell asleep before she allowed herself to fully relax. Her bonded had told her that he has a huge destiny ahead of him. Harry had told her about the prophecy that had been told after he had been born and had spoken about the Dark One’s Horcruxes.

Such abominations disgusted her and she was glad that her bonded wasn’t alone. His family and their people were doing their best in order to help her bonded survive and win his future encounter against the Dark One. They’ve already destroyed three of the Horcruxes though the others are much harder to find and they haven’t been able to find any of the remaining ones just yet. She’s determined to help Harry through any hardship he faces. She knows he has many trials ahead of him and she refuses to let him face them alone.

-I won’t abandon him like others would.- She thought, lightly nuzzling Harry’s chest as she closed her eyes.

The next morning Harry told Professors McGonagall and Snape about what Mira saw and was told by the Centaurs. They were understandably concerned and promised to keep a close eye on the other staff members. However, they also urged Harry to focus on his schooling and training for now until the time is right for him to go after the Stone. It was times like this when Harry really hated being only a trainee Assassin instead of a full-fledged Assassin. Yes, he’ll still have to listen to Master Assassins like Minerva and Severus, but he would have more say then. He did listen to them though, and continued to focus on his friends, training and school work. Thankfully, Hermione, Dean, Neville, Eliana, Jillian and himself have done a lot of work in gaining back the hundred and fifty points Ron and his little gang had lost. Hermione did most of the point gathering; especially when she continually offered to further help the various professors, even those who they don’t have classes with. The twins really pushed their little brother to do more extra credit work, especially to further bring up his grades in some of his classes. Ron balked, but when Percy got on his case he finally
“I hate this.” Ron muttered, scowling as he stared down at his History book.

“What?” Parvati asked, looking up from her own book and parchment and looking at the redhead.

“Who in their right mind likes to do extra work? It’s bad enough with the amount of assignments we already get.” Ron huffed, glaring at his book and parchment which only has two paragraphs written.

“Well you’re the one who falls asleep in History. If you’d just pay attention then you’d realize that it’s a really interesting class.” Lavender said, putting the finishing touches on her extra credit work for Charms.

“Why do we have to learn about dead Wizards and Witches? That was hundreds of years ago; what’s the use?” Ron asked, watching as Seamus walked over with two books in hand.

“Because what we’re learning is important to know. It shows how our world has progressed over the years.” Parvati explained, making her friend huff and roll his eyes.

“I still find it interesting that Merlin and Morgana weren’t enemies like many people say they were,” Lavender said, Parvati nodding her head while the boys looked at each other and shook their heads.

“Well, I’m just glad that Katie stopped those Seventh Year girls from destroying our work.” Parvati said, shuddering as she thought of the latest attempted revenge against them.

A few hours ago they had been working on their assignments in the common room. They had just finished their first couple assignments and had been letting the ink dry when a few Seventh Years had snatched up their assignments and read them over. The girls had laughed and had just been about to rip up their assignments when Katie Bell and her friends stormed over and summoned the parchments from the Seventh Years. The twins had rallied behind the girls when the Seventh Years had yelled at Katie and her friends. Thankfully the Seventh Years knew better than to go against the twins less they find themselves ruthlessly pranked for the remainder of the year. After the Seventh Years had backed off Katie had given them back their assignments and had given them an encouraging smile before she and the others walked away. It wasn’t long after that when they relocated to the library.

“It’s not our fault that McGonagall went off the deep end and took so many points from us. We’re in her House for Merlin’s sake!” Ron exclaimed, wincing when Madame Pince appeared around a row of shelves and glared at him.

“And yet it is our fault. We were told to stay away from that corridor and yet we went back there again. I’m just wondering how Filch knew we were there.” Seamus muttered, pulling a book towards him and flipping it open.

“If Potter would stop being such a selfish prat and allowed us to use his bloody invisibility cloak then we wouldn’t have gotten caught.” Ron grumbled, scowling when he thought of the night he had seen Harry pull out the cloak.

He had been shocked when he saw the invisibility cloak and had practically demanded to know where Harry had gotten something. Of course the prat is rich enough to buy something like that but still. Harry had simply told him that it’s an heirloom that has been passed down in his family for years; which of course made Ron extremely jealous that something like that is an heirloom. The most he’ll get from his family is a fob watch or something from his brothers. Later, when Potter returned and put his cloak back in his trunk before walking out of the room, he had gone over to the other
boy’s trunk and had taken a look at it. Most trunks come with an anti-theft charm or a simple lock. He had been shocked to see that Potter had gotten his trunk with a magical signature lock which means that it’s even more protected than a standard student’s trunk. What’s more is that the bloody prat also had a three compartment trunk instead of a standard student trunk. Only his parents had a multi-compartment trunk and that was like…ten years old.

-Bloody Potter.- Ron thought, frowning as he turned his attention back to his assignment while his friends started talking about exams.

If you were to ask the student body and the staff of Hogwarts, they would all complain that the month of May pass far too quickly for their liking. As the last week of May came around, students could be found furiously studying in the library and in their common rooms. Many had nervous breakdowns, especially those in their Fifth and Seventh Years. Madame Pomfrey and Healer Briggs were busy dealing with students suffering from lack of sleep, anxiety attacks and those who suffered from nervous breakdowns. Harry and the others worked hard to try and keep Hermione calm as the first day of exams neared. Susan eventually called on Nips, one of the House Elves that serves her family. Nips was very skilled in giving massages and Hermione was soon sequestered away in their Room by herself with Nips as the House Elf worked her magic and got the brunette to calm down and relax the night before the first day of exams.

During breakfast they learned from Headmaster Dumbledore that the Great Hall will be unavailable unless it is for one of the main meals. This is because Fifth and Seventh Years used the Great Hall to take their exams so it’ll be on lockdown until those exams were done. They were also given their timetables for their exam days, which were also spread across the full week and into the weekend. Many students complained on how their exams were two hours long, though they were quickly told by older students that those two hours were needed since there are both practical and written portions to their exams. In the end, they had two exams a day mostly to give them time to prepare for the next set of exams and to hopefully reduce the amount of breakdowns. The twins were certainly more subdued and explained that they had learned from Percy that the Ancient Runes and Arithmancy exams are terrifyingly difficult, even for their first year in said classes.

The week seemed to drag by for the students. Groups could be found studying in the library, during meals and in common rooms during free time while some dared to take a moment or two to head outside and attempt to calm themselves down. Harry dragged his friends outside for at least an hour every day and forced them to not study and just have fun. Mira, Ricki and Shade certainly helped out in getting them to have fun and run around like normal kids. This did help to calm their nerves, though Harry, Hermione, Dean, Neville and the twins were also nervous for a different reason. Once their exams end, Minerva and Severus will give them the signal to head off after the stone. Neville is the one who agreed to remain behind as a backup in case something happened. He planned on remaining in an empty classroom on the third floor underneath Harry’s invisibility cloak and only enter the trapdoor should he be summoned. They planned on either summoning him for reinforcements or to go and get help.

On the last day of exams, a sense of relief washed over the students…well except for the Fifth and Seventh Years. The other students practically cheered as they exited their last exam and all of them instantly headed outside to enjoy the warm weather. Many hurried to their dorms or the gym and changed into their swim suits before jumping into the lake or the pool. Harry and his group of friends were some of them and they were soon locked in a game of marco/polo with the twins and the rest of the Gryffindor Quidditch team. They spent a good few hours in the lake and on the shore just sunning themselves and enjoying the freedom of no longer having to worry about classes and tests and exams. Hermione was slightly put out at having nothing to do for the last two weeks, though
Fred told her that they’ll be getting their exam results next Friday and then two days before they head back home for the summer they’ll be getting their summer assignments. This placated her somewhat, though she still didn’t care for the amount of time spent doing nothing.

However, that evening during dinner Harry received a message from Professor McGonagall. He glanced up at her and saw her nod slightly at him. Nodding back, he slipped the note into his pocket before nudging Dean, Hermione and Neville. Hermione managed to gain the attention of the twins who nodded slightly when they looked at Harry. After dinner, they managed to split up and they headed up to the Room. Inside, they sat down on a long couch and Harry pulled out the note from Professor McGonagall.

**Mister Potter,**

Tomorrow evening after dinner is a Wizengamot meeting. Normally the meetings are held in the morning but the heads of departments are not available until the evening so that is when the meeting shall take place. Albus has been requested to be a part of the meeting in his capacity as Headmaster and as Lord Dumbledore. This is the ideal time to head to the Third Floor. Severus and I shall be in our offices in case you need help. I suggest you be prepared for anything that could possibly happen.

**Professor McGonagall.**

“So it’s official.” Hermione said, a note of worry and fear in her voice as Harry and Dean nodded.

“Yeah. They want us to get the Stone tomorrow.” Dean said, watching as Harry pulled out his Mokeskin pouch and reached into it.

All of them looked at the black haired boy as he pulled out a dark red stone from the pouch. They know that this is the fake Sorcerer’s Stone, the one that needs to be shattered at some point during the recovery mission. It’s rather unnerving knowing that they’ll be facing challenges that are meant to deter others from progressing, even though said challenges aren’t too difficult according to the twins.

The group spent a few hours in the Room talking about various plans and what they’ll need before heading to the locked room tomorrow night. In the end they spent some time brushing up on healing spells and ensured that they had some Essence of Dittany with them just in case something happened and one of them was seriously injured. Even though it was a rough plan, they all felt better knowing that they had something instead of going in blind. Leaving the Room, they took their time heading back to the common room so no one would get too suspicious as to what they’re doing.

The next day the group tried to keep relaxed and at ease. They spent time in the Room just hanging out with their other friends. Some time was also spent in the pool in the gym, to which they managed to fully relax for a few hours as they played games and got to enjoy themselves. However, as dinner arrived, the group of trainees found themselves lacking any real appetite to eat. Of course the others noticed and asked them if something was wrong, to which they smiled and tried to brush off the other’s worry. After dinner, they headed back to the common room where Harry pulled out his guitar and attempted to help calm them all down by playing a few songs. The hours passed tensely and they all waited for the rest of the House to eventually drift off to bed. When they were the only ones awake, they headed up to their rooms and created dummies using clothes so none of their dorm mates or friends would become suspicious unless they actually attempted to pull back the blankets.

“Hopefully we’ll be back before morning.” Dean muttered, Harry and Neville nodding in agreement.

Harry also snagged his invisibility cloak before he, Dean and Neville headed down to the common room where they were soon joined by Hermione and the twins. Fred checked the Marauder’s Map and, after seeing the corridor was clear, they snuck out of the common room and set off to the third floor. They had to stop a few times and duck into abandoned classrooms or into a hidden passage.
when a Prefect or one of the professors came by on their nightly patrols. All of them didn’t dare to speak as they made their way to the third floor. Upon reaching the locked door, Hermione quickly reminded Harry what spell to use to animate the harp inside the room to put the Cerberus to sleep. Harry donned his cloak and unlocked the door before slipping inside. Instantly the three headed hound focused on the door as soon as it was opened. However, their growls died down slightly when they didn’t see anyone step into the room; though they could certainly smell that someone was inside.

Harry hurriedly whispered the spell and flicked his wand towards the harp in the corner of the room. Instantly the Cerberus began stumbling and its eyes began drooping. Harry waited until the beast stumbled and fell over. He turned and let the others in, in which Hermione and Dean shuddered when they saw the giant three headed dog. Neville locked them in the room before they heard him walk off. Working together, with their true wands, they managed to carefully levitate the Cerberus up and off of the trapdoor before setting him down carefully. The twins headed to the trapdoor and opened it before aiming their wands into the darkness below. The casted a bluebell charm which created light blue and white flames that shot into the darkness. Harry, Hermione and Dean winced when they heard the screeches of the Devil’s Snare below. Fred then used a Lumos to see into the chamber below before giving them the all clear. His brother kept up the light charm while he and Harry levitated Dean and then Hermione down into the room below.

Hermione and Dean kept the Devil’s Snare at bay while the twins levitated Harry down into the room. Harry then cast a cushioning charm on the floor before they all stepped back. Fred jumped down and landed in a crouch before stepping away and letting his twin drop down, in which they then used a spell to close the trapdoor above them. Silence and darkness enclosed them, broken only by the light coming from Hermione and Neville’s wands which were lit with a Lumos. There was a faint sound of water dripping which told them that the room had been specially made to keep the Devil’s Snare alive.

“Look, the main plot for the Devil’s Snare is over there. You can faintly see it.” Hermione said, nodding over to the right of the room.

Sure enough, in the darkness they could faintly see the shrunken vines of the strangling plant and what looks like a garden plot underneath it. Fred and George took the lead, both wands in hand just in case something popped out in front of them. They opened the next door and entered a long hallway which sloped downward, the air becoming cooler and the walls glistening with moisture. It took a few minutes to get to the next door and they could all hear rustling and a clinking sound. However, they all jumped when Mira sudden teleported into the room and glared something fierce at Harry. The boy swallowed thickly and smiled sheepishly at his familiar as she yelled at him through their bond; scolding him for having left while she had been out flying around. In return for leaving her behind, she perched on Hermione’s shoulder and kept her back to her bonded human. Reaching the next room, George opened it and they stepped into a rather large room with a high vaulted ceiling.

“Oh my…!” Hermione gasped, her eyes wide as she looked at hundreds of winged keys that flew throughout the room.

“We need to catch the correct key that unlocks the door.” Fred said, pointing to a set of two brooms. “It’s an ornate key, silver.” George added, watching as Harry headed over to one of the brooms and quickly mounted it.

“Dean, up in the air with me. Mira, we could sure use your help.” Harry said, looking at his familiar as she glanced at him.
Dean hurriedly mounted the second broom and kicked off before Mira, letting out a huff, launched into the air and she and the boys began flying among the keys. Dean caught a few keys, though each one wasn’t the one they were looking for. The sharp ‘teeth’ of the keys cut and bit into the boys’ hands, creating small cuts and making them try to find the correct key faster. Harry caught sight of it first and it quickly became a rather interesting game of catch. Dean flew below the key, keeping it from diving while Mira flew from above. However, what worried Harry and Dean the most was the fact that the key had a crooked wing, as if someone had already caught it and hurriedly jammed it into the lock. Mira was the one who swooped in and caught the key and she and the boys hurriedly landed and Harry accepted the key from his familiar. Putting it into the lock, they all breathed a sigh of relief when the door unlocked and swung open slightly.

Harry gently held the key and carefully smoothed out its wing as a way of apologizing. Releasing the key, they all stepped through the door and into the next room. The room is massive though it was the sight of the large chess board which worried them the most. Before they continued though, Hermione and George healed the minor cuts Harry and Dean had received while flying in the previous room. Once that was done, they slowly walked further into the room and stepped onto the chess board. Looking around, all of them shuddered when they saw that none of the chess pieces have faces and they looked to be carved from stone.

“The door forward is beyond the white pieces.” Dean said, catching sight of the door behind the imposing figures.

“And there’s no way past them except for us to play.” Harry sighed, looking back at the black pieces.

“We helped to teach Ron chess, so we’re pretty good.” Fred explained, the others looking at him before Dean smiled.

“I’m pretty good at chess too. If we all work together, we can get through this.” He said, Fred and George grinning at him.

Fred took the place of one of the knights and found himself sitting astride one of the large black horses. George took the place of a bishop, Hermione the queen, Harry a rook and Dean took the place of another knight. The white pieces moved first and Dean and the twins looked to each other before nodding. Taking turns, they each directed the giant chess pieces across the board. It was absolutely terrifying the first time a white piece overtook a black piece. Each piece has a weapon and they certainly proved those weapons weren’t play things. Hermione shrieked when a white rook overtook one of their pawns, the black stone flying across the board before the rook dragged off the main pieces to the side of the room and off the board. The twins and Dean were the most active on the board and they hurried to ensure that Hermione and Harry were safe; including putting themselves at risk a few times.

All of them cried out when Fred was overtaken by the white queen. He had placed himself in front of Hermione to defend her and the white queen had struck. The queen easily knocked Fred out with hitting him with the butt of her stone sword before destroying the horse he was riding on. George nearly moved from his place at the sight of his unconscious brother being dragged off the board, but he forced himself to remain where he was. Hermione hurriedly took over the white queen, making the piece surrender its crown to her before it walked off the board. Harry Dean hurriedly moved in front of Hermione to defend her just in case a piece tried to overtake her. After what seemed like hours, Harry finally managed to overtake the white king and they were allowed to pass. George practically flew to his brother’s side and soon had Fred’s head in his lap. Hermione and the others hurried over and Harry soon had the blood cleaned from Fred’s face while Dean cleaned the cut on the older teen’s forehead. Hermione hurriedly healed the rather nasty cut Fred had gotten, as well as
the minor cuts Fred had gained from flying pieces of stone.

“Go on ahead.” George said, looking at the younger teens.

“W-What?!” Hermione gasped, shock and fear in her eyes as she looked at the redhead.

“I need to get him out of here. I don’t know if he has a concussion and I don’t want to leave him alone. He did the right thing by moving in front of you. You still have each other and I’ll get Neville to send for Snape and McGonagall. You should reach the Stone by the time they arrive. Fred and I have never gotten past this room before.” George explained, the trio looking at each other before swallowing thickly.

“Be careful.” Hermione urged, making George smile thinly.

“You too. Now go!” He urged, watching as the three First Years hurried across the room reached the other door.

Opening the door, the trio groaned as a horrid stench filled the air, their eyes watering as they stepped into the room with their wands raised. However, Hermione nearly screamed at the sight of an enormous Mountain Troll. Thankfully, or not, the Troll had been knocked out judging by the fact that it isn’t moving and there was blood on its face as well as a huge knot on its forehead. Covering their mouths and noses with their robes, the trio gingerly stepped around the Troll and hurried to the next door. Wrenching it open, they breathed a sigh of relief when they entered the next room. They were surprised that there was only a table in the center of the room which had several different shaped and colored bottles on it along with a piece of parchment. Walking to the middle of the room, they all cried out in surprise when flames erupted in front of both of the doors, their eyes widen.

“Bloody hell.” Dean groaned, hanging his head.

-Hermione shifted and moved over to the table containing many different colored and sized vials. Her eyes widened, however, when she saw a piece of parchment in front of the first row of vials. Picking it up, she felt relief wash over her as she glanced at the words on the parchment.

“Look, it’s a riddle.” Hermione said, making the boys look at her.

“What does it say?” Harry asked, moving beside Hermione and looking at the piece of parchment in her hands.

Danger lies before you, while safety lies behind.

Two of us will help you, whichever you would find.

One among us seven will let you move ahead.

Another will transport the drinker back instead.

Two among our number hold only nettle wine.

Three of us are killers, waiting hidden in line.

Choose, unless you wish to stay here forevermore.

To help you in your choice, we give you these clues four:
First, however slyly the poison tries to hide
You will always find some on nettle wine’s left side;
Second, different are those who stand at either end,
But if you would move onward, neither is your friend;
Third, as you see clearly, all are different size,
Neither dwarf nor giant holds death in their insides;
Fourth, the second left and the second on the right
Are twins once you taste them, though different at first sight

All three of them sighed in relief at the sight of the riddle; glad that something so simple is at hand. Looking over the riddle a few more times, the trio walked the length of the table, pointing to the various bottle and discussing the clues and which bottle is which. Dean and Hermione had a minor argument but it was quickly settled after Harry pointed out a few things. It took them a few minutes before they all finally came to an agreement on which bottle is which. They all agreed that the smallest bottle hold the potion to get them through the black flames that guard the door ahead while the potion in a round bottle would take them back through the purple flames.

“Hermione, go back. Dean and I will share what’s in here and go on ahead.” Harry said, watching as the brunette looked at him with wide eyes.

“No, Hermione, Harry’s right. Harry and I have had more training than you have and Fred and George will need help. Someone is in the room ahead and we’ll need Professors Snape and McGonagall. Send the emergency signal to Neville if he already hasn’t been signaled by George.” Dean said, watching as tears welled up in Hermione’s eyes.

Surprising the boys, she launched herself at them and hugged them tightly. They hugged her back and promised to be careful before they pulled away from the hug. Harry and Dean carefully took a small amount of the potion just as Hermione did with the other one. She shivered as the feeling of ice spread through her, though she hurriedly assured the boys that she’s okay. They both swallowed their potion and shuddered as well, instantly knowing what she had meant. Hermione urged them to be careful once more before she hurried through the purple flames and passed through the door leading back. Looking at each other, Harry and Dean nodded before hurrying through the black flames. Mira clung to Harry, growling as the flames heated her scales though she was thankfully unharmed. Their vision turned black for a few seconds before they found themselves standing in front of the door. Reaching out, Dean opened the door and he and Harry stepped through and into the next room.

Hermione had tears in her eyes as she sprinted through the Troll room and back into the chess room. Her eyes widened when she saw George levitating his twin and directing him towards the door leading back into the flying key room.

“George!” She called, making the redhead whirl around and look at her in shock.

“Hermione?! What is it? Did something happen?” He asked, looking her over carefully as she came to a stop in front of him.
“No. Dean and Harry went on ahead. The next room has a knocked out Troll in it and then there’s a room with a potions riddle, just like the professors said. Someone is waiting for them in the final room; we need to hurry!” She said, George nodding his head.

“Alright, c’mon.” He urged, running through the room with Fred floating ahead of them.

Passing the room with the flying keys, Hermione moved ahead of George and hurriedly cast a sunburst charm as the redhead prompted. The Devil’s Snare shrieked and shrunk back once more as the light reached it. Coming to a stop underneath the trapdoor, George lowered his brother to the ground and pulled out his communications mirror. He hurriedly activated it and called Neville’s name, waiting tensely for the blonde to answer. Neville soon answered and, upon learning that Fred was injured and knocked out, promised to be there in a few seconds before ending the call. George then recalled his happiest memory before summoning his patronus. Professor McGonagall had worked him and Fred long and hard for them to learn this spell and they had finally learned how to summon a full corporal patronus just last week. She had also taught them how to create a messenger patronus.

A silver colored lemur appeared in front of the redhead. It looked around before turning and looking up at George, its long tail twitching lightly.

“Message to Professor McGonagall: Dean and Harry made it through to the final chamber. Need help. Someone else has beaten them to the chamber. Come quickly.” He said, the lemur nodding before it flew up through the ceiling.

It seemed to take forever before the trapdoor opened, revealing Neville looking down at them. George insisted that Hermione be levitated up first so he and Neville worked together to get the brunette up through the trapdoor. Hermione and Neville then, standing on either side of the opening, carefully levitated Fred through the opening and set him down carefully. They then got George up through the hole and had just set him down when the door to the room burst open; revealing Professors McGonagall and Snape. Both looked worried and instantly headed to the teens. Professor Snape looked over Fred before informing them to get the redhead to the hospital wing. The group were surprised to learn that Minerva and Severus had informed Madame Pomfrey and Healer Briggs about what was going on. The two healers had taken an oath not to tell anyone the real reason why any of the teens might be brought into the Hospital wing except for those they approved of. George once again levitated his brother and he and Neville hurried off towards the Hospital wing. Hermione, however, refused to leave her friends and insisted on remaining close by.

“Go wait in the abandoned classroom next door. We’ll send you a message when and if we need your help.” Minerva said, Hermione nodding before she hurried out of the room.

The pair agilely jumped down through the trap door after sending flames into the darkness below. Running through the room, they barreled on ahead until they came to the flying keys room. There, Severus was the one who leapt onto a broom and quickly had the needed key pinned and caught. Sprinting out of the room, Minerva walked to the middle of the board and Severus watched as the black and white kings and queens moved forward and looked down at her.

“We require passage. Let myself and my colleague pass.” She said, watching as the pieces looked at each other.

However, much to her surprise and frustration, they all shook their heads and drew their weapons. Severus walked over and placed a hand on her shoulder, making her look at him.

“Let’s play then.” He said, Minerva sighing but nodding.
The four pieces moved back to their spots and she and Severus looked at the black side of the board. Minerva took the place of one of the bishops while Severus took the place of a rook. Settling into their positions, they looked at each other and nodded.

“Let’s play.” Minerva said, her eyes narrowing as a white pawn moved first.

Meanwhile, Harry and Dean stood in shock as they stepped into the final chamber. The door of the potions room had led to a long hallway and it had taken a few turns which hindered their advancement since the floor had been slick in some places. However, the final door had let them into a massive, circular chamber with a high, domed ceiling. The room is well lit and, in the center on a raised dais, is the mirror of Desire. However, what really shocked the two boys was who was standing in front of the mirror.

“P-Professor Quirrell?!” Dean breathed, shock in his voice as he looked at the person. Sure enough, their stuttering, nervous as a mouse in a house full of mouse traps, Defense Professor stood in front of the mirror. Quirrell grinned at their reflections, though there was a mild hint of surprise in his eyes when he saw Dean. As the man turned around, Harry and Dean hurriedly slid their true wands back into their holsters and gripped their Ministry sanctioned wands tightly.

“Yes, it is I. I was wondering if I would be seeing you here, Mister Potter.” Quirrell said, looking at Harry almost… hungrily. “Though your friend being here is a bigger surprise.” He mused, looking at Dean with little interest.

Harry and Dean were instantly alarmed. Gone was the ever famous stutter that had caused the entire student body to groan or make fun of the man. Instead, Quirrell’s voice is cold and sharp with nary a mispronounced word or pause.

Quirrell snapped his fingers, though Harry and Dean moved faster than the man had thought. Diving out of the way, Harry and Dean began a deadly game of cat and mouse. Both boys fired off jinxes and low level curses; keen on keeping their true power hidden for now. However, Dean cried out when a cutting hex hit his arm, causing him to drop his wand and stumble. This gave Quirrell enough time to trap Dean. He was soon leaning against one of the pillars with ropes binding him in place. Harry rolled behind one of the pillars, panting softly as he tried to gain his bearings once more.

“I always figured you would pose a slight challenge, Potter. Though it’s no matter. Soon it’ll be too late and Dumbledore will find nothing more than the dead bodies of you and your little friend.” Quirrell taunted, smirking when he saw Harry dart from behind a pillar and head towards the next.

He quickly casted several spells and smirked when Harry cried out in shock and pain. A vine sprung up from the ground and lashed at his legs, causing him to trip and fall heavily on the ground. A sickening crack filled the air as his left wrist broke as he landed awkwardly underneath him. Pain flooded his senses, giving Quirrell just enough time to wrap him in thick ropes. With a flick of his hand, Quirrell had Harry tied to one of the pillars beside Dean.

“Now, be silent. I still have to finish investigating this mirror.” He snapped, turning his attention back to the mirror in the center of the room.

Harry breathed heavily through the pain that originated from his wrist. Looking over at Dean, he saw the other boy looking at him with worry. This wasn’t what either of them had expected; especially considering that Severus and Minerva had never said anything about Quirrell being a possible suspect. Had the man really been that good of an actor that he managed to fool two Master Assassins?! Harry glanced around and blinked when he saw Mira hovering silently above the mirror,
his eyes widening as her body shifted and she blended in with her surroundings.

“I have to say, Mister Potter, that your friends are just as meddlesome as you are. Miss Granger fooled my plan on Halloween.” Quirrell said, anger in his voice as Dean’s eyes widened.

“It was you who let the Troll into the school!” Dean gasped, watching as Quirrell looked at him and smirked.

“Of course it was. I have a way with them, of course. However, because your little friend I wasn’t able to get to the third floor like I planned to. By keeping the students inside the Great Hall, she forced the professors to work in teams. I wasn’t able to break away from my team, not with Severus watching me so closely. He was always cautious around me; for a good reason of course.” He said, the two boys looking at each other in surprise.

-Why didn’t he warn us that he suspected Quirrell?- Dean thought, struggling to keep himself from panicking as Quirrell pulled out his wand and tapped it along the frame of the mirror as he circled it.

“I know this mirror is the key to finding the Stone. But…how to make it work? Trust Dumbledore to come up with something like this…but he’s in London…I’ll be far away by the time he gets back…” He muttered, making Harry and Dean think furiously on how to keep the deranged man talking.

“You were the one hurting the Unicorns.” Harry said, making Quirrell look at him.

“Such majestic creatures, yes. Admittedly I didn’t want to have to kill them but I needed their blood. It was the only thing that could help my Master.” Quirrell said, though he suddenly winced as if something hurt him.

“How did no one suspect you?” Dean demanded, making the Wizard chuckle lowly.

“Who said no one did?”

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“I admit, it was surprising, even for me, on how long it took for one of my…colleagues to become suspicious. However, that blasted woman Martha overheard me during a moment of weakness. Sometimes…I find it hard to follow my Master’s instructions-he is a great Wizard and I am so weak…” Quirrell said, pain flitting across his face as the two boys looked at him in horror.

“He was with you?” Dean asked, shock and horror in his voice as Quirrell sneered at him.

“He is always with me! But, no matter. I ensured dear Martha wouldn’t be able to follow me tonight. She put up a valiant fight, but in the end mine and my Master’s power was too much.” Quirrell said, a sinister smirk on his face as dread filled the two boys.

[Mira get out of here! Go get someone to check on Professor Winters!] Harry ordered, feeling the worry coming from his familiar.

[No, I won’t leave you.]

[Damnit Mira, go! Now’s not the time! Severus and Minerva are on their way and we’ll be okay. Just go!] Harry ordered, glancing up towards the ceiling and spotting his familiar for a quick second before she teleported away.

“I see myself in the mirror…I’m presenting the Stone to my Master…but where is it?!” Quirrell snapped, his eyes blazing as he looked into the mirror’s surface.
Harry glanced at Dean and they both nodded. They needed to keep Quirrell talking; keep him from figuring out the key to get the Stone out of the mirror.

“How is your…Master always with you?” Harry said, watching as Quirrell glanced at him.

“…I suppose I could tell you. It’s not like you’ll live past tonight.” He drawled, a slow smirk spreading across his face.

“You see, I met him when I traveled around the world. A foolish young man I was then, full of ridiculous ideas about good and evil. Lord Voldemort showed me how wrong I was. There is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it…Since then, I have served him faithfully, although I have let him down many times. He has had to be very hard on me. He does not forgive mistakes easily. When I failed to steal the Stone from Gringotts, he was most displeased. He punished me…decided he would have to keep a closer watch on me…”

Harry and Dean listened in horror, watching as Quirrell shuddered lightly as he remembered whatever punishment his Master had dealt him. Quirrell was the one who broke into Gringotts?! How?! They had seriously underestimated their Defense professors, especially since he’s proven to be a rather…powerful man. Had Professor Dumbledore known about Quirrell? Did he even suspect the man in front of them is a Dark Wizard? Both of them prayed that Professor Winters is okay; the last thing they wanted to hear is that a servant of Voldemort had managed to kill someone innocent.

“I don’t understand…is the Stone inside the mirror? Should I break it?” Quirrell asked, narrowing his eyes as he studied the object.

-Come on…come on…let me get in front of it.- Harry thought, lightly wiggling his arms to see if he could get free.

“What does this mirror do? How does it work? Help me, Master!” Quirrell begged, making the two boys frown.

However, their frowns soon turned to looks of absolute horror when a high pitched, menacing voice filled the air; seemingly coming from Quirrell himself.

“Use the boy…Use the boy…”

Harry went stock-still as Quirrell whipped around and looked at him; his eyes blazing with a manic need to obey.

“Yes-Potter-come here.” Quirrell hissed, snapping his fingers which caused the ropes to fall away from Harry.

“Come here. Look in the mirror and tell me what you see.” Quirrell ordered, narrowing his eyes at Harry who swallowed thickly.

Harry, briefly, thought about trying to engage Quirrell in another duel, but knew it would only end in either him or Dean getting hurt. Not only that, but he needs to give Quirrell the fake Stone. He had placed it in his pocket before he had walked into the room and, frankly, he’s grateful for the minor sticking charm he had placed on it. If it wasn’t for that sticking charm then it’d likely have fallen out while he had been dodging Quirrell’s curses. Shaking himself slightly, he slowly walked towards the insane man, resisting the urge to flinch when Quirrell grabbed his arm and nearly flung him in front of the mirror. Stumbling slightly, Harry straightened and looked at the mirror, watching as Quirrell moved in close behind him. The heady scent of garlic and something filled his nostrils; the scent radiating from his Defense Professor. However, he forced himself to block out the scent and turned
his attention back to his own reflection.

His reflection showed that he had gained some injuries from his game of hide-n-seek with Quirrell. The edge of a Cutting curse had snagged his right shoulder; slicing the material open and revealing a shallow cut underneath that had, thankfully, ceased bleeding. There are a few shallow cuts on his face and hands that they hadn’t healed during their descent here. He doubts that his clothes will ever be clean once more and he was rather shocked on how much dirt is actually streaked on his face and hands. His wrist, however, was swollen and he could clearly see one of the bones pressing tightly against the skin which made him mentally wince. However, despite all of this his reflection looked surprisingly calm in the face of potential death.

Looking at his reflection, Harry was shocked when his reflection suddenly grinned and opened one of his clenched hands, revealing a blood-red stone with slight blackened edges. His reflection winked before reaching up and pulling out the ever present Mokeskin pouch. Harry watched in fascination as his reflection dropped the Stone into the pouch and tucked it back underneath his shirt. As soon as that happened, Harry nearly gasped when he felt the Mokeskin pouch underneath his shirt suddenly become a little heavier and flashed with warmth underneath his shirt. His reflection nodded slightly before patting his pocket which held the fake Stone. His reflection pulled out the fake Stone and removed the cloth that had been wrapped around it. The cloth had been specially enchanted by Nickolas to suppress the ‘aura’ that that fake Stone gave off. Apparently the actual Stone gives off an aura and he and his wife had somehow enabled the fake to resonate that same aura. They made the fake as believable as possible. Harry’s reflection slipped the fake back into his pocket before stuffing the cloth into the Mokeskin pouch.

“Well? What do you see?” Quirrell demanded, making Harry blink before he frowned at the mirror.

“I-I see my parents…they’re smiling at me. I’m older-wearing the Head Boy badge and I’m Quidditch captain too.” Harry explained, listening as Quirrell cursed furiously.

“Move!” He spat, pushing Harry out of the way and causing the boy to stumble.

The Mokeskin pouch felt warm and heavy against his chest though the fake Stone seemed to weigh even more in his pocket. He glanced at Quirrell, watching as the man muttered to himself as he stared into the mirror, looking it over closely. Harry Slowly backed away, keeping his footsteps light in hopes that Quirrell wouldn’t see or hear him trying to get to Dean to get his friend free. However, his blood froze in his veins when he heard that voice once more.

“He lies…He lies…”

“Potter! Get back here! Tell me the truth! What did you see?!” Quirrell cried, spinning around and glaring murderously at the boy.

“Let me speak to him…face-to-face…” The voice hissed, making Quirrell freeze and look slightly panicked.

“Master, you are not strong enough!” He exclaimed, though he made no move to touch Harry as the boy looked at him in growing horror.

“I have strength enough…for this…”

Harry mentally screamed at himself to turn and free Dean. If what Quirrell had said was true, then he was about to be shown Voldemort. That thought terrified him. Riddle has so much more experience than he and Dean does; knows so much more than two eleven year-old boys could possibly know. However, no matter what he tried to do, he was rooted to the spot. He could vaguely hear Dean’s
rapid breathing behind him as Quirrell reached up and began unwrapping his turban. The dark purple cloth fell away from the man’s head and Harry finally found the strength to move as he took a step back in horror. Yes, Quirrell’s head looked rather small without the turban, but his eyes were locked on the reflection in the mirror which showed the back of the man’s head.

The back of Quirrell’s head had a face; more specifically the very face which has haunted Harry’s nightmares for years. Chalk white skin stretched over the face while piercing crimson colored eyes met his gaze in the mirror. A thin, lipless mouth was twisted in a sneer while the face had no nose; rather two slits for nostrils like a snake’s. Behind him, Harry heard Dean gasp and the rustling sounds of his friend and brother in all but blood struggling anew to free himself. Harry forced himself to take another step back as Quirrell turned around so he really was face-to-face with this new abomination.

“Harry Potter…See what I have become? Mere shadow and vapor…I have form only when I can share another’s body…but there have always been those willing to let me into their hearts and minds…Unicorn blood has strengthened me, these past weeks…You’re familiar saw faithful Quirrell drinking it for me in the forest…and once I have the Elixir of Life, I will be able to create a body of my own…Now…why don’t you give me that Stone in your pocket?” Voldemort asked, his voice little more than a whisper as he stared at Harry.

-He could sense Mira?! How?- Harry thought, swallowing thickly as he took another step back.

“Don’t be a fool. Better save your own life and join me…or you’ll meet the same end as your parents…They died begging me for mercy…” Voldemort taunted, smirking as Harry’s eyes blazed.

“You’re lying. My dad fought you and my mother defeated you.” Harry hissed, glaring at the shade as Quirrell walked backwards so his master was always close to Harry.

“How touching…I always value bravery…Yes, boy, your parents were brave…I killed your father first, and he put up a courageous fight…but your mother needn’t have died…she was trying to protect you…Now give me the Stone, unless you want her to have died in vain. Join me…Harry Potter…join me and become great…You could have all the power you want at your fingertips…If only you give me the Stone…” Voldemort hissed, watching as Harry seemed to pause.

Harry hesitated and called on all his training in order to not give himself away too soon. Reaching into his pocket, he slowly withdrew the fake Stone. The lights of the chamber caught on its surfaces, causing it to glimmer lightly. Behind him, he heard Dean struggle even more and knew that his friend was going to play his own role.

“No Harry! You can’t! Don’t listen to him!” Dean cried, making Voldemort sneer at him.

“Silence, boy.” He hissed, turning his attention back to Harry.

“I can bring your parents back, Harry. I can teach you so much. You’ll be even more powerful than your wildest imagination.” Voldemort hissed, his voice silky and holding promise and power.

Harry sensed the exact moment Mira teleported back into the room behind Dean. She mentally told him that she’s getting ready to free Dean by cutting the ropes, though it’ll be tricky. He looked from the fake Stone and stared at Riddle, wishing that there was something more he could do against the Dark Wizard. However, he has to make Riddle and Dumbledore believe that the Stone had been destroyed. Closing his eyes, he nodded lightly before tossing the Stone towards Voldemort. Quirrell spun and caught the Stone, though Harry reacted quickly and his true wand slid out of his holster and into his hand just as Mira freed Dean from his bindings.
“Reducto!” Harry cried, the red beam flying out of his wand.

“No! No you fool!” Voldemort screamed, the spell hitting the fake Stone.

Dean fired off another spell with his true wand, this one striking the actual mirror just as Harry’s Reducto caused the fake Stone to shatter and explode. A brilliant, white light filled the room and the magical backlash of the mirror and the fake Stone shattering threw Harry and Dean off of their feet and into the walls. Mira roared in anger and despair when she saw Harry slam into the wall with a sickening thud while glass shards from the mirror shot through the air like missiles.

Quirrell/Voldemort had been so close to the two objects that he was exposed to the chaos of wild magic that was released by both objects. With a terrifying scream his magical core detonated and his body seemed to disintegrate in the blinding light. However, as the light faded, a blade mist rose from the ashes that remained of Quirrell’s body and, releasing a scream of fury, shot towards Harry’s pinned body in rage.

Mira dove down and shot a jet of flames towards the shade, causing it to let out an inhuman screech before it flew through the walls. Mira flew down and landed on the floor next to Dean. The boy had luckily been thrown behind a pillar which had taken a lot of damage thanks to the explosion. Checking him, she let out a rumble before flying over to her bonded human. She let out a worried rumble, her eyes filled with fear when she saw that two large shards of glass had pinned Harry to the wall; one through his shoulder and the other through his left leg. The sound of the door slamming open caused her to spin around in the air, though she released a relieved cry when she saw Severus and Minerva standing there out of breath.

“Sweet Merlin!” Minerva gasped, her eyes wide as she looked at the carnage around her.

“Harry!” Severus exclaimed, rushing over to the pinned boy as he pulled out his wand.

“Minerva, check on Dean.” He ordered, the woman nodding as she hurried over to Dean and crouched beside him.

They both soon conjured stretchers and Minerva soon had Dean strapped down to one of them. She hurried over and carefully helped Severus to remove the shards of glass that kept Harry pinned before gently moving him onto the second stretcher. Severus pulled out a small vial of Dittany and began pouring it into the worst of the wounds when the door opened once more and Albus hurried in.

“What happened?” He demanded, looking around the destroyed room in shock.

“We don’t know. But Mister Potter-Othello and Mister Thomas-Woods need to get to the hospital wing.” Minerva said, making Albus focus on the two boys.

“Very well, let’s go.” He said, letting the two professors pass.

He took one last look around the room and spotted the pile of ashes near the burned and shattered remains of the mirror. However, what shocked and horrified him the most were the tiny shards of red stone and fine red powder that was scattered across the floor. He hoped that Poppy and Aaron were able to heal the boys soon. He needs to know what happened here as soon as possible.

-XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX-
Aftermath and the end of the schoolyear

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Harry Potter and co. don't belong to me. Assassin's Creed and co. don't belong to me. I'm just taking some credit for the plot and original characters. Fire Lizards belong to the talented Anne McCaffrey. In no way, shape or form am I making money from this.

Main Story Warnings: A.U.-severe-, characters are OOC, canon is only a minor guideline, crossover, swearing, violence, gore, character death, Light Grey!Harry, Assassin!Harry, modern technology, OC's abound, Ron!Molly!Ginny!Bashing, Dumbledore!Bashing

Pairings: James/Lily, Sirius/OFC, Remus/Surprise, Harry/Luna, Neville/Hermione, Dean/Millicent, others to be decided

Author's Note: Whelp, this is it: the very last chapter of this installment of the series. This will be a slightly longer chapter given everything that needs to be wrapped up and needs to happen. However, there will be some things left unanswered that will be answered over the length of the entire series. I don't know yet how long this series will continue and I won't tell you what I have in store just yet! I have to keep you all wanting to come back for more! It's been great for me as an author writing this first 'book' since it's brought back a lot of my missing inspiration. It may be a while before the second 'book' is up. I have another story I need to pay attention to that I had pushed back due to the sheer amount of ideas and inspiration I've had for this story. So, for now, I'll see you all next time and I hope you enjoy this last chapter!

Challenge: DZ2's Way of the Warrior challenge. For more information look to the first chapter or DZ2's forums.

-Thoughts-
[Parseltongue]
[Telepathic Speech]

Emphasis on words/Spells

Text

-XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX-

Delilah gasped as she woke up from her sleep, her eyes wide and her chest heaving as she looked around the dark room. Beside her, Lucas stirred and sat up, frowning sleepily at his wife as he rested a hand on the middle of her back.
"De? What's wrong?" He asked, his voice husky from sleep as Delilah pressed a hand to her chest in an attempt to calm her racing heart.

"I...Something feels wrong, Lucas." She said, throwing the covers back and getting up from the bed.

Lucas watched with a worried frown as Delilah hurried from the room. Delilah hurried down the hallway until she came to Eliza's room. She listened closely in an attempt to hear if something is wrong before reaching out and gently opening the door. Peering into her daughter's room, Delilah was able to make out the restless form of Eliza. Stepping into the room, Delilah winced slightly as her daughter suddenly shot up in bed and turned towards her.

"Mummy? Something's wrong with Harry." Eliza said, distress in her voice as Delilah's eyes widened.

"You-"

"I can sense it. It hurts; my shoulder and leg." Eliza said, shielding her eyes as her mother summoned a small ball of gently white light.

"He'll be okay, sweetie. Severus, Minerva and his friends are there at the school with him." Delilah said, catching Eliza as she hurried towards her and hugged her tightly.

They were slightly startled when Lucas suddenly hurried into the room, his hair disheveled as he looked at them.

"I've just gotten a messenger patronus from Minerva. Harry, Dean and Fred were injured going after the Stone. They've just arrived at the hospital wing where they're receiving treatment from the healers." He explained, watching as his wife and daughter looked at each other in worry.

"Should we go there?" Eliza asked, blinking when Lucas and Delilah reluctantly shook their heads.

"No. We don't want to give away any...inkling that we have inside knowledge about what is happening in the school. We need to wait until Albus or one of the professors contact us." Delilah said, distress in her voice as Eliza shifted in her arms.

"Severus has a good feeling that it was the kids' Defense Professor Quirrell who was working for Riddle. He's not sure since the boys aren't awake yet. From what they've seen, however, the fake stone was destroyed and it looks as if Quirrell is dead." Lucas explained, making Delilah sigh and shake her head.

"That's twice that our son has had to...kill." She muttered, soothingly rubbing Eliza's back as her daughter shuddered.

They talked for a little bit longer about what needs to be done once they receive news from Hogwarts before heading back to bed. It didn't seem like much time passed at all before Lucas was being woken up by one of the House Elves who informed him that Professor Dumbledore passed on a message that something urgent has happened at Hogwarts and it'd be good for him and his wife to be there. Lucas woke up Delilah, Eliza and sent a House Elf to get Cassie up since her son was involved as well. It didn't take long before they were all ready; including Sirius who had learned of what happened by overhearing Delilah and Cassie talk about it. Taking turns, they flooed over to The Three Broomsticks where they all hurried up to the school. Lucas frowned when he saw Minerva waiting for them at the entrance to the school and saw the scowl on her face.

"Minerva?" He asked, his voice soft as she looked at him.
"Albus is refusing to call the Aurors. Martha Winters, the other Defense professor, was attacked as well. Harry must've heard about it during his confrontation against Riddle and had Mira go and help her. Poppy said that Mira teleported in with Martha who was injured and unconscious earlier last night. Harry has saved Martha; she could've died from some of her injuries and she had been hidden in a spare classroom." Minerva said, leading the group towards the infirmary.

"That old fool." Delilah snarled, the others nodding in agreement.

"What about the Weasleys?" Sirius asked, knowing very well that Molly and Arthur would be distressed if they found out that one of the twins had been hurt.

"He hasn't alerted them yet." Minerva said, making the group scowl.

Reaching the infirmary they were quickly shown to the back of the large room which had three beds curtained off. The sight of a nervous Neville, Hermione and George gave away who was behind those curtains. Hermione shot to her feet and hurried over to the group where she was quickly hugged by Delilah and Eliza.

"I didn't know! We knew that someone might be waiting in the last room but we never-!"

"It's okay, Hermione. There's no way you could've known that Riddle had possessed Quirrell."

Lucas said, his voice soft as the girl nodded tearfully at him.

Pulling back the curtains, Delilah and Eliza hurried over to Harry's bed and began checking over the wrapped injuries. Cassie, meanwhile looked over her son and was relieved to see that there doesn't appear to be too many injuries unlike Harry. She's grateful that her son wasn't badly hurt, but she also worried about Harry and what injuries he had sustained. Looking over to the other bed, she moved over to Fred and smiled when she saw his eyes flicker open. In an instant George was beside her peering worriedly down at his twin.

"W-What happened?" Fred asked, his voice rough and scratchy as he looked at the pair.

"You got hit over the head by one of the chess pieces you bloody prat." George said, distress and worry in his voice as Fred blinked a few times.

"The others?" He asked, turning his head and spotting Harry and Dean which only increased his worry.

"They'll be okay, Mister Weasley. You had suffered a minor concussion." Healer Briggs explained, making everyone jump at the man's sudden arrival.

"It was easy enough to heal you though Poppy and myself placed you in a healing sleep to ensure no harm will come." He said, pulling out his wand and running it around the redhead's head.

"Where's our parents?" Fred asked, frowning lightly as Madame Pomfrey bustled into view and scoffed.

"Albus didn't see the need to contact them because neither of you were in 'dire' situations." Poppy said, pulling out her wand and scanning Dean.

"What happened to him?" Cassie asked, concern in her voice as Poppy glanced at her.

"He's suffered exposure from massive amounts of 'wild' magic which caused his own magic to deplete. Not only that, but he had a broken arm. I banished the bones and he spent the rest of the night re-growing them. He had a few magical burns on his hands but that's all." Poppy explained,
watching as Cassie nodded and relaxed slightly.

"What about our son?" Delilah asked, worry in her voice as Poppy sighed and moved over to the other boy.

"He's suffered from a concussion, two broken ribs, a broken leg and wrist, a magical burn on the side of his face and also two stab wounds. Severus and Minerva found him pinned to the wall by two large glass shards." Poppy explained, Lucas, Delilah and Eliza listening in horror.

The sound of the door to the infirmary opening drew their attention and Lucas and Sirius became angered when they saw the serene look on Albus' face. Both men drew themselves up to their full heights and waited until the aged Wizard got closer. Albus, for his part, didn't feel too bothered by the hostile looks he was getting…up until he was a few feet away and Lucas' and Sirius' magic flared. He wisely stopped walking forward and the smile slipped off of his face.

"What the bloody hell are you playing at, Dumbledore?" Lucas growled, anger in his voice as he stalked towards the man.

"Now Luc-"

"That's Lord Othello to you." Lucas growled, narrowing his eyes as Albus' eyes flashed with frustration and disappointment.

"Why haven't you contacted Mister Weasley's parents? As you can see, we brought Heir Tomas-Woods' mother with us." Sirius said, making Albus look towards Cassie before looking back at him.

"I thought it would be best-"

"And you are wrong, Dumbledore. Misters Weasley have both been through a traumatic experience and their parents should have been contacted as soon as possible. Not only that, but I see that you have failed to contact the Aurors." Lucas drawled, sneering at the old man.

"Now Lord Othello, I doubt that this matter is one that calls for the involvement of the Aurors." Albus said, watching as Lucas and Sirius glared at him while Minerva whipped around and stared him down.

"Albus if you don't contact them then I will!" Minerva snapped, making the older man flinch slightly.

"One of your own staff members was attacked, Dumbledore and two First Year students are currently unconscious and a Third Year student has just recovered from a minor concussion and yet you claim that there's no reason to involve the Aurors?!!" Sirius said, surprise and disbelief in his voice as Albus looked at him.

"I sincerely hope you are going senile rather than you're purposely dismissing the fact that there had been a very real threat that had actually harmed two children and one of your own staff. That would make you out to be a foolish and rather cruel man." Lucas said, his voice holding a clear warning that Albus couldn't help but hear.

Wisely, Albus turned and headed back out of the infirmary, though he looked rather angry. While they waited for him to return, they talked quietly amongst themselves about what could've possibly happened. Poppy explained that she wanted Harry and Dean to rest for the rest of the day before waking them up tomorrow afternoon. Jillian, Eliana, Millicent, Susan, Hannah, Daphne, Tracy and Blaise all hurried in, though they looked surprised and a little overwhelmed at the sight of all the adults. However, that didn't stop them from checking on Fred, Harry and Dean. They looked greatly relieved to hear that their friends will be okay, though it was clear that they wouldn't be able to relax
until their friends were awake and released from the infirmary. They talked about their classes and
the rumors that were already spreading throughout the school as to what had happened. Thankfully
there are no more classes or else that would be rather hard to explain as to why both Defense
Professors aren't able to teach. The group only stayed for a few minutes before they headed off after
promising to be there later to visit. Hermione, Neville and George remained behind as all three of
them had played a part in what had happened the night before.

It was only a few minutes after they were left alone once more when Albus arrived with Arthur,
Molly, Amelia, a dark skinned man and another woman with short black hair and intense blue eyes.
With a cry of her sons' names, Molly rushed forward and enveloped George in a rather smothering
embrace before she headed over to Fred's side and began fussing over him. Arthur looked worried
and slightly angry, in which he sent dark looks towards Albus.

"What happened?" Amelia asked, looking sharply at the group.

George, Hermione and Neville looked at each other before glancing towards Lucas who gave them a
meaningful look. They instantly knew to give Amelia a...censored version of the story; a version that
didn't involve any mention of the Brotherhood or the mission that Harry and Dean had been given.
Together, the trio explained everything they had learned about the trials behind the locked door on
the third floor. Amelia and her two aurors along with Molly and Arthur were shocked and horrified
in learning about the Cerberus and the various dangerous trials, in which Albus slowly paled when
he saw the raw fury in Amelia's and Arthur's eyes. The three teens talked about what made them go
to the third floor in the first place in which they explained that they just had a horrible feeling that
something was wrong and their gut instincts were telling them to go beyond the trapdoor. Of course
none of them could explain what had happened behind the door to the last chamber, though Minerva
told them about the carnage she and Severus had rushed into.

"What the bloody hell were you thinking, Albus?!" Amelia demanded, her eyes blazing as the
elderly man looked at her.

"Now, Amelia, things were under-"

"They weren't under control, Albus and you know it. A group of students managed to get past your
traps and two made it to the final chamber which you just so happened to ward so no one could leave
but yourself or two others. It seems like you were planning on having someone go into the chamber."
Amelia said, narrowing her eyes as Albus' eyes lost their famous twinkle.

"Now, I want to know who is the person who you laid this trap for." She snapped, watching as
Albus shifted.

"That's an easy answer, Madame Bones."

All of them turned towards the only occupied bed on the right side of the room. Martha shifted in her
bed and sat up, smiling faintly at Poppy as the woman walked over and checked her. After accepting
a glass of water from the healer, she cleared her throat and began speaking.

"For the last few months I had notice that Quirenus was acting strangely. I followed him and caught
him talking with seemingly no one a few times. However, he discovered me following him one time
and I was forced to confront him. All of us knew about the trials and what was at the end of them. I
soon put the clues together and figured out that Quirenus was after the Sorcerer's Stone. I also
discovered one of the cloths that he used to wrap around his head. It was heavily enchanted to
prevent whatever was underneath it from being detected. I'm a former Curse Breaker and Enchanter
so this raised some flags. Sadly, when I went to confront Quirenus he attacked me. H-He became a
completely different man. He was much stronger than I had ever thought he was and he quickly
powered me. I remember he casted some kind of curse at me before I was knocked out."

"You had the bloody Sorcerer's Stone inside a school full of children?!" Amelia roared, her eyes blazing in shock and anger as Albus actually took a step back.

"Now Amelia-"

"You'd better have a good reason before I arrest you for child endangerment!" She growled, her two companions taking a step towards the older Wizard in case they needed to restrain him.

-Amelia sighed as she leaned back and closed her eyes. With the Hogwarts report finished, for now at least, she's finally able to maybe relax since she had gotten the floo call from Albus yesterday early morning. When Albus had initially called her, she had sensed his reluctance in even calling her and he had been very...hesitant to even say why he needed her to come to Hogwarts. However, she's seen the political scene enough times to know not to trust the old man which is why she had grabbed Kingsley and Melissa to come with her. Learning about the incident that happened beneath the third floor had shocked and horrified her. How could a supposed 'great' man like Albus bloody Dumbledore keep such a dangerous artefact such as the Sorcerer's Stone inside a school filled with children, many of which are related to some of the most prominent families in their world! Not only that, but according the Weasley twins, many students had gone into the 'forbidden' room thinking the professors had made a kind of obstacle course for them to try out. She had seen the shock on Albus' face and knew that the old man had thought everyone would simply listen to his words of warning and not try and check out the forbidden corridor to see what was so dangerous about it.

Martha Winters' tale chilled her to the bone and she had ordered Albus to take her and her Aurors down to the chamber. It was hard to believe that such simple trials had been created an attempt to protect one of the most powerful and dangerous artefacts in their world. Albus explained that he had made them so simple so others wouldn't think that he'd be foolish enough to hide the Stone at the end of it. It wasn't that surprising to her or the others to see that it obviously hadn't worked. Seeing the carnage for herself had been shocking; even more so when Minerva pointed to the pile of dust that was the remains of Quirenus Quirrell. She had also been shocked to see a fine red powder and red stone fragments near the remains along with the almost decimated remains of the Mirror of Desire. She had gotten especially pissed off when she had seen the remains of the mirror, which was another dangerous artefact inside a school filled with children. Albus had claimed that it was to keep the artefacts safe, but with the carnage around them his argument was very weak.

Understandably Lord and Lady Othello had demanded to be allowed to spend the night in the school so they'll be there for when their son wakes up. Miss Thomas demanded the same and the last thing she saw was Minerva showing them to guest quarters near the infirmary. Before she left she had Poppy and Aaron promise to get her when the boys wake up; not Albus. The man had tried to protest but she firmly reminded him that this is an official investigation and it is above his standing as Headmaster. She had no doubt that he'll try to be there during her talk with the boys, something she doesn't want.

"Madame Bones?"

Amelia looked up and blinked when she saw Courtney Higgs, her sectary, standing in the doorway.

"Yes?"

"Madame McGonagall called. Heirs Potter-Othello and Thomas-Woods are awake." Courtney said, making Amelia nod as she stood.
"Thank you Courtney." She said, the younger woman nodding and stepping out.

Pressing a button on an intercom on her desk, Amelia called for Kingsley, Melissa and Rufus before pulling on her robes. The three Master Aurors were soon being let into her office and she quickly explained where they're going. Minerva had told her last night that they can come through her fireplace in her office so they won't have to travel from the front gates and alert Albus to their arrival. She also explained that the three of them are to remain outside of the infirmary and are to only allow in Minerva, Severus, Hermione, Neville and the twins. They were surprised when she ordered them to keep out Albus but they were quick to agree to her orders at the hard look they gave her. Pulling out a floo powder container, Amelia walked over to the fireplace in her office and tossed in a pinch before stepping in and giving the address.

Minerva looked up and nodded when she saw Amelia come out of her fireplace followed by three other Aurors. Standing up, she gave them curt greetings before swiftly leading them through the hallways. Of course the appearance of three Aurors and the head of the D.M.L.E. made the students who were awake and wandering around stop and stare, though they were smart enough to keep their mouths shut for the moment and to move out of the way for the group. Reaching the main floor, they headed to the hospital wing and saw the Othello's and Dean's mother heading inside the wing followed by the twins, Hermione and Neville. Amelia nodded lightly, glad that they had gone inside so she wouldn't have to have anyone go and get them. However, she was rather surprised to see Severus walk up to them and share a look with Minerva who nodded. Instead of saying anything, they continued to the hospital wing.

Reaching the double doors, she followed the two professors inside and her Aurors closed the door behind her. She was instantly drawn towards the sounds of hushed voices coming from the far end of the wing. However, the closer she got to the beds, the quieter the voices became before they completely stopped. Coming around the curtains, she was relieved to see both Harry and Dean sitting up in their beds looked healthy though the right side of Harry's face, which had been covered yesterday, is covered in light pink, new skin.

"It's good to see you both up and talking." Amelia said, the boys smiling lightly.

"Thank you, Madame Bones." Harry and Dean said, the woman nodding as she sat down in a spare, conjured chair.

"Now, I'd like to hear what happened in the chamber against yourselves and Quirrell." She said, watching as the boys looked at each other.

"Before that, Amelia, there are a few things that I believe you should know. However, this is a matter of upmost secrecy and thus, we'll need a Witch's Oath from you." Lucas said, watching as the woman raised an eyebrow and looked at him.

"Oh?"

"In order to hear the entire, un-edited story, we need the oath. If you don't take an oath then we'll still tell you, but it won't be the entire story. This is to protect a few hundred of people. Neville's grandmother and his parents know of the secret as does Cassie here and Hermione's mother." Delilah explained, watching as Amelia thoughtfully looked at the ground.

She could hear the truth in their voices and knew that whatever secret they're keeping is very important. It was...unnerving that they'll need an oath from her but she does understand. It's obvious that whatever this secret is, it's huge. Yes, she could go with the edited version...but at the same time her curious nature and her need to know the whole truth demanded that she take the oath. Nodding to herself, she popped her wand out of its holster and pointed the tip at her heart.
"I, Amelia Nichole Bones, so do swear on my magic and life that I will not reveal any secrets that are
told to me today. I will only discuss these secrets with the people present in this room or those who
they allow me to. So I say, so mote it be." She said, her body flashing as her magic recognized the
oath.

Speaking quickly, Delilah and Lucas told Amelia the truth. The woman was shocked in learning that
Assassins and Templars are, indeed, real and out there. She was more than a little worried in learning
that the children were all trainees, though she understood the need to train them young and get them
protected before any Templars learned of their abilities and snatched them up. She completely
understood the need for an oath and couldn't blame them for all the secrecy. It didn't really surprise
her when she learned that Voldemort had been a part of the Templars and it especially didn't surprise
her when Lucas and Delilah explained that he likely wanted to gain the Templars' trust before
attempting to turn on them. However, she was shocked and horrified in learning that Voldemort had
taken measures in preventing his death. Of course she knows what Horcruxes are, but learning that
the Dark Lord had created more than one was…it was insane! Due to this information, she
completely understood why Lucas and Delilah had taken Harry in so quickly and why they were
training him so much. If the poor boy had been a target before then it's very likely he'll be a target
once more should the Dark Lord come back.

Amelia sat enthralled as Lucas and Delilah talked about what the Brotherhood stood for and couldn't
help but agree with their ideals. She was also rather alarmed in learning about the prophecy that
involved Harry and Voldemort and made a mental note to speak with Joseph Croaker, the head of
the Unspeakables, to see if such a prophecy actually exists. The children added in their views on a
few things, in which Harry explained that he was very interested in learning advanced combat and
Defense in the near future to better prepare himself for his confrontation with Riddle, whenever that
may be. She quickly offered herself as one of his trainers, to which Harry beamed at her and Lucas
and Delilah smiled in thanks. Hearing about the mission from Flamel himself was shocking,
especially when she learned about the sheer planning that had gone into the mission. Of course she
didn't like the fact that the entire mission had rested on the shoulders of two boys but she understood
their reasoning to an extent.

"Now, what happened in the chamber?" Amelia asked, making Lucas and Delilah look at their son
as well.

"It'd be best to show you." Harry sighed, shifting lightly as the group looked at each other.

Lucas quickly summoned a House Elf and had his pensive brought in along with a small table. Harry
pulled out the memory of the events in the chamber and dropped it into the swirling, silver liquid.
Eliza, Hermione, Neville and the twins practically demanded that they be allowed to view the
memory as well. Soon, all of them had a hand placed inside the swirling liquid and their eyes became
white as they were mentally transported into the memory. While the others were viewing the
memory, Healer Briggs and Madame Pomfrey checked them over and had them drink a few more
potions. Harry also had to deal with Mira who was still cross with him for making her leave him and
Dean during their time in the final chamber. Yes, she understands that Miss Winters needed to be
saved, but still. Dean also had a very upset Ricki on his chest as the fox glared at him one moment
before nuzzling up to him and whining and asking for attention. Ricki eventually curled up on the
center of Dean's chest, his eyes closed as if he were sleeping though his ears kept twitching at every
little sound.

When the group came out of the memory, the two boys and their familiars watched as the adults and
their friends sat down in surprise and alarm. Harry and Dean looked at each other; knowing that
none of the adults had ever thought that Riddle would possess a professor. They had certainly been
surprised and it had been sheer dumb luck that they hadn't been killed. Hermione and Eliza hurried
over to the two boys and hugged them tightly, making Harry and Dean awkwardly hug them back.

"So... Vol-Riddle was possessing Quirrell and had some control over the man's body from what we saw." Amelia said, her voice soft as she sat down before her legs gave out.

"You both did a good job. You held out until Quirrell/Riddle got the upper hand. You also played along as much as possible." Delilah said, pride in her voice as Harry and Dean nodded.

"You still have the Stone?" Lucas asked, Harry nodding as he pulled the Mokeskin pouch from around his neck.

He reached into the bag and pulled out the wrapped Stone. Lucas pulled out his own Mokeskin pouch which he opened and deposited the Stone into. Amelia watched the whole thing with awe; though she was glad that the Stone was going to be returned to its rightful owner and safely destroyed.

"Now what?" Dean asked, gently stroking Ricki's ears as he looked at the adults.

"None of you need the press to know what happened here. I believe Albus will be very...agreeable with us when we mention that we don't mind if nothing comes of this. You're not to answer any of the headmaster's questions. This is an official investigation thus, it's out of his hands. However, I'm not saying that you all shouldn't be rewarded for preventing the resurrection of the Dark Lord."

Amelia said, looking to Minerva and Severus.

"Forty points each for ensuring the safety of the school." Minerva said, pride in her voice as the group looked at her in shock before looking at each other.

"B-But-"

"-that means-!"

"We'll be tied for the House Cup!" Hermione gasped, having quickly added up their totals and realizing that the one-hundred and forty points will push them ahead.

"Five points each for having come up with a sound plan that ensured the safety of each other." Severus said, a smirk spreading across his face as the group cheered.

"Now Severus, I thought you wanted to see Slytherin win the House cup this year." Minerva said, grinning at the other man who scoffed softly.

"Please, we've already won the Quidditch cup. The last thing I need to deal with is the sight of my students parading around the school with their noses in the air. They already do that enough for my tastes." He said, making the others laugh while Amelia shook her head.

"You won't be saying the same thing when school starts up again, Severus. My son plans on trying out for the Quidditch team as Seeker." Delilah said, pride in her voice as Harry flushed while Severus raised an eyebrow.

"Well then I look forward to seeing those matches." He said, the others chuckling lightly.

Amelia, with Harry's permission, took a copy of the boy's memory. Lucas and Delilah confirmed that she's now a full ally of the Brotherhood, which also meant that she would be allowed to see the estate. Harry asked about Susan, in which Lucas and Delilah promised that they'll speak about Susan and their other friends learning about the Brotherhood over the summer. Amelia explained that she needs to speak with Albus still in hopes of making the man back off from questioning Harry and
Dean about what happened. She also wanted to make sure that Albus knows that if something similar happens then she won't be so willing to keep the knowledge from the Wizengamot and he might find himself summoned before them in court on trial for child endangerment. Lucas called on a House Elf once more and had the pensive removed before they all said their goodbyes and hugged Harry and Dean.

The adults talked quietly about a few things as they made their way to the doors of the hospital wing. Amelia was surprised to learn that Madame Pomfrey and Healer Briggs know of the Assassins and Templars, though what was even more surprising was learning that Poppy's daughter had been an Assassin but had tragically lost her life in the war. Aaron had a cousin three times removed who is an ally of the Brotherhood so it only made things better now that he knows since he's able to better understand why his cousin is so…reclusive. Both of them had given oaths to not reveal anything they had learned today which is why they had been able to discuss what they had freely and without worrying about being overheard by either healers. When they reached the door, Delilah removed the privacy wards that had been placed on them before opening the door. They weren't that surprised to see Albus being barred from entering by the three Aurors Amelia had brought, though the shock on the old Wizard's face at seeing Severus and Minerva among the group was particularly delightful to witness.

"Severus? Minerva? What is the meaning of this? I told you to inform me when Harrison and Mister Thomas-Woods were awake." Albus said, anger in his voice as he looked at his two staff members.

"And I was informed by Madame Bones that this was a sensitive case that shall be handled directly by her. I happen to agree with Madame Bones, Albus, so I informed her when they were awake." Minerva said primly, making Albus scowl at her.

"I agree with Minerva and Amelia, Albus. It's pointless for you to try and butt your way into this matter." Severus said, hiding his inner glee at the shocked look he got from the elderly Wizard.

"Which reminds me, Albus: you and I need to discuss some...important matters in your office." Amelia said, watching as the headmaster paled slightly before he seemed to gather himself.

"Surely it can wai-"

"No it cannot wait, Albus. I have already informed you that you are not, legally, allowed to question Heirs Potter-Othello and Thomas-Woods. Now, shall we adjourn to your office?" Amelia asked, her eyes glinting as Albus cleared his throat.

"Of course, of course. I was merely concerned about the welfare of two of my top students." He said, his tone holding a note of disappointment as if he was disappointed in them for not allowing him into the hospital wing.

"I can personally tell you that both boys are well on their way to being as good as new so to speak." Minerva said, Albus nodding lightly.

"Very well, Amelia, if you'll follow me." He said, turning and leading the woman down the halls.

"I'll show you to my office so you can floo back to the estate." Minerva said, nodding to Severus who nodded curtly back before sweeping off towards the dungeons.

-Albus sighed in frustration as the fire in his office's fireplace turned back to its normal orange/red flames. The meeting with Amelia hadn't gone the way he had hoped for. The woman was ruthless-
and precise in her instructions and made him very much aware that, should he attempt to question Harry and his friends, then he could be arrested for tampering with an ongoing case. He couldn't afford such a thing, especially since nearly all of his political clout had been removed thanks to Minister Mathew's laws preventing people from holding more than one important political position. Yes, he still sits on the Wizengamot as Lord of the Dumbledore family, but that's it. A woman by the name of Diana Finch had replaced him as Chief Wizard while someone from America had become the Supreme Mugwump in the I.C.W. Another person had been elected as Britain's representative for that body as well. Yes, he's still Headmaster but that could easily be stripped from him as well if Amelia decided to dig into his past or if he, as she had put it, stepped out of line.

She had given him orders to tell the students that Professor Quirrell had taken ill and was at St. Mungo's. He's also to remove all of the traps on the third floor during the summer and the Cerberus is to go to a reserve in Ireland for Magical Creatures and the Troll was to be released back to its clan in the mountains. Amelia had also explained that she'll be returning with a specialized team to examine the final chamber and try to figure out all that had happened. Of course he had offered his services to her but she had curtly turned him down and said that this was matters for her department, not for the headmaster of a school. Yes, he had tried to remind her that he had extensive knowledge that she doesn't and might be able to help her more than whatever team she put together. However, Amelia had rather brutally slapped that idea down by explaining that the team is comprised of people from all over the world who know various branches of magic that he has likely never studied before.

Sadly, he has no choice but to listen to Amelia less he be taken to court. Lucas and Delilah are even less forgiving than Amelia and he knows that they've been informed of the times he's requested to meet with Harry. All of his plans have come unraveled thanks to the Othello's adopting Harry. He's aware of his station in their world, is highly confident and has friends that are firmly out of his circle of influence. The only thing that has been going for him is that the Weasley twins have befriended Harry and his other friends. Admittedly Ronald wasn't the most…subtle of people and has been severely heavy handed in his attempts to befriend Harry. Sadly, however, the twins are very free spirited and don't follow their mother's strict instructions. They're more like Arthur in that aspect and he's also been speaking with Molly and has learned that Arthur has begun cracking down on her and what she's able to do around the house.

It's not the most comforting of thoughts but he'll have to rely on young Ginerva getting close to Harry and his friends in order to have any semblance of influence in the boy's life. Minerva and his other professors have all reported that Harry is one of the top students of his year with Miss Granger having the top spot. Hopefully Ginerva will be a touch more subtle in her approach to befriend Harry and the others. Yes, a lot can go wrong, especially if Ginerva fails to get close to Harry, but it's worth a try. He needs to be able to control Harry and guide the boy down the path he needs to take.

"Where did I go wrong?" He muttered, frowning as he leaned back in his chair and looked out the window which looked over the lake.

How had the Othellos even known about the Dursleys? Or even the Potters for that matter?! Yes, Lucas and Delilah had been in Hogwarts, though Lucas had been four years ahead of Lily, James and their friends while Delilah had been three years ahead of them. Delilah was in Ravenclaw while Lucas was in Slytherin; something which had greatly worried him when he had learned that they had adopted Harry. The only time he had seen Lily hanging out with either of them was when Delilah had offered to tutor Lily in Ancient Runes and Defense. They never really seemed to spend time together outside of their tutoring sessions and Delilah and Lucas had been betrothed in Delilah's Sixth Year. Obviously he had missed something, especially since Delilah and Lucas appeared to have been close to Lily and James somehow. It was also rather disconcerting seeing Minerva and Severus interacting with them so…easily.
He had fully expected Severus to loath Harry given the hostile relationship between him and James. Yes, Severus had sneered and muttered rude remarks when Harry had been sorted into Gryffindor. He had also scoffed and rolled his eyes during staff meetings whenever the other staff members mentioned Harry’s high grades. However, lately he’s seemed to have calmed down in his attitude towards the young boy. Of course he's glad that Severus seems to have dropped the grudge he's held against James Potter.

"How do I get Harry under my influence again? If he doesn't listen to me then it could spell the destruction of our entire society." Albus muttered, reaching over to the glass bowl on the edge of his desk and grabbing one of the lemon drops.

As he popped it into his mouth a gentle trilling sound filled the air. Albus blinked and looked over to Fawkes' perch. His familiar trilled again, causing his worries to sooth slightly. However, his moment of peace was interrupted when a flash of golden flames startled him. His eyes widened when as a gold and white colored Phoenix flashed into his office and hovered above his desk. The Phoenix trilled lightly before dropping a letter onto the stunned Headmaster's desk and flashing away once more. Fawkes remained silent, his eyes locked onto where the other Phoenix had appeared. Albus, however, was very worried. The only other person who had a Phoenix besides him is Nickolas. Nickolas had found Asha when he had been a young boy and they had bonded instantly. Since then they had been inseparable and he had been inspired by his former mentor when he had first laid his eyes on the beautiful Phoenix. Fawkes is actually Asha's offspring and he had bonded with Fawkes a little after he defeated Gillert.

Shaking himself, Albus swallowed thickly and picked up the letter, wincing when he saw that it is indeed from Nickolas. Picking up a letter opener, he cut the envelop open and pulled out the letter inside.

Albus,

You promised me and my wife that the Stone would be safe! The monitoring device that we had linked to the Stone broke the night before last which should only happen if the Stone was destroyed. I can't believe that I actually listened to you when it came to the Stone and its safety. I blindly trusted you because of our friendship and you've betrayed that trust. Please tell me you at least had the Stone in a secure location within the school. I also thought that you had the backgrounds of all of your staff members checked? Unless someone managed to sneak into the school?

Thankfully we have enough elixir left to put our affairs in order and ensure that none of our notes wind up in the wrong hands. My great-granddaughter will be taking over as Lady Flamel and has deemed the alliance between our Houses as null and void. You should be receiving a letter from Gringotts and from our lawyer concerning the details and the fact that you will be expected to pay back all debts owed to our family.

I had high hopes for you, Albus. But lately you've been proving me wrong. Consider this the last time I will be contacting you.

Lord Flamel

"Damn it!" Albus growled, slamming the letter down onto his desk as the portraits of the former headmaster and headmistresses complained about the outburst.

Was the entire world against him?! First the Othellos adopted Harry which ensured that the boy was out of his sphere of influence, then Ronald botches up every attempt to make friends with the lad while Harry makes friends with people he can't control, and now Amelia has completely blocked all possible routes to ask Harry and Dean what happened in the final chamber. How had the Stone been
destroyed? Had Harry released a burst of powerful accidental magic that destroyed the Stone or had he somehow tricked Quirrell into hitting it with a powerful spell? Was Quirrell working alone or was he working with someone? How had the Mirror been destroyed?

"There are too many unknowns." Albus sighed, dropping his head into his hands as his mind whirled with various thoughts.

Sighing, he lifted his head and turned slightly, spotting a calendar hanging on the wall nearby. Like all calendars which are used by professors and general business men and women, each date was filled in with something that had to be done. The nineteenth was circled in gold with a note below it marking it as the end-of-the-year feast. The feast used to be held not long after the main school exams were finished. However, recently he had decided to change it so it was held on the day before the students went home in the morning. The graduation ceremony was to take place on the eighteenth and the Seventh Years will get an honors breakfast and lunch which they can have their parents, relatives and guardians attend. He just hoped everything went well for the last few weeks of the school. Shaking his head, he looked over at the miniature House points counters and his eyes widened. Just this morning before breakfast, Slytherin had been in the lead by over a hundred points.

Hufflepuff had been in second place while Gryffindor and Ravenclaw had been tied for third. However, now Gryffindor is ahead of Slytherin by a good amount, which didn't make much sense…unless Minerva had given Harry and his friends points for some reason.

Reaching into one of the drawers of his desk, Albus pulled out a thick book and set it down. Opening it, he flipped through the various pages until he reached the Gryffindor points tally for the year. Records of the House point system are kept in this book for the entire year, which meant he was able to see how many points were lost or gained and for what reason. He generally had no reason to look through it as Minerva has the same book in her own office where she was able to give or take points and overrule another professor in point addition or removal. He only looked through it whenever one of the professors asked him to.

"Now, how did Gryffindor gain a lead…" He muttered, flipping through a few more pages until he came to the most recent entry.

His eyes widened when he saw that Minerva had awarded forty points to Harry, Hermione, Dean, Neville and the twins this morning. However, what truly shocked him was the fact that Severus had awarded them five points each. Yes, Severus has become more…relaxed when it comes to awarding points. The head of the Department of Education had spoken with all of the staff members about what was expected of them when Minister Matthews began implementing the various changes which will affect the school. He could only assume that the head of the department had strong words with Severus about his performance as a professor here which made his dour potions master 'relax' so to say. It was also worrying that Severus was keen to listen to Amelia rather than tell him what had happened. He knows that Severus is now aware of what had happened in the final chamber and he had attempted to read his potions master's mind in front of the infirmary but Severus had firmly kept him out and warned him not to make another attempt.

"What use is a spy when he refuses to inform me about what is going on?" Albus growled, scowling down at the points book before slamming it shut.

"Severus is a Slytherin, Albus, or have you forgotten? He obviously knows that it's far better to listen to the head of the D.M.L.E. and save his own hide rather than soothe your ruffled feathers."

Albus scowled and turned his head, looking at the portrait of Phineas Black. The thin man raised an eyebrow at Albus, though didn't say anything else as Albus scowled at him.

"I know he's a Slytherin, Phineas." Albus muttered, making the other portraits look from him to the
least liked headmaster in Hogwarts' history.

"Then it shouldn't be a shock to you that he would rather save his own skin than obey your every command like some kind of cur." Phineas said, a sneer on his face as Albus glared at him.

Muttering under his breath, Albus turned his back on the portraits and strode out of his office. Phineas rose from his chair and exited his painting through a hidden door behind a curtain. He glanced darkly at another door which looks to be destroyed. That door had led to his other portrait that had once hung in Grimmauld Place. Unfortunately his disappointment of a great-great-grandson, Sirius, had burned his portrait along with a few others or had them locked down in one portrait. Instead, he headed through the hidden door and found himself in another one. Looking out at the room in front of him, Phineas looked around for the owner of the rooms and found the man reading on his couch with a glass sitting on a nearby end table.

"Potions Master Snape." He called, making the man look up sharply.

"Phineas?" Severus asked, frowning as he marked his place in his book and set it aside.

"You need to be careful, Severus. Albus is growing...suspicious of you." Phineas warned, watching as Severus frowned and shifted.

"How so?"

"Because you wouldn't let him see what Heirs Potter-Othello and Thomas-Woods were up against beneath the trapdoor. You've sided with Madame Bones instead." He answered, making Severus roll his eyes.

"I've never let the old man into my mind before so why should I start now? He won't dare have me removed from my post. He still needs me as his precious spy." Severus said, Phineas nodding lightly.

"Yes, he does still need you. However, he is a master of deception and has been known to use spells and potions to get what he wants. I advise more caution when interacting with him and whenever he should visit. I also advise that you warn Heir Potter-Othello about the headmaster's desperation to have him under his...guidance." Phineas warned, making Severus frown.

"You're being rather...informative. I thought you loath all children and anyone who doesn't concern you." Severus said, caution in his voice as the deceased headmaster scoffed.

"You're correct in that information. However, if you're unaware, Heir Potter-Othello is distantly related to me though cousin Dora Black who married into the Potter family. I always look out for family." Phineas explained, Severus nodding lightly.

"Very well. Thank you, Phineas. I shall pass on your advice and I will take more precautions whenever I have to interact with the Headmaster." Severus said, bowing his head slightly to the portrait.

"See to it that you do." Phineas said, walking back through the door and arriving back in the headmaster's office.

Severus stared at the blank portrait before reaching over and taking a drink of his scotch. He wasn't too surprised in learning that Albus was becoming frustrated with everything that has been going on. All of the old man's plans have crashed and burned and many secondary plans are now relying on the shoulders of that redheaded Weasley chit. Oh, he's heard about what happened on Christmas and the twins talked about what their father had done about their mother's attempt at controlling and influencing Harrison. He would have loved to have been there to see Arthur go off on his wife about
her attempts to ensnare Harry; it must have been a glorious argument. Shaking his head, Severus glanced down at the Prince family ring on his finger. His beloved mother had never been able to fully inherit the family fortune; instead it had gone to his great-uncle who refused to allow his bastard father to become Lord Prince. His great-uncle was kind enough to supply his mum and him a monthly allowance, which thankfully never fell into his father’s greedy hands.

When his mother died he had become the main target for his father’s drunken rages. However, his father only lived until his Sixth Year which was when his great-uncle was finally able to step in and help him out. His great-uncle’s wife had died during childbirth with their child and he had never remarried. When his great-uncle had passed, the man left everything to him. Unlike many other Purebloods and Halfbloods who gloated about inheriting a fortune and Lord/Ladyship, he had kept everything quiet. Only the Brotherhood and his close friends know that he’s actually a lord; not even Albus knows. One of his good friends from the Potions Guild is actually his proxy on the Wizengamot in order to help him keep up the ruse.

"I’ll get the charms and protections on this updated this weekend." He muttered, lightly rubbing the onyx stone set on the gold ring.

While his Occlumency should be good enough to withstand any attempts Albus might make, he still doesn’t trust the man to not try something else. A charmed pendant from his family’s vaults should help absorb any of the spells that the ring might not be strong enough to completely deflect and should help shield his thoughts more. He also made plans to make more Neutralizer potions for himself, Harry, Dean and the boys’ friends. There’s no doubt in his mind that Albus would love having the Longbottom’s under his thumb once more. They had completely broken away from Albus a few days before their awards ceremony and had even turned in their Order of the Phoenix badges. That had been rather amusing for Severus to watch. The old man’s face had paled and he looked as if someone had slapped him with a fish. They had also called in all debts that were owed to their House though they had cancelled the debts between those Houses they wanted to continue to be allies with; needless to say House Dumbledore hadn’t been one of those Houses.

Sighing softly, Severus abandoned the notion of continuing his reading and instead headed through his quarters and into his own, private potions lab. There are four work stations in the room along with a cleaning station and shelves filled with various ingredients. Moving to the shelves, Severus collected all of the ingredients needed to make Neutralizer Potions. Thankfully, he’ll have enough to give to the others and himself for the last week and a half. It’s not that big of a stretch of the imagination that Albus might try something before the schoolyear lets out. Yes, the man seems to have given up on Ronald making friends with Harry and his group but there’s always something that the old coot could attempt.

"It’s always better to be over prepared than under prepared." Severus muttered, heading to a work station and beginning to prepare the ingredients.

Harry, Dean and Fred were released from the hospital wing the next day, in which both boys were glad to be back with their friends. When they walked into the Great Hall that morning, there was a noticeable drop in the level of noise as people noticed their arrival. However, things returned to normal after Tonks stormed up to them and smacked them upside the head before hugging them tightly. She then proceeded to drag them both over to the Hufflepuff table where their other friends were already sitting and smirking at them. Susan, Hannah, Millicent, Jillian and Eliana hugged the boys tightly, making them flush and glare as a few of the older male ‘Puffs laughed at them. It was during breakfast when they learned that the ‘official’ story was that someone had broken into the school in an attempt to get whatever was hidden at the end of the trials on the third floor. ‘Apparently'
Harry, Dean and Fred, along with Hermione, George and Neville, learned of the intruder and went to go and stop the intruder. They obviously managed to but had been hurt in the process. There were also rumors that Professor Quirrell had gone after them to help but had been gravely injured in the process which is why he was sent to St. Mungo's instead of remaining in the hospital wing here.

The group of friends was more than happy to encourage the rumors since none of them felt like having the rest of the student body know the whole truth. Of course the rest of their House was more than happy to celebrate since they’re now in the lead for the House cup; something that the Slytherins were very unhappy about judging from the sneers and dirty looks most of the Snakes were sending them. During breakfast, many Hufflepuffs were glancing at the group often and they knew that the 'Puffs wanted to ask questions about what had happened in the forbidden room and who had broken into the school. Harry, Dean and the others deflected any questions that were asked by those who were brave enough to ask them by explaining that they had been told not to tell anything by Madame Bones.

After breakfast, the group of friends headed outside where they were joined by Daphne, Tracy and Blaise. Sitting down by the lake, they happily talked about any summer plans. Hermione proudly explained that her mum has already decided on what she wants to do in way of occupation. Because Witches and Wizards don't really have need for Muggle dentists, Emma has decided to make a public library. The others were greatly interested in this, especially Daphne, Tracy, Blaise and Neville.

They explained that there isn't a public library anywhere in the Magical world yet and most people just went out and bought whatever book they might need. Of course they wanted to know more about her mum's ideas and Hermione was more than happy to elaborate.

"Mum plans on purchasing a plot of land in Hogsmeade to build the library on. It'll be two stories and have various sections. The first floor is going to be the 'Magical' section and the second floor is going to be the 'Muggle' section. She's been talking about having private study rooms for people who want to study with their friends without worrying about disturbing others and there'll also be a computer lab for people to use the internet and other programs. They will be charged a certain amount to use the computers per hour." Hermione explained, the others listening with great interest.

"Will food and drink be allowed inside the library?" Jillian asked, remembering how the school's librarian was very strict about there not being any food or drink inside the library.

"Only water and some snacks. She has hopes of having a vending machine or two in the main entrance of the library. The children's sections will also have a play area for little ones and she's hoping to have volunteers to read stories to children on certain days of the week. She's also hoping that, in time, authors might be willing to come to the library for book signings and even special events." Hermione said, Harry nodding thoughtfully.

"It's pretty common in the Muggle world for such things to happen. I think your mum has a great chance, 'Mione." He said, making the brunette beam at him.

"It certainly sounds interesting! My mum is always complaining that it costs so much to buy books; especially since she might not even like the book until after she's purchased it." Blaise explained, the other Purebloods nodding in agreement.

"Do you know how big the library will be?" Hannah asked, watching as Hermione tilted her head.

"I'm not sure yet. Mum has been looking at the different plots of land to build on. She's hoping to hire plenty of people to staff the library and take care of the grounds. It's another dream of her's to have an outdoor reading area, like a small garden." Hermione added, smiling wistfully as the others grinned.
"I have a feeling that you'll be one of the workers." Harry said, chuckling soft as Hermione looked at him as if he were insane to suggest otherwise.

"Of course."

"It sounds like a great idea. I know libraries are very popular in the Muggle world. It shouldn't take too long before the trend picks up here, especially if your mother has a wide selection of reading material." Hannah said, Hermione humming in agreement.

"She's been asking Harry's parents, Dean's mum and a few others for various suggestions on what books to stock. There'll be many different sections for each floor, though more so for the Magical floor." Hermione explained, the others nodding in agreement.

"That's not surprising. There are so many different subjects in our society and then there's sub-sections of those subjects…"Jillian said, trailing off when she saw the others grinning at her.

"What?!"

"You seem rather eager about the idea." Dean said, chuckling as Jillian blushed and huffed.

"Of course. I love going to the library near my home. I've always disliked the fact that there wasn't any kind of magical library except in schools." She said, making the others chuckle but nod in agreement.

Conversation drifted and the twins revealed that their older brothers Bill and Charlie plan on visiting at some point during the summer to see the new house. Susan explained that she'll be going to France with Hannah and her parents and it was her hope that her aunt will be able to join them at some point. Eliana was going off to the United States to visit some more family while Jillian was planning on heading to her family's private island in Jamaica. Daphne and Tracy were planning on a joint family vacation to Spain while Blaise was planning on heading back to Italy to visit his relatives once more.

"I think my Mum has found someone knew in Nepal. She hasn't said anything, but during Yule she kept going out to the city." He explained, the others looking at him with interest.

"Are you okay with that?" Millicent asked, watching as Blaise cocked his head thoughtfully.

"Honestly, I would be happy if she found someone. She's had a few boyfriends, but none that she felt comfortable enough to marry." Blaise explained, his friends nodding in understanding.

They talked a little while longer about their summer plans. Harry, Dean and Hermione planned on staying home for the most part and Millicent just planned on spending time finding a summer job so she can help pay for new clothes for herself and Will. She didn't want to either of them to completely depend on the trust vault her parents had set up for them to use until she comes of age and acquires access to the main family vaults. Yes, there's plenty of money in their trust vault to pay for both of them to go to school and have what they need, but it was always nice to have pocket money, especially for birthdays and in case they needed something extra. Of course the others were slightly saddened to hear this, but they understood completely that Millicent is trying to make the Bulstrode name into a name that's respected once more. She doesn't want to live under the dark shadow her father had created and the only way to do that is to try her best and prove people wrong about her and her little brother.

After splitting up, Harry headed back up to Gryffindor tower deep in thought. Ever since he and the others brought Millie into their group, she's changed drastically. She's still rather quiet, but she's no
longer frightened to jump into conversations or speak her mind. There have been plenty of times when she's verbally smacked down himself or one of the others because they got too carried away or said something 'repulsive'. She's proven herself to be very intelligent, thoughtful and observant. It was actually rather scary when he learned exactly how much Millie noticed. There have been a few times when she's caught him coming out of the Room after a private workout session. However, she never really asked him what he was doing. She would just give him this inquisitive look but wouldn't ask what he had been doing. According to Dean, he's had the same thing happen on numerous occasions. There was just...something about her that set his senses screaming at him but he didn't know what and it's been driving him bonkers.

Reaching the tower, Harry headed up to the dorm room and blinked when he saw his mailbox flashing softly on his bedside table. Toeing off his shoes, Harry flopped down onto his bed and grabbed his mailbox. Opening it, he raised an eyebrow when he saw two letters inside and waiting for him. Pulling them out, he closed the mailbox and replaced it just as Mira flew in the open window. She greeted him with a happy rumble and settled down on his chest to read the letters with him.

**Prongslet,**

Do you remember the concern you had about Muggleborns not being allowed to practice magic at home? I believe one of your friends had written home about it at one point. Well, we certainly haven't forgotten and it was just recently brought before the Wizengamot. While there were and still are concerns about the Statute being breeched, many happen to agree with the argument that was brought forth. It isn't very fair for students who live with magical parents/guardians to be able to practice magic while their peers who live in Muggle homes cannot practice what their professors want them to learn.

The outcome of the meeting was to have a set of wards placed around each Muggleborn's house. These wards will allow the student to perform magic in front of their parents/guardians only. They will also take a written oath agreeing to only perform magic in front of those who already know about the Magical world. Things are finally looking better for our world which is why the Wizengamot is taking such precautions. The last thing they want is for an eager new Witch or Wizard who just finished their First Year to go home and show their Muggle friends what they learned. While it's highly unlikely that another 'witch hunt' will begin, it is still a huge risk. Her Majesty can only do so much to help protect us from Muggles who would seek to harness our powers and use them for their own gain.

I wanted to let you know ahead of time though the story should break tomorrow morning. Ministry officials will be visiting over the week to get the addresses from students and to have them sign the oath. Officials will also be visiting the homes of other Muggleborn and Muggle-raised students who will beginning their magical education come September. While it might be concerning in having the students under a contract, it's so the secret can remain contained.

In other news, Kano and I are already preparing for the wedding come August. It's a madhouse here in Grimmauld and I'm not sure if you'll want to visit this summer considering on how many people are constantly coming and going as Kano makes plans. Her family is going to be portkeying in at the beginning of July in order to help with the final preparations. A lot of influential families will be coming to our wedding according to the guest list, Remus is planning on standing as my witness while Kano's younger sister will be her witness. The Delacour's will be attending the wedding as well, which is something that I figured you'd like since it's been some time since you've seen Fleur and Gabby.

*We all can't wait to see you, Dean and Hermione again! Remus and Kano send their love.*
Harry was shocked to learn that the Wizengamot actually approved of Muggleborns and Muggle-raised should be allowed to practice magic at home. However, he was glad that those living with their Muggle relatives, parents and guardians will be able to fully learn and understand what the professors are trying to teach them over the summer. He already knows that all of the Muggleborn and raised will be overjoyed with the idea of showing their loved ones who know about magic what they’ve learned. He completely understood the restrictions being placed and why they're put in place. It was easy to imagine an eager First Year wanting to show off for his family and friends. Word of the child's magical abilities would spread and of course no child wants to be called a liar and the child will strive to prove their abilities by showing off more magic which would continue to spread until it reached the wrong person. There’s no telling what scientists would do to them if they managed to get wind of the Magical world.

Setting the first letter aside, Harry opened the second one and was shocked to see who it was from.

Heir Potter-Othello,

I never truly got to thank you for what you and your friends did to help my wife and I. Your parents have shown me and Perenelle the memories of your battle. You and your friends put yourselves in harm’s way to retrieve the Stone and you were successful. I was shocked in seeing the parasite that Riddle has become and I have agreed with your parents to help back them in whatever they may do in an attempt to stop Riddle from coming back and waging war on our world once more. I also understand that you will undoubtedly be in the thick of it so I want you to know that I will be more than willing to help you in any way I can.

Your parents, godfather and tutors have spoken highly of you and your friends, especially concerning your talents and abilities. My great-granddaughter Lucy, is taking over as Lady Flamel while my wife and I move to one of our hidden properties to live out the rest of our lives in peace. I have told her about you and your talents and she has already begun to express an interest in potentially forming an alliance between House Flamel and House Potter. You should receive a message from her sometime this summer about possibly meeting with her. Of course your parents are to attend the meeting should you wish to meet with her.

Thank you, once more, for saving the Stone and keeping it from falling into the hands of Riddle. I hope to hear about great things from you, Mister Potter-Othello. You are an extraordinary young man with much promise and potential.

Sincerely,

Nickolas R.A. Flamel

Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Flamel

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The last week and a half of the school year seemed to pass by slowly for those who had finished their exams. For the Fifth and Seventh Years they were filled with tense days wondering if they had any chance of getting into the college or university they applied for or if they passed their exams or had failed drastically. When their exams finally ended, it was as if the very spirit of the school had risen. However, Fifth and Seventh Years could be seen worriedly discussing the possible results of their exams which wouldn't be known until the second week of summer. A few days before the end of the year, Tonks nearly knocked Harry to the ground and was squealing and jumping up and down with him in her arms. Thankfully the over-eager Metamorphmagus had caught him in a relatively
quiet hallway so they didn't get stared at too much.

"Tonks! What is it?!" Harry wheezed, nearly collapsing when his cousin finally released him.

"This! Look!" Tonks squealed, her eyes dancing as her hair cycled rapidly through various bright colors.

Harry blinked when she shoved an official looking letter at him. Taking the letter, he smoothed it out and blinked, his eyes widening when he saw the crest for Phoenix University in London at the head of the letter.

Miss Nymphadora Tonks

Upon reviewing you application to our university to study Criminal Justice and Criminal Psychology, we are pleased to inform you that you have been placed on a list which ensures that we will fully review your results with a high chance of accepting you into our university. Our decision was based on your excellent grades in all seven years of your schooling at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. We have also reviewed your O.W.L. results and were pleased to see that you qualified for N.E.W.T.s in Defense, History, Potions, Ancient Runes, Transfiguration, Charms, Herbology and Arithmancy. We will be receiving a copy your N.E.W.T. results as soon as they have been graded but your examiners have expressed their high hopes in your grades.

Should you have passed your N.E.W.T.s, we shall send you a full acceptance letter with details as to when to meet with one of the councilors from our university. You have also made it onto a list for possible full scholarships. We will be proud to offer you a full scholarship should you be approved by the board.

Brandon Withers

Brandon Withers

Dean of Phoenix University, London

"Bloody hell!" Harry exclaimed, his eyes wide as Tonks nodded her head rapidly.

"Can you believe it?! I applied to the university early January when the professors began recommending that we do so. I never thought I would get accepted by Phoenix University! I applied to Le Fay College in Wales and Hecate University here in Scotland. But Phoenix University got in contact with me first." Tonks rambled, squeaking when Harry suddenly hugged her tightly.

"I'm happy for you, Tonks! This is great!" He said, grinning as the older Witch nodded happily.

"I plan on majoring in Criminal Justice and getting a minor in Psychology if possible. Madame Bones recently contacted me about having me just apply and enter the Auror corps but I want to get my degrees. In order to become a Master Auror you need degrees or to have been in service for near ten years with a spotless reputation. Besides, if being an Auror isn't what I think it is, I will have more options available to me." Tonks said, Harry nodding as he handed her back her letter.

"You'll be a great Auror, Nymmy." He said, grinning as Tonks flushed but beamed at him.

"Did you tell your mum?" He asked, his cousin nodding.

"Yeah, I called her as soon as I got the letter. She and Dad are bloody proud of me. I think they might be planning a celebration for me though I told them to hold off until I hear if I've been accepted or not."
"Oh, please. They've practically already accepted you and given you a scholarship to boot! What's not to celebrate?" Harry asked, grinning as Tonks lightly punched his arm while blushing.

"Shut up. Anyway, how did your exams go? You lot got your results, right?" She asked, Harry nodding as they began walking down the hallway.

"Yup. Hermione made the top of our Year group and I think there are rumors that she's even broken a few records for First Years already. I'm behind her, then Daphne, Dean and Millicent, Tracy and Susan are tied, Elianna, Neville and Jillie are tied, then Blaise and Hannah are tied. I know that the First Year 'claws were getting flak from their older housemates for not claiming the top spots. From what I've heard Ravenclaw has always had the top spot since my mum graduated so they're pretty sour that a couple Lions, Badgers and Snakes have claimed the top spots." Harry said, snickering as Tonks shook her head.

"Many of them are just stuck-up, arrogant pricks. I've heard that there's a lot of inner-House bullying in the Raven's Nest." Tonks said, Harry frowning at the thought.

"I know that thing's aren't perfect in Gryffindor, Slytherin and Hufflepuff, but I thought that there would be some respect between the house of the intelligent." He muttered, making Tonks snort lightly.

"My friends said that Cho Chang has her own clique and they're terrorizing some of the First and Second Years. She has them terrified to go to Professor Flitwick." She said, making Harry scowl at the thought.

He hoped that Eliza wouldn't be sorted into Ravenclaw when she came to Hogwarts. If what Tonks was telling him is true, then his sister could be singled out because of her relationship to him. He's seen Chang and her group batting their eyes at him even though she claims to be head-over-heels in love with Cedric Diggory, a rather handsome Hufflepuff. Not only that but his dad and Sirius told him that the Chang's were very...hostile when they had refused the betrothal contract Lord Chang had presented to them. It didn't seem to matter to the man that they refused all of the betrothal contracts. He knows that she and her little group of friends are some of Hermione's main bullies, though thankfully his brunette friend has been standing up for herself more and more lately. It also helped that Jillian, Eliana, Susan and Hannah never went too far from Hermione and were always more than willing to stick up for her.

"So, anything exciting happen in the Lion's den?" Tonks asked, grinning as Harry rolled his eyes at her but grinned.

"Well, Ronald got a Howler from his mum again. Fred and George were surprised since they thought their dad had taken away or destroyed all of her Howler paper." He explained, Tonks shaking her head at the thought of the woman.

"Her Howlers are stuff of legends. I'm surprised it came while he was in the tower and not during meals. So many people would make fun of the boys if a Howler arrived for them. Her shrieking made it possible to hear those bloody things four floors up." Tonks said, Harry snorting lightly at the thought.

"Yeah, apparently Ronnie didn't do too well on his exams and barely passed the year. If he had gotten a few points lower on his results then he would've had to repeat his First Year. From the sounds of it his parents are planning on having him take summer lessons at the Ministry in order to help him fully 'grasp' what he didn't seem to understand. He wasn't too happy about that." Harry explained, wincing slightly as he remembered Ron's blowup about having summer classes.
"What?! What do you mean I have to take summer classes?" Ron demanded, his face and ears rapidly turning a bright red color in his anger as he stared at the offending Howler.

Fortunately, or unfortunately depending on who you were talking to, the Howler had finished its intended message and proceeded to rip itself apart; leaving Ron standing there fuming at the shredded pieces while the rest of the common room looked on in surprise. Lavender, Parvati and Seamus appeared to have gone slightly deaf from the way they were shaking their heads in an attempt to clear them. They hadn't been able to get away far enough when the Howler had arrived and thus, they had been subjected to hearing Molly Weasley's screeches from a distance of a few inches rather than feet. Many of the older students were, sadly, used to hearing the Weasley matriarch's screeches though they had to admit it was rather interesting hearing the woman tear into someone other than the twins.

"Like hell I'm going to be going to some stuffy classroom during the summer. The summer is for goofing off and having fun, not learning and spending time reading books and doing assignments." Ron growled, stomping away with his friends looking at each other.

"Ron, you know we're going to be getting summer assignments from our professors, right?" Lavender asked, her tone soft as the irate redhead spun and looked at her.

"Why the bloody hell would they do that? Haven't we learned enough?!"

"Ron, we're always given summer assignments." Percy said, stepping up to his brother with the twins behind him.

"Nobody ever said anything about summer assignments!" Ron snapped, blinking when his brothers took his arms and dragged him up the stairs to the boys' dorms.

The silence in the common room only lasted for a few minutes before conversations resumed, though many were now talking about the new Weasley drama that is happening. Hermione shook her head, stunned on how thick Ron was to believe that there wasn't going to be assignments over the summer. Lavender, Parvati and Seamus looked at each other, mentally debating if they should go up and check on their friend. However, they figured that it would be best to let his brothers handle his impending blow-up. Lavender sighed and glanced up at the stairs again before following the other two over to one of the tables to wait for Ron.

"Needless to say he's been in a piss-poor mood ever since," Harry said, glancing at Tonks as she shook her head.

"According to the twins he did fairly well in History, Muggle Customs, Broom Handling and Customs of Different Races. Percy explained that if Ron does well in his summer classes and tests well, then the Department of Education will accept the average of the two scores and it'll likely increase his grades. He and the twins may not like Ron too much due to his…behavior, but they don't want to see a member of their family flunk out of school. All three of them are determined to help Ron as much as they can over the summer." Harry explained, Tonks nodding her head solemnly.

"Good. I know Percy plans on getting a summer job at the Ministry again and the twins have their training and their jobs with Remus and Sirius. But it's good that they're looking out for their little brother; no matter how much of a prat he is." She said, Harry humming in agreement.
Reaching the Great Hall, the pair split up and headed to their groups of friends. Harry grinned when he saw everyone eating at the Gryffindor table and hurried over. Glancing further down the table, he saw Ron, Seamus, Lavender and Parvati glaring towards him and his friends. It wasn't surprising really; especially since they now have four Slytherin's eating with them. Ron and Seamus had thrown a fit the first time the group had sat at their table and only when Professor McGonagall had come over did they finally shut up and learn their lesson. Apparently it wasn't right for Gryffindors to be friends with Slytherins and Harry's parents are likely rolling in their graves seeing him hanging out with the 'slimy snakes' according to Ron. Parvati and Lavender still manage to find things to snip about whenever they're near Millicent, though they have begun learning to keep their mouths shut thanks to Jillian and Eliana glaring at them. No matter how much the two 'gossip queens' boast, they're still terrified of Jillian and Eliana.

"What took you, Ry?" Eliana asked, looking up from her meal as Harry sat down beside her.

"Sorry, Tonks ambushed me." He said, grinning sheepishly as he piled his plate with a few sandwiches and some fruit.

"What do you mean?" Jillian asked, taking a deep drink from her thermos.

"She got a letter from Phoenix University. They practically gave her a full-ride scholarship and explained that, if her N.E.W.T. results are good, then she'll be able to study Criminal Justice there." Harry explained, grinning at the shocked and happy looks on his friends' faces.

"That's great!" Tracy and Daphne gushed, the others nodding happily.

Cheers erupting from the Hufflepuff table made all of them look over. They laughed when the saw Tonks being hugged and congratulated by her friends and by a good number of her Housemates. Tonks is a well-loved girl in Hogwarts, especially since she's been an outstanding Prefect and Head Girl. A lot of students from all four Houses looked up to her so it wasn't too surprising for others from the different Houses to head over and see what was going on. Harry and Dean grinned when they saw Tonks blushing and grinning as she explained what happened to various people; all of whom expressed their happiness for her and congratulated her.

"How many colleges are there?" Hermione asked, tilting her head to the side as the others looked at her.

"Well, there's Phoenix University in London. Then there is Le Fay College in Wales and Hecate University here in Scotland. I believe Merlin University is somewhere in Norfolk." Neville said, the other's nodding happily.

"The Ministry also has a program that helps Magicals get into Muggle colleges if they wish to. They're able to change the scores you get from your exams to something that Muggle universities and colleges accept. However, it's up to the individual to study and prepare for Muggle classes." Hannah explained, smiling at Hermione's eager look.

"It's also pretty common for Magical colleges to cross-teach subjects from both Magical and Muggle worlds. Andromeda knows both Muggle and Magical law." Dean added, Harry nodding as the others listened with interest.

"Mum's going to be happy to hear this." Hermione said, already thinking about what she has to tell her mum.

"You should wait until we leave for home, Mione. That way you have something to tell her." Harry said, he and the others chuckling at Hermione's look.
"I guess you're right. But there's so much I want to talk about!"

"And there's only a few more days left. You can make it." Eliana said, smiling as she patted Hermione on her back.

The final days passed with a lot of fanfare. Three days before the end of the school year, the Seventh Years finally had their graduation ceremony. A stand had been erected in the center of the Quidditch pitch and parents, guardians and relatives of the graduating students filled the stands. Some of the younger students, mostly those who are friends and family of the graduates, were also able to attend. Harry was able to attend thanks to his relation with Tonks and he was grinning ear-to-toe as he sat beside Andromeda, Ted and Sirius, as Tonks walked down the aisle to accept her diploma. She had a bright smile on her face as she shook hands with Headmaster Dumbledore and then Professor Sprout since the woman is her Head of House. Each time a student was called up; the headmaster would say a few things about the student such as their academic success, accomplishments or some hilarious story.

Because of her position as Head Girl, Tonks and a boy named James Walters who was Head Boy were called up and each made a speech. There was plenty of laughter and jeering as Tonks and James regaled some of the more hilarious things that happened in the school during their seven years there, though they both touched on how much things have changed and how it has changed for the better. When the speeches ended, all of the graduates cheered and shot off noise-maker spells. A nice touch, though, was when a set of specially made fireworks went off and lit the morning sky. Harry chuckled when he saw the fireworks; his godfather and Remus had made those fireworks; that much he was sure of.

Headed inside, the graduates and their visitors had a luncheon in the Great Hall while the rest of the school had their lunch in their common rooms. Every Seventh Year was informed that they could remain for the last few days in order to partake in the last feast and ride the Express home one last time. Some signed up to remain behind while others were more than eager to head home and begin their lives as adults and graduates. Through the various conversations, Harry was able to learn that many graduates had applied to college and were taking various classes to earn the degree they wanted. Others were planning on returning next year as apprentices to some of the professors and would also be taking weekend or night classes at one of the colleges at the same time. Some didn't yet know what they want to do now that they're finished with Hogwarts while others were planning on learning from their parents, relatives or guardians in order to take over a family business or practice.

Tonks was one of the few who decided to remain behind. According to her, she still has her Head Girl duties to perform which includes sending off the Prefects on the train and helping the staff to ensure that everyone got onto the Express on the last day. Harry was glad that his cousin was so willing to remain behind while many of her friends said their goodbyes and promised to keep in touch and hang out sometime soon. Many were planning on portkeying back home with their family while some were going to be apparating as soon as they passed through the wards around the school. Tonks spent more and more time with Harry and his friends during the last few days. Slytherin made a valiant effort to gain more House points to put them back on top, but they weren't able to pull it off. The day before the final day at the school, the professors finally passed out worksheets detailing their summer assignments, which made some happy, such as Hermione, while others groaned and muttered complaints under their breaths.

That evening was the Leaving Feast, in which everyone was dressed in their best school robes and had to sit at their House tables for the announcements. The Slytherin table cheered when Headmaster
Dumbledore announced their achievement in winning the Quidditch cup for the year, in which the silver trophy was placed in the center of the table. The banners hanging from the ceiling changed to show the Slytherin crest with a broom and the four balls used in Quidditch on the lower part of the banners. However, the Gryffindor table exploded into cheers when the headmaster announced their win of the House cup. The golden trophy was placed in the center of the table while the other banners displayed the Gryffindor crest. Ravenclaw and Slytherin were in second place for the House cup race and poor Hufflepuff had claimed third place. Sadly, in Quidditch, Hufflepuff had gotten second place with Ravenclaw claiming third and Gryffindor earning fourth place.

"Harry, mate, you have to try out for the Seeker position, when school starts up again." Fred begged, desperation in his voice as Harry blinked and raised an eyebrow.

"Is McLaggen really that ba-"

"Yes!"

Harry blinked owlishly as he looked at, not only the twins, but the three Chasers as well. Katie, Alicia and Angelina all looked rather shocked at their own outburst, but they were in complete agreement with each other. Angelina hurriedly explained that Cormac is a sexist, crude, bullying arsehole who was completely full of himself and put the blame on everyone else. According to the girls Cormac often made passes at them, even though they're older than the Second Year. Admittedly, Harry agreed with them since he had often heard some of the comments the older boy had made in the common room. Merlin, the guy tried to make passes at Eliana though he had backed off when Jillian threatened to turn him. Harry knew that Cormac wouldn't be too happy in being kicked off the team, but the Second Year sucked at Quidditch. Harry had actually cringed a few times during some of the games when Cormac missed three rather obvious opportunities to catch the Snitch for their House.

"Don't worry, I plan on trying out as soon as I'm able to. My parents have already been talking about getting me Seeker armor." Harry said, the girls letting out cheers which gained the attention of Oliver.

"The twins have told me how talented you are. If you tryout, you'll get the spot. I'm tired of seeing Flint's smirking mug." Oliver said, glaring over at the Slytherin table.

"Oh, he'll try out." Jillian said, making Harry raise an eyebrow at the girl.

"Oh really?" He asked, a teasing note in his voice as bright blue irises glared at him.

"Even if I have to drag you to the pitch myself, you're going to try out." She growled, making the others laugh at the girl.

Jillian, Hannah and Susan are all die-hard Quidditch fans. While Hermione often sat out on the games, the trio could be seen at the very front of the stands cheering and screaming for their team or whichever team they favored for the game. Harry knew that Jillian was serious about dragging him to the pitch so of course he promised to try out as soon as the tryouts were posted for the new school year. However, further down the table, Cormac scowled as he heard the three chits and the twins cheer and thank Potter. Yes, he's heard of Potter's 'legendary' skills on a broom. Madame Hooch often bragged about Potter's skills and how she had allowed him to help some of the other students who struggled with getting the hang of flying.

He doubted those claims. Wood and those three chits couldn't deal with the advice he gave them before and after the games. If they had just listened to him then they would've been the proud holders of the Quidditch cup instead of the blasted Snakes. It pissed him off that they blamed him for their
loss of the games and the fact that they're so quick to try and find a new Seeker angered him more than anything. However, there's a whole summer for him to train more and get even better at his Quidditch skills. Come the new school year, Wood will be begging him to stay on the team and Potter will be kicked to the curb. Nodding to himself, Cormac grinned and focused his attention back to Morgana Dawson, a rather pretty Second Year who's managed to ignore him thus far. She has spurned all of his attempts to get her to notice him or go out with him. However, she can't keep denying him forever. If next year goes as he hopes, she'll be fawning all over him by October instead of batting her eyes at that prick Diggory.

After the feast everyone headed back to their dorms to ensure all of their things were ready for tomorrow. Harry wisely got his friends to think ahead and they packed things to do during the train ride in their school bags while everything else went into their trunks. Harry also headed out with Hagrid to speak with the Fire Lizards near the lake. He learned that more of them have gone out to explore the world and attempt to find other Fire Lizards and there are a few more from the estate here. Three of Mira's siblings are now on the grounds and have actually found their mates, something which made Mira and Harry very happy. Mira flew off to play with her siblings while Harry and Hagrid sat down and watched Norbert join the group.

"I'll be sure ta watch over 'em this summer." Hagrid said, happiness in his voice as they watched the cavorting Fire Lizards.

"How is Norbert doing?" Harry asked, watching as said Fire Lizard let out a small roar and began playing a game of tag with a few others.

"He's good! Gettin' big as ya can see, 'Arry. I think he might 'ave gotten some of my height when we bonded." Hagrid said, nodding towards his familiar.

Norbert suddenly broke away from the group and flew over, though he landed on Harry's knees instead of going to his bonded. Harry peered down at Norbert carefully and was shocked to notice some things that he hadn't before. Normally a Fire Lizard's wings show how big they'll get, kind of like how you can tell how big a dog will get from the size of their paws when they're a puppy. Norbert's wings are still rather large for his body and his scales are still shimmering, which only happens with hatchlings when they're still growing. Fire Lizard hatchlings often shed their scales until they reach adulthood. Hagrid had Norbert open his mouth and, sure enough, the Fire Lizard still has some of his 'baby teeth' so to say.

"I have heard of Fire Lizards adopting traits from the people they bonded with. You're blood likely altered his D.N.A. and he'll be bigger than a normal Fire Lizard." Harry explained, Hagrid nodding his head in understanding and agreement.

"Albus is havin' an official from the Ministry come an' observe the groups 'ere. They just wanna further understand 'em." Hagrid said, Harry nodding lightly.

"They'll leave if they feel threatened so don't worry about them in that regard. I just hope that the Ministry won't try and take any of them." Harry said, blinking when Hagrid lightly patted him on the back.

"I won' let them, 'Arry. Don' worry." Hagrid said, making the black haired boy smile.

"I know you won't, Hagrid."

Harry spent an hour longer with Hagrid just talking about the various creatures in the Forest and about their familiars. Harry promised to write to the large man, in which Hagrid grinned and said that he would look for Harry's letters. The rest of the evening/night was spent just hanging out with
friends and preparing for the long train ride home tomorrow. The First Years learned that breakfast would be served earlier than normal since the Express would depart around nine in the morning. Of course some who loved to sleep in weren't too happy learning about this, but none-the-less all of them were excited to finally head back home and be free from school for a few months. Fred and George were eagerly making plans with Lee about when they can hang out during the summer and even talked with Katie, Alicia and Angelina about having them come to the Burrow sometime. Ron looked rather eager when he overheard that. It wasn't that much of a secret that the youngest redhead has a crush on Angelina even though she hasn't even said more than one sentence to him throughout the entire schoolyear.

In the morning, Harry, Dean and Neville woke and instantly hurried into the bathroom to shower and finish packing. After finishing their morning routines the boys collected all of their toiletries and packed those away in their trunks before shrinking their trunks down and putting them away in their pockets. Looking over at the other beds, they shook their heads when they saw that Seamus and Ron were still sleeping. Even though it was sorely tempting to let the pair sleep in and run late, they didn't want the twins or Percy to worry. Harry and Dean looked at each other before nodding with devilish smirks on their faces.

Pulling out their wands, Harry and Dean silently casted a charm Sirius had taught them. Buckets of cold water appeared above Seamus' and Ron's beds where they slowly began tipping. Neville's eyes widened before he turned and booked it out of the room, Harry and Dean right behind him. They shut the door behind them and began snickering as they sprinted down the stairs and into the common room. In the common room, Hermione, Eliana and Jillian blinked and frowned when they saw the three boys snickering and glancing up the stairs. However, before they could ask, Harry hurried them towards the door leading out of the common room.

"C'mon! Time for breakfast!" He said, lightly pushing Jillian towards the door as the girl looked at him with suspicion.

"What did you three do?" Hermione growled, trying to dig her heels in as Dean propelled her forward.

"We have no idea what you're talking about, 'Mione." Dean said, helping Hermione to climb through the portrait hole.

Before Eliana could go through herself, twin screams of shock echoed through the room. Those who were lingering in the common room froze and looked up towards the boys' dorm before looking towards Harry and the others. Instead of answering, Harry, Dean and Neville hurried the girls out of their House and scrambled through after them just as a soaked Ron and Seamus came running down the stairs. Dean looked back and smirked when he saw the pair round on Fred and George who weren't really helping as they rolled on the floor howling with laughter. Outside their House, Harry happily explained that he and Dean simply helped Ron and Seamus wake up so they won't be late. Hermione scolded them something fierce, though Jillian and Eliana were trying to stifle their giggles by covering their mouths with their hands. Neville had a grin on his face, though that only made Hermione round on him and scold him for not stopping the pair.

Thankfully, Hermione stopped scolding Harry and Dean by the time they reached the Great Hall; though she took to ignoring them during the meal. The remaining members of their House slowly trickled in, in which many walked over and patted Harry and Dean on the back for a prank well played. According to Katie, who was still giggling, the twins had taken the blame since they have done that to their youngest brother before and they certainly would've done the same thing if Ron had taken any longer to get up. The twins arrived and grinned at Harry and Dean, which made the pair smirk and nod slightly in thanks for taking the fall for the prank. Surprisingly, it didn't take too
long before Ron and his friends to arrive and dig in, though Ron and Seamus kept glaring at the twins throughout the meal. When the meal ended, Headmaster Dumbledore stood and wished them a good summer and reminded them to take care and be safe. He dismissed them after that and everyone stood and headed out to the carriages.

The air was filled with a sense of excitement as everyone piled into the carriages and headed down to Hogsmeade. Chatter filled the station as many got into lines to get onto the train. However, some students simply found their parents and, after saying their goodbyes, headed to their homes there in the village. Susan was the one who found them a compartment near the back of the train and they were soon settled down with their trunks stored securely on the rack above their seats. Harry sat near the window with Mira on his shoulders while Dean sat next to him with Ricki and Shade playing on the floor. Neville sat on the other side of Dean with the girls sitting across from them. Before long, Millicent joined them and added her trunk to the rack, though before she got to sit down Daphne, Tracy and Blaise walked in as well. All of them were grateful as the compartment slowly expanded so they all have room to sit down comfortably after storing their trunks away.

The train soon began moving and conversation flowed easily. The girls crowded around Hermione and Eliana as the pair produced an edition of Vogue; something that the Pureblood girls had never seen before. Neville and the other boys began playing a game of Exploding Snap as they talked about what they were looking forward to. Neville was eager to get back to his parents and explained that they might head to the United States or some other country for a week or so just for vacation. Throughout the ride, a few people stopped in to speak with Harry or one of the others quickly. All of them were rather interested when Jorden Bow, a Hufflepuff in their year, stopped in and spoke with Susan about something. What had them so interested was the way Susan blushed softly when the boy spoke with her and promised to see her sometime during the summer. Hannah had a knowing smile on her face and it only took a few seconds after Jorden left for the other girls to practically pounce on Susan and bombard her with questions about her relationship with the rather handsome Werewolf.

Susan tried to brush off the questions by stating that she's just kind of friends with Jorden, though Hannah didn't really help matters by talking about how often Susan and Jorden study together in the common room. Thankfully, for Susan at least, the other girls backed off and turned to other topics.

When the lady with the snack cart came, they all bought some snacks and drinks before settling down some. Pulling out books, magazines and other things to do, they spent the rest of the train ride in companionable silence. It helped that Ron and Draco didn't seek them out and attempt to antagonize them during the ride, which was also kind of surprising really. When Hermione came back from using the loo, she explained that she had spotted Draco talking with Spencer in a compartment alone. Harry made a mental note to ask his parents if they had uncovered anything about Spencer and his family other than what they already know.

When the train slowed down, all of them hurriedly packed away their things and shrunk down their trunks. Eliana was more than happy that she's now allowed to use magic outside of school. The Ministry officials had arrived early yesterday morning and all of the Muggleborn and Muggle raised students had signed a contract with the officials and were told about the new rules that they're under.

All of them were just happy that they're now allowed to use magic in order to further understand their schoolwork and even help out more around the house or flat where they live. When the train stopped, they headed out into the corridor where they joined the crowds to get off of the train. Blaise made it off first and stuck around to ensure the others got off safely without being shoved or trampled. He had to sweep Hannah off of her feet in order to get her out of the way of Marcus Flint since the large Slytherin looked as if he had been about to shove the girl. Hannah blushed heavily but thanked Blaise and hugged him as he set her down.

It didn't take long before they found their parents, in which they were surprised to see the adults
grouped together near one side of the station. Hurrying over, Hermione squealed when she saw her mum and pounced at Emma, making the woman laugh as she hugged her daughter back. Harry hugged Eliza tightly before hugging his parents while Dean was jumped on by his siblings. Blaise happily introduced everyone to his mother: Viola and his two younger sisters: Rena and Oria. Viola was a very beautiful woman with rich chocolate brown skin and silky black hair. Her daughters were just as beautiful and shyly greeted the others as they hung onto Blaise. Blaise promised to keep in touch before allowing his mother to lead them away since they apparently have an appointment soon. Everyone hung around for a little while before steadily heading home. Fred and George managed to break away from their family and promised to keep in touch and visit frequently during the break before they hurried back to rejoin their family.

Soon, it was only Harry, Dean, Hermione and their families remaining out of their group of friends. Lucas produced a portkey and smiled as everyone grabbed a hold of the hoop. After the customary 'jerk behind the navel' feeling and landing in front of the manor. Dean bid the others farewell before heading to his house with his family while Harry, Hermione and others headed inside. Hermione promised to see the others during dinner before she and her mum headed up to their rooms while Harry and Eliza headed up to his room so he could unpack. Mira was more than happy to be back and flew outside though Harry's open window to see her family.

"So?! What all happened?" Eliza asked, watching as her brother unpacked his clothes and handed them to a House Elf to be washed.

"Nothing too exciting." Harry explained, his sister humming lightly.

"Well, I still want to know." She said, making Harry chuckle and shake his head.

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Hey, everyone. So, I’ve been getting a lot, and I mean a lot of comments about my grammar and how I frequently switch from writing in past tense to present tense. Normally I wouldn’t let this get to me but I’m finally doing something about it. I will be rewriting all of my current stories both here and on archiveofourown/fanfiction. Until further notice I won’t be posting new chapters or working on the sequel for anything until I improve my writing style.

I’ve come a very long way and have improved greatly since I first began writing; something I am very proud of. However, I know I can’t spot every mistake I’ve made by myself. I am looking for a beta for both my Harry Potter stories and my Undertale stories. I’ve already reached out to two people, though I haven’t heard back from them just yet. If any of you would like to become my beta for either my Harry Potter or my Undertale stories then I’d be more than grateful. Just send me a private message. If you do want to offer your services as a beta, please note that I’ve never had one before and therefor I’m not sure if there’s a way to share documents here on the site or if we’d need to exchange actual e-mails.

Anyway enough rambling from me. As each chapter is redone I will replace the current chapter with the new one along with giving credit to whoever my new beta(s) may be and the date when the new version of the chapter has been added. Thank you all for your dedication and for trying to help me along. I truly appreciate it.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!