Mentality
by LissyStage

Summary

In the world of Harry Potter, things never turn out well. If only his hopes weren't always so quickly shattered. - Eventual DMHP slash, child abuse, AU, and creature!fic.

Beta: CleopatraIsMyName from FFNet

Notes

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Pairings: Eventual DMHP, mentions of PDVD, eventual femmeflash (no, you can only guess), any additional pairings will be mentioned as the story proceeds.

Rating: T - 13+ (due to descriptions of gore - Rating will change to reflect future events.)

Warnings: WIP Portrays on-going child abuse, excluding sexual; potential OMC, OFC, OOC, torture, slash pairings!, major fluff, violence, gore, etc. Oh, and this is a CREATURE
Author's Notes: Originally found on FFNet. I apologize for any mistakes made concerning British culture that has been made before-hand. I now have a new beta from England (CleopatraIsMyName), who has been correcting me on some things.
Prologue

Chapter Summary

Beta: CleopatraIsMyName

10:57 PM
October 31st, 1981

It was over in a bright flash of dark emerald. A cowering shadow drifted off. A babe nestled in his cradle cried. A sharp glow of pure white enveloped him, raven locks and all, protection given.

A ding sounded in a corner of a kitchen; the scent of freshly-cooked food permeated throughout the single room, giving the simple house a feeling of warmth and familiarity.

Petunia Dursley slowly, thus thoroughly, wiped her wet hands on a dish towel folded neatly in a corner of the counter. With a turn of her heel, the slim woman walked to the telephone, soft pads in the distance alerting her to where her toddler, Dudley, was currently situated: the living room, enraptured eyes glued to the television.

Picking up the phone, she muttered a greeting, eyes on her child.

"I am not going to be able to make it tonight, love," a rumbling man voiced on the telephone, "Can you please wrap some leftovers up and keep them in the refrigerator for me?"

With a huff, and the rolling of her eyes, Petunia replied, "What is it this time, Vernon?"

The answer given was the incoherent mumble and cursing of some of his newest coworkers employed at Grunnings. With hurried declarations of love, and a hastily muttered apology from her dear husband, Vernon Dursley, Petunia cancelled the call.

A dinner later, Petunia was cleaning up the table when a brisk knock was heard at the door. Locating her son with her eyes, Petunia walked over to the entrance, peering into the peephole.

Who stood there was a kindly elderly man, decked out in attire that seemed to be inspired by the early nineteenth century. His unusually long, white beard was clearly noticeable over the bright colors he embraced with an unashamed passion. Taking her eyes off his shocking ensemble, she accessed the situation. With a mental shrug, she opened the door just enough to speak to the gentleman.

"May I help you?" she questioned, hands folded in front of her chest.
"Hello, my name is Albus Dumbledore," he started. The widening of Petunia's eyes belied every torid emotion in her very being, so much so that Dumbledore was able to swiftly lodge his shoe between the door and the frame without missing a beat.

"Stop it," she snapped, brown eyes narrowing in anger and distaste, "I will not speak to you. Ever."

Dumbledore's blue eyes, hidden partially by his half-moon spectacles, merely seemed to twinkle mischievously at the younger woman's predicament. With the wave of his wand, the door swung open, leading Petunia to lose her balance and nearly collide with the wall just behind her. The man clasped his bony arms behind his back, walking casually into the kitchen.

Hearing conversation coming within the depths of the room, she immediately searched for her baby in the living room. With a sigh of disgust, she inferred just where her little tyke had gone.

Striding into the kitchen, she was met with the sight of her son playing with a new toy.

"Where did he get that?" she asked, eyebrows raised at the toy fire truck.

"Do you really want to know?"

"Never mind, keep that curse of you freaks to yourself," she acquiesced, obviously uncomfortable with the images sailing through her mind's eye.

Looking over at her little baby, her face softened slightly.

"Popkin," she cooed, getting down on one knee so that she was at eye-level with the chubby, drooling toddler. "Mummy needs to speak to Mister Dumbledore alone."

The baby merely made little noises as he rolled the fire truck around the table, not quite understanding what his mother was prattling on about. However, seeing her extending her arms, he eagerly held out his own.

She wrapped her arms around his chubby form, nodding slightly towards the older man before standing and walking into the living room calmly to place him in his crib. Of course, it was situated in such a way that she had the perfect view from the kitchen, and her precious little man was able to watch all of the cartoons he pleased.

Swiftly walking into the kitchen with the theme for a cartoon playing rather loudly in the background, she leaned against the counter, patiently waiting for the older man to speak. After a few moments past, and he just looked up at her, eyes twinkling merrily, she sighed and crossed her arms in front of her chest defensively.

"Now," she said, "What is it that you want?"

And with that, our tale begins.

{ ————·———·———·———·———·———· ————}
It was always dark. Either that or he was in the Other Places. But what he always loved the most was Outside.

He knew by instinct how to describe Outside; pretty. The Outside was really pretty. It was always bright Outside, unless it was the time the Mean People were eating their last food of the day. Night.

There were big trees Outside and butterflies and flowers and all kinds of other things. When he was allowed out of the Other Places, Freak ran around, making extra careful not to get dirty - since the Mean People got especially cross when he acted like a "ooligen" - and explored Outside. It was very fun!

But then he would always have to go back inside of the Other Places. There were three Mean People there. One was Dudley, his big cousin. He was a lot bigger than Freak. Freak always knew that Dudley shouldn't be that big, but no one ever said anything. That must mean that Freak was the odd one of the bunch.

Dudley was always being hugged by the Small Mean Person. She looked at Dudley really happily, but whenever she saw Freak, she yelled, told him really, really mean things, hit him, or just pretended he wasn't there.

Then later on Freak would get sent to his cupboard. It was his, and no one else could have it! Sometimes Freak would take food with him, or Dudley's broken toys, and hide them away. For some reason, the Mean People never saw them.

When Freak went to sleep, he saw bad things sometimes. But he also saw good things. Very nice things. And very bad things. Whenever he saw the bad things, he got really scared and started to cry. He had to be careful that the Really Big Mean Person didn't see him crying or hear him.

That was when he got hurt a lot. It wasn't very nice at all. He was supposed to "toughen up". It was what the Really Big Mean Person said to him every time he was caught crying. Then he would call Freak stupid or a waste of space.

Sometimes, when Freak was really, really, really bad, and the Really Big Mean Person was very,
very angry with him, he would take off his belt or twist an arm or a leg until white hot pain lanced up that particular limb, and he heard a really sharp snap.

That's why Freak learned to always hide what he was feeling.

Then there was also a time when he was let out of his cupboard and told to sit on the floor next to the couch, since being a freakish thing made him "infereoor," or something like that, to the Mean People.

He saw this thing once where a girl, a boy, and this man they lived with next to water Outside. The boy and girl were allowed to go Outside and saw a really silly Loch Ness with its head stuck in the ground.

They helped it and met his family. Freak asked the Small Mean Person about the family and why Freak didn't have one, and she said that he didn't deserve a mummy or a daddy.

It always made him sad to think about Dudley having a mummy and daddy, but Freak not having one.

Near Night, he asked the Small Mean Person why he didn't d'serve a mummy or a daddy and she said it was because he was a freak. No one in "good taste" could love something like a freak. His mummy and daddy had both died in a car accident. She pointed at the top part of his head, and when he touched in that place he felt a zigzag line there.

She said that he was in the car with them and got that since he didn't die with them.

Later on Freak had had to see even worse bad things when he fell asleep. He could hear a man screaming, then a woman who had red hair and then a really bad man laugh. Then a flash of a really bright color like the grass. Before he woke up, he felt like he was flying. He didn't cry that time, though.

Every time he slept after that, he would always have the same dream over and over again: flying. He didn't know what it meant, but he felt safer whenever he was dreaming than anytime else.

Chapter End Notes

The cartoon used in this story was Family Ness, a cartoon that aired in England on 1984.

The capitalizations are meant to emphasize how he actually thought of things.
It always got really cold during this time of year; that is, during December.

School had let out over a week or two ago; Harry was never really sure about it, since he was always locked inside his cupboard during that period of time.

All he can remember, really, is his daily routine: sleeping, getting up, washing up, cooking breakfast, sneaking food to his cupboard, doing his chores, cooking lunch, continuing his chores, cooking dinner, and finally getting sent to his cupboard to sleep.

Of course punishments were always a given; something he never even thought about anymore. Using the bathroom, however, always came with its own hardships.

He slept with a tattered blanket that Dudley hadn't needed anymore, some really old pajamas that baby whale had out-grown, and a special toy he had found at the park. It had been left in a box, and somehow Harry had been able to sneak it into his cupboard with no one the wiser.

It had large, grey eyes and a small snout. Its lips were tilted in a small smile, and its ears were perked up like a cat's. What had enchanted the child about the toy were the wings and sharp, reptilian tail attached to the sleek, blue body. It was a soft plush toy, and it never ceased to make him feel safer and the tiniest bit warmer in his cold, dark cupboard.

Tonight was different, though. The Dursleys were leaving tonight to stay at a relative's house during the rest of the Holiday term, and Harry would be alone for the majority of those days.

Of course, this never failed to occur during the Summer Holidays - ever since he could understand what the term "freak" actually meant - but he had never actually thought it would happen at this time of year. He'd think the family he resided with would want to, at least, pretend there wasn't an extra member of their household and celebrate here. However, luck never seemed to be on his side whenever it even remotely related to the Dursleys.

He heard the rolling of suitcase on wooden floorboards, the thumping of footsteps above and outside
his cupboard, along with a mixture of bellowing, nagging, and excited chatter.

With every step his Uncle Vernon made above his small cupboard, dust and wood filings would fall onto his tiny, makeshift cot, littering the fleece and floor with paint chippings and brown wood shavings.

As the voices got louder and the door opened, Harry swore he wasn't going to shed a single tear.

When the door was finally shut closed, keys locking the inside, he could no longer deny the familiar prickling of tears and the burning of his throat. Harry silently surrendered himself to those tears. Just as long as Uncle Vernon never heard about his first moment of weakness in years, he could allow himself this tiniest bit of relief and despair.

That night, he dreamt of presents, family chatter, and warmth; the things he has never had, and believes he probably never will.
Excitement

Chapter Summary

This is based on the original chapter, but I try and write it a lot differently.

Beta: CleopatraIsMyName

Chapter Notes

Warnings: On-going child abuse, portrayals of that abuse, along with some minor gore and detachment.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

June 23rd, 1991

With a bang and a crash, Harry Potter was awoken from one of his most restless of sleeps. Of course it was a given, by now. His nights usually consisted of dreams; dreams of blood splatters, eerie silences, and flashes of colors and screams. Such vague, yet gruesome things he saw at night.

Of course, after that... he always dreamed of flying. The feeling of freedom and recklessness that came with floating through the air at break-neck speeds... it was awe-inspiring. It broke through the anguish, and allowed him to feel safe, if only in rest.

"Boy!" A deep voice bellowed from outside of his cupboard. "Get up and make some bacon for Dudders' birthday!"

With a grunt, Harry slowly opened the door to his safe haven. It wouldn't do for them to see his glum expression, so he quickly made his way to the kitchen to cook Dudley's food.

While making no sense to any other person why a mother would allow a child to handle a task such as that, it never made Harry blink an emerald eye. He was used to the slave treatment by now, and thought that it was the least he could do for the family. It was the only way he could cope.

Quickly finishing up frying the bacon, he took out a large plate and loaded it up with the greasy pork, using a fork to pick up whatever didn't fall onto the flatware.

Washing the dishes, Harry walked to his cupboard - after stealing a strip or two - and waited for when his appearance was necessary.

A shrill voice called for him to wash up for the arrival of Aunt Marjorie. Just thinking of the ghastly older woman made Harry's face scrunch up. If the Dursleys were bad, she was a villain; especially when she brought that stupid bulldog of hers. Harry felt himself grimace as he recalled a few years prior, when the older woman’s dog chased him up a tree. Of course, Dudley had a great laugh at his dilemma.

Shaking off the memories, he made haste. The raven-haired boy rushed up the stairs, and through the
door of the bathroom. After showering, Harry used the small piece of cloth of a towel he was allowed to dry himself off.

Though the clothes the Dursleys made him wear never fit him, being several sizes too big for his skinny frame - as they were Dudley's old hand-me-downs, as well - it wasn't like Harry was able to complain about them. The one time he had said anything about it, Uncle Vernon had made sure he understood his place. He still remembered the shame he felt after that brutal spanking and the pain in his bum. At least Dudley had stopped making snide remarks about that particular incident.

As he walked down the stairs towards the living room, he heard the familiar, infuriating voice announce the arrival of Aunt Marge.

When he arrived, Aunt Petunia just looked at him with a subtle curl of the lip, motioning for him to sit down "like a civilized person". Of course, Marge chimed in with a familiar rendition of how could he ever know what that is, he's a heathen?

Harry just crossed his arms defensively over his chest, and watched Dudley open up his enormous amount of presents.

"Thirty-six..." he muttered, looking up at his family with a scowl fixed on his pampered face."That's two less than last year."

Aunt Petunia froze in place, wracking her brain for a reasonable explanation. Then when she spotted a lone present on the floor underneath small pieces of ripped wrapping paper, Dudley was appeased.

That is until, "But Mummy, that's still less than last year by one!"

Harry watched on indifferently as his Aunts and Uncle tried to make Dudley understand that they would buy two more later on at the zoo.

He couldn't even being to contemplate how his cousin could complain about that. A couple years ago, Harry was given a bag of dog biscuits by Aunt Marge, while her precious "Neffy-Poo" got a toy robot. Really, what a prat.

When the party was over, Harry was told to clean up the living room while the Dursleys discussed what they were doing later on that day.

When a telephone rung and Aunt Petunia went to go answer it, Harry was just picking up the last bit of paper scraps. It took all he had not to fall over when he heard her shrill voice screech, "What do you mean you've broken a leg and cannot babysit the boy?"

With a muttered goodbye, Petunia called him into the kitchen. "Looks like you're going with us to the zoo, boy. Put on your shoes."

When Harry reemerged from his cupboard, Dudley was allowing alligator tears to cascade down his huge cheeks, unsteadily asking why Harry had to come ruin his birthday.

With a hurried goodbye from Aunt Marge, who smirked at Harry's obvious discomfort from being so totally out of his element, along with an exchanged sympathizing look with his other aunt and uncle, she left for her own home.

Though they didn't want to allow it, his aunt and uncle grudgingly accepted the fact that Harry was to come to the zoo with them. And unsurprisingly, Dudley stopped his fit when his friend Piers Polkiss came to carpool.
As was customary, Piers squinted at Harry's bespectacled face and asked who he was. And, like what was customary, Dudley replied that Harry was his strange cousin.

What was sad was the fact that Piers wasn't kidding in the least. Kids tended to ignore Harry at school, and frequently forgot who he was due to his poor health. He didn't go to school several times a month, and nobody ever questioned it.

Sitting in the back seat of the car was never pleasant, and made even more so with the presence of Piers. Being nothing more than a monkey mimicking his surroundings, the idiot chose to partake in Dudley's incessant poking’s and prodding’s of Harry.

When the car came to a halt in the parking lot of the zoo, Harry had to try his best to keep his excitement hidden from the rest of his group. They would find some way to ruin the experience for him otherwise.

When Dudley complained of the heat at the entrance, Aunt Petunia stopped in front of a vendor. Dudley proclaimed he wanted a large chocolate ice cream, to which Piers voiced his agreement.

Before they could leave, the woman managing the cart asked him what he would like. With a pinch, Aunt Petunia prevented him from answering and bought him the cheapest thing on the cart's menu, a lemon ice lolly. Despite his instincts telling him to behave otherwise, Harry enjoyed the first cold-ice he'd ever had before with a visible relish.

It was when they were walking towards the reptile house that Harry noticed something that made him stop in his tracks, before Uncle Vernon clipped him behind the ear and told him to get a move on.

He'd known that the dreams he'd had, while not being normal, had a certain edge to them. It was with a sad gleam to his eyes that he wished a poorly old woman rest in the afterlife. After all, she would be dying tomorrow. At least it would be peacefully in her sleep.

Shaking his head from the freakishness that had consumed him momentarily, Harry made sure to keep up the pace.

While Harry was amazed and fascinated from the many types of snakes and lizards in the exhibit, Dudley was busy complaining about how they weren't moving and just lying there, basking in the sun.

Harry followed Dudley to a boa constrictor's cage. Although, after tapping on the glass for a few moments, the older boy had grown and left, Harry chose to stay behind. That’s when he heard someone ask him what his name was.

Turning his head sharply, Harry didn't see where the voice could possibly come from. The closest to him was a little girl and Dudley, and neither sounded like the voice.

Looking back at the snake, Harry caught his breath when its tongue flicked out and he heard the voice ask what his name was again.

"Harry, Harry Potter," he calmly stated, watching for the Dursleys or Piers out of the corner of his eye. When he assured himself that neither of them were anywhere near the constrictor, Harry struck up a conversation with the snake.

"Where are you from?" Harry asked the constrictor calmly, sleeved arms leaning over the plaque that
identified the snake.

"Brazil," the snake raised its head, flicking its tongue out between hisses. "I am waiting to go back. The two-leg walkersss have been talking about it. I am ssupposssed to go tonight."

"Well, it wasss niccce to meet you," Harry replied, using a finger to push up his eyeglasses.

Piers took that moment to take Dudley by the arm and point at the snake. Excitedly, Dudley jogged to the snake's location, pushing Harry out of the way and onto the floor.

Despite what happened next, Harry felt he would never regret longing for Dudley to be humiliated, for once.

Having effectively pushed the smaller boy out of the way, Dudley grinned at the snake. Pointing a chubby finger towards the protective glass, he tried to prod at the glass again to gain the snake's attention. However, instead of hitting the solid surface, all Dudley touched was air. Losing balance, the boy fell face-first... directly in front of the snake.

With a sharp hiss, the snake playfully flicked its tongue at Dudley, causing the small whale to whimper and scramble away as fast as humanly possible from the large reptile.

Harry could've sworn he'd seen the snake wink as the rest of the visitors of the zoo screamed bloody murder.

"Brazil, here I come. Thanksss, amigo!"

Cursing, Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia took Dudley and Piers by their arms. Harry ran after them, adrenaline pumping through his veins during his little adventure.

When they got to the car, Dudley was hysterically whimpering that he'd somehow broken his leg, while Piers blamed Harry for the entire incident, claiming that he was talking to the snake.

All Harry knew was that he was looking forward to regretting the self-satisfied smirk he'd cracked during the car ride back to Number 4 Privet Drive.

Chapter End Notes

"Thirty-six, that's two less than last year."

"Neffy-Poo"

^^ Both are quotes from either the movie, book. Dudley says the first one, and the second is his nickname.

"Brazil, here I come. Thanksss, amigo." - Boa Constrictor
Nevertheless, when Harry got back to the Dursleys’ house - as such a place could never be thought of as his home - he should’ve known better than to expect the expected. It always did hurt worse when he knew he had definitely been in the wrong, and had a very fine grasp on what would occur next.

Several minutes later, he was nursing his mental and physical wounds from the severe verbal lashing and spanking he had earned for himself.

'Hopefully I won't be sentenced for more than a few days,' he thought to himself, clutching his soft dragon doll to himself.

He winced as his thin, cotton pajamas rubbed against his sore buttocks. 'I hope they don't stain. Uncle Vernon was angry enough that he didn't tell me to go clean the blood off...'

Thankfully, as the boy dozed off, unconsciously ignoring the slowly ebbing pain, he didn't have any dreams except for flying...

Several days later – or, at least, that's what it felt like - Harry was finally off of his punishment. Used to long days without anything significantly sustaining, aside from the numerous foods he sneaked out just for circumstances similar to this, he knew he would need to take it slow for a bit.

Hearing the doorbell ring from his place at the kitchen table, Harry looked at the Dursleys.

With a grunt, Uncle Vernon ordered the young raven-haired child to bring him the mail.

"Yes, Uncle Vernon," Harry nodded, carefully walking to the door. The raven-haired child bent over, picking up the mail and walking slowly back to the table.

He studied the three letters in his hands: a letter from Aunt Marge, some sort of a bill, and a letter addressed to a Mr. H. Potter.
Blinking twice, Harry peered at the last letter again.

Mr. H. Potter

The Cupboard Under the Stairs

4, Privet Drive

Little Whinging

Surrey

Being careful not to show any outward emotion, or any sign of his rapidly beating heart, Harry stuffed the letter in his pocket and walked into the kitchen.

"What took you so damn long?" Vernon grumbled, cleaning his hands off with a cloth at the sink.

"I'm sorry, Uncle Vernon," Harry ducked his head, inwardly just about bursting with excitement.

"Never mind, boy," he said irritably, "Just give me the mail."

Nodding his head, Harry handed the mail to his uncle, and waited patiently for further instruction.

Glancing up from the letter from his sister, Vernon noticed the stupid runt was still there.

"Go wash the dishes."

Sighing mentally, Harry resigned himself to working for the rest of the day.

Later on at dinner

Harry tried not to squirm in his seat as Dudley hit him with his stupid stick again.

"Stop moving, Potter," the larger boy growled at his target, "I need to practice using my stick."

Nodding his head, Harry made sure to only move in order to bite a bit of the vegetables on his plate.

"Duddy-kins," Petunia scolded lightly, "Eat first, and then you can hit the boy with your stick."

"Please, mummy?" Dudley pouted. Harry had to cover up his snort with a cough. He couldn't help the reaction, though; Dudley looked like a pig in a wig with his lower lip stick out, making his cheeks look larger.

"You better not be catching a cold," Uncle Vernon snapped at the young boy, "We aren't wasting more money than we need to on you. And we aren't tolerating you getting Dudley sick."

Harry nodded quickly, and nearly clutched his head in shock. He was feeling awfully light-headed. The raven-haired boy grudgingly accepted the fact that he would need to eat a larger portion than he was accustomed to, if only to appease his empty stomach and floating head.

Shifting in such a way that the letter in his pocket wouldn't be visible - who knows what would happen if they saw it - Harry dealt with the offhand insults and the constant prodings of Dudley's stick. Why Smeltings Academy would ever allow an idiot like him acceptance was beyond Harry. 'Oh, wait. Apparently there were others like him there, if the required stick was any sort of hint.'

He shuddered at the mental image of over a thousand Dudley Dursleys within the boundaries of a
single school campus. His thoughts then turned to the school he would be attending this year.

As Dudley told Harry of the millions of ways he'd suffer at Stonewall High, he awaited the time when he would be alone, in his cupboard, reading the letter he barely managed to examine.

An hour later, after Harry had cleaned up the kitchen, he crawled into his makeshift cot and hoped that the Dursleys would turn in at an early time.

As luck was never on his side, Harry was genuinely surprised when he heard, and felt, the three pairs of footsteps on the stairs and the murmur of good nights.

Frozen in his bed, Harry closed his eyes and counted up to five minutes.

'Two hundred and ninety-six, two hundred and ninety-seven, two hundred and ninety-eight, two hundred and ninety-nine, three hundred!'

Crawling up, Harry's feet touched the cold floor and he shivered slightly, bringing up the old blanket with him and around his shoulders.

He stood up and reached for the light bulb’s little chain, on his tip-toes, pulling it down once with a click and automatically closing his eyes in response to the blinding light.

It didn't take long for him to pull the letter, addressed to him, out and examine the seal: a snake, lion, badger, and eagle surrounding a H. He ran his callused fingers over it, feeling the bumps and ridges of the oddly familiar image.

Holding his breath, Harry carefully opened the envelope, wincing at every audible sound the ripping paper made in the semi-quiet house.

When the oddly brown papers were removed, Harry let out the breath he was holding.

He quickly read, re-read, and re-re-read - even if that wasn't an actual word - what he was sent.

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 Mr. Potter,

We are pleased to inform you that you have a place at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please find enclosed a list of all necessary books and equipment.

Term begins on 1 September. We await your owl no later than 31 July.

Yours sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall

Deputy Headmistress

Slumping down onto his cot, Harry was in a shocked state. Either it was some sort of weird cult, or Harry had just been admitted to a school of magic.
Still confused, he tucked his feet under him and read the second page.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

*Uniform*

First-year students will require:

1. Three sets of plain work robes (black)
2. One plain pointed hat (black) for day wear
3. One pair of protective gloves (dragon hide or similar)
4. One winter cloak (black with silver fastenings)

Please note that all pupils’ clothes should carry name tags.

*Course Books*

All students should have a copy of each of the following:

*The Standard Book 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

*One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi*

by Phyllida Spore

*Magical Drafts and Potions*

by Arsenius Jigger

*Magical Beasts and Where to Find Them*

by Newt Scamander

*The Dark Forces: A Guide to Protection*

by Quentin Trimble

*Other Equipment*

1 wand
1 cauldron (pewter, standard size 2)
1 set glass or crystal phials
1 telescope
1 set brass scales

Students may also bring, if they desire, an owl OR a cat OR a toad.

**Parents are reminded that first years are not allowed their own broomstick.**

Sincerely,

*Lucinda Thomsonicle-Pocus*

*Chief Attendant of Witchcraft Provisions*

Taking a deep breath, Harry gasped as he realized what the Dursleys would do if they ever caught sight of this letter. They *detested* magic, and Harry was *magical*.

Plain old Harry was a wizard, a person capable of magic. It explained so much, but left him with so many unanswered questions.

Was his mum magical? His dad? If so, did they really die the way the Dursleys had said they did? Surely, if Aunt Petunia knew, she'd tell him. Did he have other family?

Aunt Petunia had to have known about this, otherwise how did his mum go to school?

A startled gasp escaped from his lips when he heard the familiar sound of footsteps outside his cupboard.

His breathing rapidly grew labored, and he bent over in a sudden coughing fit. Trying to catch your breath was terrible when you realized that you were about to be caught doing more wrong than ever before.

He could hear someone puttering outside the cupboard and see the doorknob turn slowly.

Quickly trying to hide the letter, Harry scrambled around. However, the person outside was faster. The letter was suddenly in Aunt Petunia's hands.

Seeing her face grow paler and paler - hitting a shade of blue - would've been funny had Harry not have been so unbelievably terrified.

Her eyes flickered over to him, before she made a small noise and stood, beckoning Harry out of the cupboard.

It was with trepidation that he followed his aunt into the living room, trembling in anticipation as to what would happen next.
Yeah, the letter was directly taken from the book. I didn't know the format nor the supplies before this xD
Harry slowly walked into the living room, mentally bashing himself for his idiocy.

’You got too cocky,’ he thought, ’Of course it wouldn't be that easy.’

Aunt Petunia was already there, situated in one of the armchairs she had pulled up closer to the couch, parallel to it. She was staring down at the paper, unblinking.

She looked up when Harry sat down on the couch, and was silent for several tense seconds.

For Harry, those seconds were the most fearful he’d ever felt before, as long as he’d lived so far, somehow? His palms were clammy and sweaty, he was shaking, and he felt as if he was going to cry and beg for mercy.

Calming his visible appearance, he looked his aunt in the eye, and waited for her to speak.

"Where did you get this?" She muttered, eyes narrowing slightly.

"I found it this morning when Uncle Vernon told me to go retrieve the mail."

She moved so fast, that it took him a moment to realize she had slapped him. With a wince of pain, he touched his burning cheek tentatively.

"You will never go to that school of freaks, do you understand me?" She angrily stated, "I doubt they would want a mistake like you, anyway."

Harry locked away all of his emotions regarding that statement, knowing it would be best he act unfazed. Nodding his head, he averted his eyes from his aunt's face, though turned his head towards her.

"Not only are we not paying the money to send you to that stupid school, but we will\textit{certainly} not allow your freakishness to somehow affect Dudley, if it were allowed to flourish."

Not meaning it in the least, Harry agreed, "Yes, Aunt Petunia."

"So forget all about\textit{magic}," she spat the word in disgust, "Since there is no way we are ever allowing you to leave your duties unattended."
This time, Harry nodded his head, tentatively agreeing. After all, he was just Harry, and he did need to repay the Dursleys for allowing him to live with them.

When Petunia stood up from the chair, she headed towards the fireplace, lighting a fire and letting the papers and envelope fall within it. Turning towards Harry, she nodded her head in the direction of the cupboard, indicating it was time for him to sleep.

As she walked past him, she whispered, "Never speak of this incident again."

Struggling not to cry, he nodded again and closed the door to his cupboard, lying down and covering himself up with the tattered, old blanket.

That night, he dreamt of a woman, malevolent laughter... and green, green, light.

Harry sighed tiredly, leaning on a wall next to the hose. The summer sun was blazing overhead, making taking care of the garden an even more tedious task.

He brought an arm up over his eyes, catching his breath. The sweat covering his body made him shiver, though he didn't actually feel cold. He squirmed against the wall in obvious discomfort, unable to get used to the shirt clinging to his back.

He always felt helpless at these times. Especially after Petunia had told him, in no uncertain terms, that he would never be attending Hogwarts.

The way she reacted, though, had answered his question: his mum had indeed been a witch. She had, at least, been told about the school for Aunt Petunia to have said those things.

He just had to find a way to go; but, it didn't sound especially doable. His aunt and uncle would never allow it, and he would never be able to experience magic.

With a groan, he turned back to his roses, ready to continue.

On the eve of Harry's eleventh birthday, the Dursleys had decided to be even more sadistic than usual. It was like Aunt Petunia was mocking him, confirming the fact that no one would be coming for him.

He was very depressed that day, though he tried his hardest to keep the forlorn expression off of his face. Inside, he was wracked with grief. He would live here until he could find a job, and even then, they would still, virtually, own him.

Trudging the last steps to his cupboard after dinner, the raven-haired boy virtually collapsed onto his mattress. Tears of fatigue and sadness were already falling onto the flat pillow. With that, he awaited the last hours until he turned older.

About four hours later, Harry fell into a deep sleep.

He thrashed and screamed in pain, back arching off of the mattress as he was assaulted with feelings of grief, mourning, depression, and violence. Each was even worse than the last, breaking his, already fragile, heart.

With a shrill shriek, loud and sharp enough to break the most sensitive of glass, Harry relaxed down into the mattress. Suddenly, he glowed a pure white, and levitated upwards. His skin was given a natural lustre and his hair grew a bit longer.
The rest of the changes would show up throughout the next few years. Until then, he would rest...

And just after he had settled down to restore his energy, a booming knock was heard throughout the house.

Someone was there.

Trembling slightly, Harry stayed inside his cupboard. It was so totally out of the norm that he had no idea who could possibly be knocking on the Dursleys' front door.

A scrambling of footsteps, and he felt someone walking down the stairs. Someone of considerable bulk.

Uncle Vernon.

"Alright, alright," he yelled, "I'm coming!"

"'llo Mister Dursley," a cheery, low voice called, "'m 'ere to get 'arry Potter."

Suddenly, Harry's hopes had risen. Could it really be? But... how?

"There is no Harry Potter here," Uncle Vernon answered gruffly, "Now, leave. You have disturbed my family's sleep enough."

Harry could hear the door swing, but not it close.

"Oi," Uncle grunted, getting closer to the child's cupboard, "Get the Hell out of my house!"

Acting purely on instinct, Harry slammed open his cupboard's door. "Hello, I'm Harry Potter!"

Uncle Vernon yelled in rage as the big man looked down at Harry.

He looked truly magical. He was very big, bigger than Uncle Vernon, and very tall. He had very long, curly brown hair, with an even longer beard. His eyes sparkled in kindness, and he had laugh lines surrounding his mouth.

He was wearing a peculiar type of clothing, and held a large, black umbrella in his even larger hand.

'A big umbrella for an even bigger man,' Harry mused.

He bent over slightly, hand outstretched, "'Llo, 'arry, I'm 'agrid. I'm 'ere to take you ter buy your things for school."

Harry glanced into his cupboard and muttered something inaudible.

"What was that?"

"My aunt threw the letter in the fireplace and let it burn."

Hagrid contemplated this for a few seconds, before taking out another letter, addressed to Harry. When he gave it to the young lad, his eyes had lit up with joy.

"Yer mother's eyes," he had spoken softly in awe.

"Hm, what was that, Mister Hagrid?"

"You 'ave yer mum's eyes, 'arry." Hagrid said, eyes tearing up. He stuffed his hand in his pocket,
searching in there for a few seconds before fishing out a handkerchief. He blew very hard into it.

"She 'ad the most pretty green eyes," he bawled, "And you got 'em, 'arry."

Harry touched his face in wonder. He had never known about this interesting little tidbit. He had the eyes of his mum...

"What about my father?" He asked warily, straightening his glasses.

When Hagrid had finished crying mournfully in his handkerchief, he answered Harry's question, "You look just like 'im."

Grinning slightly, Harry imagined his mother with emerald eyes, and the way his father looked.

He tentatively raised his head to peek up at the burly man, beneath his dark, raven fringe. "Can we go?"

Chapter End Notes

I hope I didn't mess up on Hagrid's dialogue that much xD
Before Harry could be whisked away to a new and enchanting place, he heard the two distinct footfalls of his aunt and miniature whale, or cousin, Dudley, signaling their arrival.

"He's not going anywhere," screeched his aunt, dressed in only a nightgown, slippers, and hair curlers. Dudley was right behind her, rubbing his eyes tiredly.

"What's going on Mummy, Daddy?"

"Nothing Dudders. Go back upstairs and go to sleep," she cooed.

Uncle Vernon's face was turning different colors rapidly, causing Harry to wonder whether or not he was going to die from some alarming condition. He briefly fantasized about such a reality, oblivious to his surroundings.

Quite suddenly, his attention was brought back to Dudley when he had said, "Mummy, why is there a big man in our house, and why is he holding Potter's hand?"

"My name is 'agrid," the bumbling man introduced, relinquishing his hold on Harry's, and redirected his beefy hand to Dudley for a quick shake.

"Who sent you here?" Uncle Vernon finally snapped. His fat arms were folded in a defensive position against his chest as he spoke.

"Headmaster Albus Dumbledore," Hagrid began, only to get cut off by Aunt Petunia.

"Whaaaaat?" She yelled, arms waving wildly in gesticulations that, quite honestly, made her look uneducated, "He assured me that the boy wouldn't be going anywhere, especially since his freakish father had no other living relatives."

Hagrid's brow wrinkled in confused, a hand raised to scratch his head, "Dumbledore wouldn't o' said that,' he assured, "'arry's mum and da' paid the entire seven years o' hogwarts tuition."

Aunt Petunia covered her mouth with a muffled scandalized wail, "That lying old codger!"

She turned and pointed an accusing finger directly in Harry's direction, "If your parents hadn't had gotten themselves blown-up, none of this would've happened!"

"Whatdya mean by that?" Harry asked, "I thought they died in a car crash?" His young voice faltered at the cause of death, wishing they were still alive.

"'arry, yer parents didn't die like that," Hagrid looked down, a hand patting his messy, raven hair, "They were killed by a powerful dark wizard trying to save yer life."
"You lied to me!" Harry growled in contempt, hair rising, "You told me they had died while driving drunk! That they were awful and had left me in the car, giving me my scar!"

When Harry looked up at Hagrid with weary disappointment, an expression that should be nowhere near a young child's face, Hagrid grew angry.

When Uncle Vernon appeared at the next moment with the rifle, the raven-haired boy backed away slowly to cower behind Hagrid, his small hands gripping the older, and much larger, man's strange clothing.

Harry abruptly let go when Hagrid made a sudden movement, and was suddenly right in front of his uncle, looking down at him with an irate expression affixed upon his normally jolly face.

Uncle Vernon made some sort of threat, poking Hagrid in the belly with the barrel of the gun. Shaking his head, Hagrid gripped the offending object, twisting the metal easily into a pretzel-like shape.

The man looked near-comical, his face ash-white, slowly bringing a curled weapon towards himself. Harry suppressed a giggle of hilarity.

Dudley chose that moment to open his huge trap with, "Who are you again?"

Turning his head to meet the frightened gaze of the youngest Dursley, he replied, "Rubeus 'agrid, Groundskeeper 'or 'ogwarts School o' Witchcraft and Wizardry."

Dudley's eyes bugged out of his head, and he turned tail and ran straight up the stairs, screaming about 'foul beasts' and 'Potter'.

Harry failed to keep his laughter contained, and burst into giggles.

"What're you laughing at, boy?" Aunt Petunia hissed, not looking intimidating in the least compared to the friendly Mister Hagrid. However, to Harry, it was never about that.

'You all are so ignorant, Dudley ran upstairs screaming and crying, and Uncle Vernon is still holding the gun!' Harry wished he could say.

Instead, he stopped laughing immediately and quietly muttered, "Nothing, Aunt Petunia..."

However, Uncle Vernon was. He couldn't seem to fathom what had just happened. He was still standing there, frozen stiff. His face was pure disbelief.

Walking briskly towards her husband, with Hagrid safely at the freak's side, Petunia placed her hands on her hips. She leaned over and snapped her fingers, effectively gaining his - albeit distracted - attention.

"Vernon," she spat, "Get ahold of yourself!"

Blinking rapidly, he threw the rifle on the floor, having been on safety the entire time, and straightened his shoulders.

"As I was saying," he began, as if he hadn't been stuck in a stupor for the past minute or so, "The boy is staying. He isn't going to that bastard school for scum, nor is he leaving without our expressed permission."

Grunting in frustration, Hagrid rubbed a single hand across his face. "I don't think yer quite gettin' it.
"'arry is goin' ter 'ogwarts regardless o' what you say."

With that, Hagrid fell to one knee in front of Harry, "You ready ter go, 'arry?"

Gasping in shock, Harry realized he almost left without his belongings. The raven-haired child scrambled into his cupboard, searching for book bag the Dursleys had allowed him. Stuffing it full of his things, he found it would be about the size needed. He, especially, remembered to get the items underneath one of the floorboards: a notebook, pen, pencils, some toys, and his precious dragon doll.

After scanning for any other precious objects he may have forgotten about in his haste, he crawled out, closing the door behind him and waited for Hagrid.

Turning around, the man did a bit of a double take, "That it?"

Nodding his head rapidly, Harry whispered, "I'm not allowed to have a lot of things."

He ducked his head down, embarrassed at how he was behaving. Not only that, but Hagrid must surely pity him now.

Hagrid blinked in confusion, bewildered as to why he wasn't "allowed" - despite the comments from the Dursleys aimed at the young boy, they were just words, after all - and took the small child into his arms, not surprised as to how light he was. It was to be expected, after all. He was quite small for his age.

Muttering his farewell to the terrible family, Hagrid got on his motorcycle with Harry is arms, and sailed away into the sky.

The last thing Harry thought of, before he surrendered to the much needed rest, was the sharp contrast between his pale blue dragon, and the dark night sky.

Chapter End Notes

I think all of my characters are completely OOC by now xD
Harry woke up abruptly, breathing fast. His pulse was racing and he was sweating profusely.

But the only thing going through his mind was what he had just seen.

Usually, when he woke up from these particular dreams, they were blurry and vague. As if they were partially distorted to ensure he didn't remember too much.

While these were still not graphic at all, he could still remember the majority of it. Of course, it came in flashes and metaphors.

Chuckling lightly at his stupid brain, the raven-haired child turned over on the bed he was currently situated on.

Despite the dreams of bright flashing colors, the voices, and a male voice screaming, he was okay. And totally lost.

"What the bloody," he started, sitting up. This was definitely not his cold, familiar cupboard. "Where am I?"

"'Morning, 'arry," a booming voice called from his left. When he turned his head, he could see the blurry image of the large man whom had saved him last night. Rubeus Hagrid.

"Hello, Mister Hagrid," Harry said shyly, in a soft voice. Hagrid chuckled lightly at his meek demeanor.

"Now, none o' tha," said the large, bearded man, "Just call me 'agrid, 'arry. Ever'one calls me that."

Looking up quickly, Harry squinted his eyes, trying to judge the man's honesty. When he came closer and placed something in his hand, Harry knew this man was a true and honest person.

"Hagrid," he asked, looking down at the blankets. He fidgeted nervously, wringing his hand.

"Would you be my friend?"

Laughing heartily, the man answered with, "O' course, I will, 'arry!"

Putting on his glasses in a split-second, the suddenly cheery boy beamed up at Hagrid, happier than he had ever been before.

"Thank you, Hagrid," Harry said, louder than his usual soft voice. "I haven't had a friend before."

Smiling bemused, Hagrid replied, "I'm sure you've 'ad plenty o' friends, 'arry."

Shaking his head and frowning slightly, Harry decided to not say anymore.

'Hagrid probably won't ever believe me, even when I tell him the truth.' He thought sadly.

Smiling softly, Harry asked, "Where are we, Hagrid?"
"'Ogwarts, 'arry," he grinned, "Though' you might wanna see 'er in 'er beauty before the students come in."

"Okay!" Harry exclaimed, "What are we waiting for, let's go explore!"

Harry jumped out of bed, but Hagrid picked him up before he could leave.

"First ye gotta eat yer bangers and mash," Hagrid ordered, carrying the eleven-year old child to the table. While it was terribly huge, it wasn't big enough to make Harry uncomfortable trying to eat.

First bite of the food, Harry nearly spit it out. Not only was it hard enough to break a tooth on, but the flavor was a bit... bad.

Whimpering quietly, Harry made sure his predicament wasn't visible on his face, and steadily ate a little more than an eighth of the food.

Frowning, Hagrid stopped eating, "'rn't ya gonna eat more?"

Shaking his head, Harry remarked, "That's a lot more than I normally eat. I don't want to make myself sick."

'It's not technically a lie,' Harry reassured himself, 'I really can't eat that much."

Nodding his head, Hagrid lamented.

About twenty minutes later, Hagrid and Harry were walking side-by-side on the grass towards the school. "'Ogwarts were the best years of my life." Remarked Hagrid.

They passed a huge, menacing looking tree. Pointing at it as they walked, Harry asked what it was.

"That's the Whomping Willow, 'arry," Hagrid explained, "Don't get near its branches, it may swing at you."

Absorbing this new knowledge, Harry glanced around at the grounds. He could see a vegetable patch up ahead, next to some Green Houses.

Pointing at the Green Houses, Hagrid said, "That's where Professor Pomona Sprout hosts all of 'er Herbology classes. Along with 'er planting, she takes care o' the more... the plants that are a bit o' a 'andful. Some of those plants can be downright nasty little buggers."

Eyes wide, Harry smiled enthusiastically, giggling at the light-hearted conversation. This new world seemed so fun and exciting.

As they treded closer and closer to castle, Harry started getting dizzier and dizzier.

There was a buzz in his ears. Hagrid was saying something, but it never registered in his brain.

Then he heard the voices from his dreams.

"How dare you-"

"Potter-"

"-wrong with him!"

"Troll!"
"-do great things in-"

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

His feet became lead, and before long it was a chore to even take the smallest of steps. He could hear the sound of harsh, panting wheezes, much like his own voice. He could hardly breathe. His forehead was hurting so much!

Soon enough, the grass was getting closer and closer.

Right before he blacked out, he muttered the word, turban.

Chapter End Notes

I wrote this with a headache D;
"-ry! 'Arry," a voice called. Harry wished it would go away. He wanted to sleep. He shifted in his seat, trying to avoid whoever was calling for him.

"'Arry, are you awake?" The voice ventured tone piteous and sad.

Despite wanting to go to sleep again, Harry could never knowingly allow another being to be so miserable and hurt. He reluctantly fluttered his eyes open, only to shut them again due to the blinding light.

When Hagrid called for the lights to be lowered, or at least for something mute them, Harry finally opened his eyes completely.

He was in a white room, that he could tell. Hagrid was sitting on a chair by the bed Harry was laying on.

It smelled medicinal, and with a lurch in his throat, Harry realized he was in some sort of hospital room.

Calming himself, the raven-haired boy inspected the best he could, with his glasses off.

There were strange vials next to Hagrid's chair, on a small table.

The bed he was situated in was curtained off from the rest of the room, ensuring privacy.

Finally done with that, Harry moved onto his side, looking at Hagrid sadly.

"Did I do something bad, Hagrid?" He asked, tone soft. "Why am I here?"

Hagrid took another handkerchief out of one of his huge pockets sewed into the strange clothes he was wearing - robes, a voice in Harry's mind whispered - and proceeded to blow his nose in it.

His face looked a bit flushed, concern etched into his normally joyous features. He was slouched in the uncomfortable seat.

"No, 'arry," Hagrid reassured the small boy, "You aren't in any trouble. You have done nothing wrong."

Harry sighed in relief, before he looked at Hagrid in bewilderment, "Then why am I here?"

"You jus' suddenly fell, collaps'd on the grass. Couldn't get ye up. Brought ye here."

Harry nodded his head, understanding. "I know why, but I don't think I should tell you..."

Harry winced when he realized how mean that sounded to his ears, "Not that I don't like you Hagrid, but..."
He was unsure whether or not to tell him even the smallest part of what he knew. Harry didn't even know what was going on, but could venture a small guess.

'I'm some sort of psychic...'

"It's just," he picked at the sheet's fabric, looking at his hands as he spoke, "You can't keep secrets very well. Sometimes, you let things slip, and I can't let that happen."

Harry lifted his head, urging Hagrid to understand what he was saying.

Despite how slow he could be to some things, the burly man nodded his head, smile soft and sad, not thin in anger. "Okay."

Harry turned onto his back, looking up at the flawless white ceiling, "Where am I, exactly?" He asked, looking at Hagrid's blurred features from the corner of his eye. He could just make out Hagrid's lifted eyebrows.

"Oh, I didn't tell ye," said he, "I brought you to the 'ospital wing."

"Who runs it?"

"I do, young man," a woman said, opening and closing the curtains, "An' how are you doin' today, lad?"

"Fine," Harry tensed, unsure of how to react to this new person's presence.

"Good," she bustled about, picking up the vials full of strange, viscous liquid and looking at the labels. She finally took two and turned towards the raven-haired boy lying on the bed.

With a soft tsking noise, she urged him to budge up, rearranging the pillows to elevate him to a sitting position. She pushed a bit on his shoulder to signal him to lay back a bit.

Smiling genuinely at Harry, she took out a thin wand, waving it at his body. Small sparks were issued from it, and she hummed a bit, nodding in some places.

Then she started to frown. Soon it got deeper, her brows getting closer together, before her expression grew livid. She lowered her wand, arms crossed, and tilted her head back, mouthing words.

Calming down, the older witch looked at Harry, features softened, "Whom did you live with before, poppet?"

He merely started at her, assessing how trustworthy she could be.

The woman was wearing a big dress, with an apron tied around the waist. Her hat looked very traditional, and she held herself with dignity. Her face was aged, but soft.

Nodding his head, Harry answered, "My relatives, the Dursleys."

"How do they treat you?" She asked, Conjuring up a stool to perch upon, legs crossed.

Eyes widened in delight, Harry responded, "The best that I can, I'm afraid."

"How so?"

Growing a bit nervous at the questions, Harry swallowed and said, "They yell at me a lot because
I'm always doing something wrong. I don't have my own room," he paused, then realized what he had said and hurried to explain it, "But that's only because I'm not as important as Dudley, my cousin. I'm really weak and get sick easily."

Neither agreeing nor disagreeing with what Harry had said so far, she dropped the question.

"Harry, how often do you eat?"

"I don't really know."

Her grip on her hands tightened a bit, "Can you give me an estimate, dearie?"

"At least once a day. I can't eat too much, because they don't have enough to feed me and Dudley."

"How much does Dudley eat?"

"Much more, maybe five times a day?" Harry ventured a guess, unsure. "Who are you?"

Unhappy at how quickly she was brushed off, she replied with, "Poppy Pomfrey; I am the medi-witch in charge of Hogwarts's Hospital Wing, the matron, if you will."

"Oh," Harry replied, eyeing the vials of whatever in her wrinkled hands, "What is that?"

Smiling softly, she said, "Some potions to help strengthen you up."

"What do they do?"

"This one," she explained, holding out a vial of a syrupy, purple potion, "is for your head, to ensure you don't suffer any damage due to the fall you took. And this," she held out a semi-transparent blue potion, "is to provide you with the nutrients you would have gotten, had you eaten a full meal for lunch, today."

Panicking slightly, Harry turned to Hagrid, "I'm sorry, Hagrid. I didn't know I had been knocked out so long."

"'Arry, 'arry," Hagrid waved off, "You can take the tour tomorrow, or even the day you start school at 'ogwarts. I still have to take you to Diagon Alley, though..."

"Diagon Alley?"

"Oh, yeah," Hagrid was pulled out of his contemplations, "Where yer will buy ya school supplies."

Grinning widely, Harry turned to Madam Pomfrey, "Do you want me to take the potions now?"

"Yes," she said, picking up a spoon from the counter's tray and taking the stopper off the vial of potion. "It will taste nasty, but it'll also help you."

Skewing his face at the nasty mixture, Harry reluctantly swallowed, making sure more went straight down his throat than his tongue. He did the same for the next two potions he took. Even as he did this, he knew he would never get used to the terrible flavors.

The third potion was a sleeping draught, Pomfrey had explained to him, it would ensure he got plenty of rest for his outing tomorrow.

His dreams were a vague storm of deaths and premonitions.
The next day, Harry woke up with a strange sense of foreboding. Something wasn't quite right, and it wouldn't be right for quite a long time.

He replayed what he had dreamt... There was a low, rasping voice. A man. Purple cloth. Deception. Lord.

But, though the sense of wrongness stayed, the dream slipped away from him, like water through his fingers. Soon enough, there wasn't even a droplet left.

Then the events from yesterday entered his mind, and he turned on his side. He felt excited. Today he would see more of the world he had entered, just days before. It was splendid, fantastic, and awesome.

Smiling brightly, Harry heard the steady footfalls of shoes. Before even seeing her, Harry greeted, "Good morning, Madam Pomfrey!"

Bemusedly, she slid the curtain closed behind her, waving her wand over Harry's thin form. "Good morning, Mister Potter. And how are we this lovely day?"

"Excited," Harry said, "I cannot wait to go to Diagon Alley with Hagrid. It'll be so fun, and new!"

The young raven-haired child's mood was contagious, and the white-haired witch couldn't help but smile at the young lad's enthusiasm. He was positively bouncing, impatient for the burly half-giant to take him over to the Alley.

Her tests came up the same as yesterday, with a slight improvement in his appetite and energy. His near-depleted magical core was back to normal, and he was ready to go.

"Okay, Mister Potter," she started, lowering down her wand, "It seems that you are in a well enough condition to leave the Hospital Wing. Just take it easy, be sure to eat all of your meals, and come back every day for the potions I gave yesterday, hm?"

Harry frowned, a look of revulsion on his face, "Do I have to take that stuff?"

Nodding her head, Madam Pomfrey took two familiar potions from her pocket, "Yes, I noticed that your health was very poor, and you need to take these so that, one day, you'll be stronger."

She took out a spoon, after unbottling the potions, measuring out careful mouthfuls.
Before long, Harry was alone, waiting for Hagrid to come in and take him to Diagon Alley. He didn't have to wait long before the friendly, bearded man slid open the curtains.

"All set to go, 'arry?"

Shaking his head, Harry pointed out that he hadn't had a shower yet, having just remembered the forgotten fact. This caused both Hagrid and Madam Pomfrey to wrinkle their noses, and announce the need for clothes.

Several minutes later, a squeaky-clean Mister Harry Potter was ready to go.

"Ready, Hagrid?" He smiled, rocking back and forth on his heels. The big man grinned back, clapping his hands and rubbing them together.

"All right," he said, "Now, let's get to it, 'arry."

Hagrid lead Harry over to a huge fireplace in the middle of the hospital wing.

"This is called a Floo, 'arry," Hagrid explained, "You use it to move place to place."

He took a big jar that sat atop of the mantle and dumped part of the contents in his hand. His palm now held a fine, black powder.

"This 'ere is Floo Powder," he lowered his palm down to Harry's face, allowing the spectacled boy to examine his hand.

Carefully moving his fingers to close his hand into a fist, he said, "Now, ye just throw this into the Floo, yell ou', 'The Leaky Cauldron, and step into the fireplace."

He had Harry carefully repeat his instructions, and then allowed the boy to take a handful of the powder from the pot.

Winking at Harry, Hagrid went first. "The Leaky Cauldron," he intoned carefully, throwing the powder into the Floo. The fire turned into a dangerous green, mesmerizing Harry in its brilliance. Hagrid then walked into the fireplace, disappearing in a flash. After the flash, the flames of the fireplace turned back into their normal red-orange.

Blinking, Harry took a deep breath, and repeated Hagrid's actions.

"The Leaky Cauldron," he cried, hesitatingly walking into the fireplace.

He felt some sort of constriction, then found he was stumbling out of a fireplace, right into Hagrid's body.

"Oof," Harry grunted, regaining his balance and righting himself. The boy tried his best to pat off the powder that he could see on his clothes.

Hagrid turned around, chuckling at his predicament. "It's alright, 'arry, it'll come off soon 'nough."

The chatter in the bar halted to a stop at the sound of Harry's name, and he swiftly raised his head. Everyone had their mouths wide open, slack-jawed.

Then, as sudden as the silence, the other people within the shabby pub started to chatter all-at-once, whispering louder than Harry thought they were aware of.

"Is that-?"
"Dear Merlin-

"I thou-

"Potter..."

A woman wearing a hat walked up to him, smiling broadly, eyes crinkling at the sides. She held out her hand, which Harry hesitantly took, and shook it several times. "It is such a pleasure to finally meet you, Mister Potter. My name is Doris Crockford!"

She seemed a bit over-enthusiastic and Harry cautiously backed away from her, unnerved.

Turning, another man hurried over to the boy, holding out his own hand. When Harry grasped it, the man immediately began to babble about who he was, and of how he was so lucky to have finally met the "Famous Mister Potter".

As soon as the man, Dedalus Diggle, had gotten his fill of Harry's presence, another man walking up to him.

He was dressed a bit odder than the rest, what with the large, purple turban wrapped around his forehead and the back of his head.

That sense of foreboding came back like a slap in a face. Harry edged slowly away from the strange man.

But then he was talking to him, and Harry had no reason to deny him this other than a mere feeling.

Hagrid looked between Harry and the strange man, before placing a hand on Harry's shoulder and introducing him to the man.

"'Arry, this is Professor Quirrell," Hagrid said, "He teaches a class called Defense Against the Dark Arts at 'ogwarts."

Harry nodded towards the man, while trying to edge away from him subtly. There wasn't something quite right about the man. He made Harry simultaneously feel scared and angry. It frightened him, the intensity of the emotions he felt.

"Professor Quirrell thi' ere boy is 'arry Potter."

Nodding, Professor Quirrell looked down at him, then turned around and walked away.

Harry tried his best to smile up at Hagrid, but he was unable to. It was as if the professor's presence had done something to him. He no longer felt as happy, but rather on the defense. As if the professor were about to attack him at any second.

Confusedly, Harry looked up at Hagrid and said, "Hagrid, why was everyone so happy to see me?"

"I'll tell ye later, 'arry," Hagrid apologized, "I forgot ye didn't know nothing about this world."

Harry took the apology and made a note to remind Hagrid later. After all, the man had forgotten once. He'd probably forget again.

Squaring his shoulders, Harry ignored the stares and whispers, choosing instead to listen to Hagrid explain where they were, and where they were headed.

Hagrid steers him towards a wall at the back of the pub, and takes out his umbrella. Harry just shakes
his head at the absurdity of such a large object fitting inside a robe pocket.

Tapping on the wall, Hagrid mutters something inaudible, and Harry hears a sound. The wall, oddly enough, suddenly had a rather large hole in it, which then grew and grew until there wasn't even a wall there anymore.

And Harry gets his first glance of Diagon Alley.

It's delightful in its brilliance. People left and right were wearing those odd clothes, and there were shops lining the paved walkway.

Everyone was so happy and peaceful, and it felt so magical. Harry felt he was where he belonged, as if a small part of him knew he didn't belong with his aunt and uncle, and now he was here, and he was just... content.

Harry beamed broadly, and his skin had a bit of an ethereal glow to it. His utter happiness seemed to spill out and bubble, and he was giggling at his heightened emotions.

Hagrid just smiled and explained what a few of the shops were, while Harry asked questions about what that was, and where they were going to go first, and oh, Hagrid, may we please go there?

Then Harry found himself in front of a snowy white, tall building called Gringott's.

"We are 'ere to get ye money," Hagrid explained, opening the door for the small child and allowing Harry passage before him.

He rushed him to the front of the large bank, and there was this odd, strange creature looking at them.

'Goblin,' a voice in Harry's head spoke, like last time. He shook his head and grinned up at the strange cr-, goblin. It gave an eerie smile back, all teeth.

Hagrid raised a single brow, surprised by the exchange, but didn't comment on it. Instead, he cleared his throat a little, and said, "We're 'ere to access 'arry Potter's vault."

The goblin nodded its head, Conjuring a quill pen and writing down the request on a piece of parchment.

"Key?" He asked, holding out a small hand that looked to be more nail than flesh, by the sheer length of them.

Hagrid smiled sheepishly, patting his pockets and digging his hands within them. Harry heard some odd noises of metal, and was that a frog, before Hagrid finally took out a single, brass key.

The goblin nodded his head and called for another one named Griphook.

Hagrid looked sideways at Harry, then leaned in a bit closer to the goblin, muttering something about needing to go to vault number seven thirteen for Albus Dumbledore.

The goblin nods slowly, and tells Griphook that, too.

Griphook then beckons them towards a large metal door and it opens, revealing a dark hallway. It seems to be leading underground, as there were torches lining on the walls the entire way down.

They stop in front of a large mine cart, and Hagrid gets situated in it, looking vaguely uncomfortable at the tight squeeze. Harry sits in front with Griphook, grinning at the goblin, happy to notice he got
The goblin looks at Harry and says, "You might want to hold on tightly."

Nodding nervously, Harry hangs onto the side and front with a hand each, bracing for the start. And he was right to. He shut his eyes tightly, struggling not to yell at the break-neck speeds of the cart. By the time the ride ended, Harry was disoriented and reluctant to try that again.

Hagrid stands swiftly, waiting to regain his footing, then walks quickly to the vault door.

While he is gone, Harry asks the goblin, "How do you handle that every time?"

The goblin just smirks in an odd way, "Well, you get used to it after a century or so."

Harry's emerald eyes widen, shocked at the age of the goblin. "You're that old? Does it get boring, living for that long?"

Pondering on the question, the goblin shakes its head, "No, not really. While it may seem to, a goblin's perception of time is different from a wizard's. The days and nights seem shorter to us, and we age rather slowly."

Harry absorbed the new knowledge, then smiles brightly. "Do you like your job?"

"Yes, I rather do. Every few decades or so, I meet a special child such as yourself. In fact, I had met another one about four years ago."

Blinking, Harry enthusiastically asked, "What's his name?"

"Draco Malfoy," the goblin answered, face bright at the mere mention of the boy "In fact, I think he is starting his first year at Hogwarts, like you are.

"Though," the goblin frowned, "The child is forced to hide his intelligence and kind heart behind an arrogant mask. Shame, he is positively delightful."

Before Harry could comment on the goblin's response, Hagrid came out of the vault, holding a small, bulky package.

He quickly stuffs it in his pocket, avoiding Harry's questioning eyes and sits back in the cart, looking pained.

Harry braced himself again, closing his eyes and waiting for the cart to start again.

When it's over, and they come out of the cart to walk to the vault door, Harry isn't just a little glad to know that he only has to ride it once more.

The goblin uses the key to open the huge door, stepping back to allow the boy and large man to walk inside.

Harry gasps when he sees all of the coins piled in the center of the large vault, the amount astounding to him, a boy who has thought his parents poor for years.

Glancing around, not seeing anything else of interest, he walked over to the hill of coins, picking up three different ones. He then proceeds to look up curiously at Hagrid and asks, "Hagrid, what are these coins called?"
"Well, 'arry," the burly man said, crouching down, "The little bronze coins are Knuts. The medium-sized silver coins are Sickles, and the large gold coins are Galleons.

"There are twenty-nine Knuts in a Sickle, seventeen Sickles in a Galleon, and four-hundred ninety-three Knuts in a Galleon."

Nodding his head, Harry thought on this information, before shaking his head. He'd ask again later.

Hagrid took out a bag and Harry scooped handfuls of coins in it until it was full. Then, Hagrid tied it closed and stuffed it in his other robe pocket.

When they left the bank, there seemed to be more people there than earlier, and Harry was surprised by how many wizards and witches were in this part of Britain, alone.

As they passed by a small dark alleyway to get to Fortescue's, an ice cream parlor that Hagrid had told Harry about, Harry felt a sudden tug.

He stood stock still, face pale. Then he turned and ran into the alleyway, ignoring Hagrid's cries for him to stop.

The tug came again, and Harry could feel some sort of call for help. It was vague and whimpering and sad and so desperate that he couldn't ignore, even if he was able to.

Then, he saw it. There was a boy and a man. The man had the same flaxen hair as the boy, pointing a wand at him and talking too low for Harry to hear. The boy, however, heard. His face was drawn tightly and he seemed to be fighting off tears.

As the man waved his wand a bit, the boy gasps and scrambles against the wall.

"I'm sorry, Father," the boy whimpered, pleading, "Please, I'm sorry!"

"What have I said about talking to dirty mudbloods?" The man calmly asked when Harry got closer.

"T-that they were below me and that should I ever forget about it, that you would make remember..." The boy slumped against the wall, resigned to whatever punishment his father would inflict on him.

Then Harry saw him raise his wand, mouth open to incant something, and he just couldn't stand there and let it happen. The call was too strong, and the need to protect the other boy was there, gnawing at him.

Taking a deep breath, Harry worked on instinct, and screamed. His body was taut and stiff and he worked his powerful lungs. The man ducked his head, dropping his wand in the process, slamming the palms of his hands over his ears.

The boy looked over at Harry incredulously, pale-grey eyes wide. Before long, the boy's father was unconscious on the ground, ears bleeding.

Harry walked over to the flaxen-haired boy slowly, not wanting to scare him.

"H-hello?" The boy asked, uncertainly.

"Hi, are you okay?" Harry questioned, checking him over for any bruises or cuts.

The boy nodded his head tightly, swallowing hard. "Who are you?"

"Harry Potter."
It took the boy a second to realize who he was, and then he was hyperventilating dangerously. "H-harry Potter?"

Harry, once again allowing instinct to guide him, clutched the pale boy's hands tightly to his chest, eyes shut. He worked to channel and project feelings of calm to the boy.

When the other child was calm, eyes dry and posture straighter, a hand was thrust towards Harry.

"My name is Draco Malfoy," the boy flaxen-haired introduced himself, "And I do believe I owe you a debt."

"A-a debt?" Harry asked, taking Draco's hand. He felt the tug lessen until it was near non-existent, helping him to relax slightly. "I don't understand what you mean."

"Well," Draco started, "A debt i-"

He was cut off when Hagrid finally made his way towards them, panting and wheezing.

"Ha-" he tried to say. Then he placed his hands on his knees, bending over to catch his breath. Once he was done, Hagrid said, "'arry, why did ye run off like that?"

Harry just raised his eyebrows and pointed towards Draco's father on the ground. Then Hagrid rubbed a hand on his face and asked, "What'd ya do to Mister Malfoy?"

"I'm not really sure," Harry said, "Just know that his ear drums are shattered."

Hagrid was unable to even comprehend what he had just heard. Instead, he just nodded, walking over to pick the man up. That's when he noticed Draco standing there, leaning against the wall.

"And ye would be 'is son?"

Draco nodded quickly, then looked away from Hagrid, not willing to acknowledge the precarious position he had been found in.

Harry noticed Draco was trembling against the wall, though barely, and embraced him, allowing him the comfort that only a hug could bring. But seeing as this was his own first hug, he was disconcerted by the closeness of the boy. The hug was awkward, but it helped both boys recover from the fright.

Hagrid handed Harry some Galleons from his vault bag, "Go get yerselves some ice cream while I take 'im to Saint Mungo's."

And with that, the two boys were left alone.

Harry peeked at Draco from underneath his fringe, and then smiled broadly.

"Let's go and get some ice cream, yeah?"

Draco smiled sadly at Harry and walked back towards the rest of Diagon Alley, leading Harry to Fortescue's.

Chapter End Notes
Draaaaaaannccco!

I order my characters by order of who is shown. Aside From Vernon and Petunia. Vernon was added first, but Petunia was shown first.
"So," Draco began, "You wanted to know about that debt, right?"

Without his father in sight, Draco was able to relax significantly. He wasn't worried about anyone telling his father at all, especially in a crowded ice cream parlor like this.

"Yeah," the raven-haired boy sitting across from him answered shyly, "I'm really new to the Magical World."

Draco's eyes widened as he thought back to the lessons that his father enforced in him. "Mudblood and half-blood scum are not to be associated with, unless to mock or pity them for their misfortune. A Malfoy always turns his nose up at any lower person than them."

"Oh," Draco swallows, fidgeting, "I didn't know that..."

Just then, their deserts appeared in front of them, along with a small sign next to Harry's.

"What does it say?" Draco asked curiously, picking up the spoon already within the confines of the ice cream. He licked it, savoring the taste of freshly baked brownies and chocolate.

Harry leaned in closer, adjusted his glasses on his nose, and read aloud, "This desert is on us, Mister Potter. Have a pleasant day!"

Harry wrinkled his nose in slight disgust, "This has been happening all day..."

"Wuh hath?" Draco asked, mouth still encircling the silver spoon.

Harry giggled at Draco's garble, "Well," he sobered up immediately, expression turned contemplating, "Earlier, when me and Hagrid came through the Floo to the Leaky Cauldron, everyone grew silent, then suddenly started whispering. From the snatches that I heard, it was about me. Then two people shook my hand, thanking me for something."

"You don't know?" Draco gasped, coughing. He ended up putting his spoon down on the napkin on the side, trying to control the sudden fit after nearly choking on his ice cream.

Harry leaned over the table, patting Draco's back. Draco nodded thankfully, clearing his throat. When all was done, he gave Harry the go-ahead to continue speaking.

"Hagrid told me he would tell me later..." Harry shrugged, face dark, "But I'm not really sure about that; he's already forgotten once..."

"It's a tale that's told to all of the Wizarding children now," Draco started, looking Harry squarely in the eyes, "What happened that night.
"My father was a part of it, so he tells it differently. My mum is the one that told me the entire tale, making sure to clarify where Father was vague, or when he said something untrue and biased."

He swallowed thickly, drumming his fingers on the table nervously. Suddenly, he felt a warm hand on top of his and looked up at the boy sitting across from him.

He just shrugged and smiled sheepishly, "I could feel your anxiety."

Draco’s face felt warm at the sight of the smile, and returned it with his own, though his was much softer in comparison.

He took a deep breath and continued on, "Well, it's told with the beginning of the rise of the Dark Lord.

"Several years back, a new dark wizard gathered supporters for an uprising. He wanted to 'purify'," Draco made quotation marks with his fingers, "the society of mudbloods, half-bloods, and those with creature blood."

"What does that mean?"

Draco looked up, surprised, then he face-palmed himself, "Oh yeah, you don't know those terms. "Mudblood is an offensive, or derogatory, way of classifying a wizard or witch whom was born from two non-magical parents, or muggles. The socially acceptable term is muggleborn.

"Half-bloods are those born with a non-magical parent and a magical one.

"Those with creature blood have had a relative marry a humanoid creature, such as Veela. Veela are creatures of love, though they can turn nasty real quick when you threaten their soul mates.

"And purifying... It's really just a blanket term for massive genocide.

"That's what happened when the Dark Lord gained his followers and grew to power. He started a war to get rid of those that didn't have 'pure' magical blood running through their veins.

"Apparently, a prophecy was made and the leader of the resistance, Headmaster Dumbledore, hid away two families that were unofficially named within it, or just met the requirements.

"The Dark Lord attacked one particular family, the Potters', after a close family friend betrayed their location."

Harry's emerald-green eyes widened in realization, his breathing quickening. Draco turned his hand over and squeezing the hand above his, channeling calm thoughts like Harry had done for him.

"The Dark Lord paid a special visit to the Potter's and killed them. Lily, the wife, sacrificed her life for her son. When the Dark Lord turned to kill the baby in the crib, the spell, an Unforgiveable known as the Killing Curse, backfired somehow, and he ended up with a single scar in the shape of a lightning bolt."

Draco looked over at the boy and squeezed his hand again.

"I'm not really surprised," Harry smiled weakly, "It didn't make any sense when my aunt told me I had miraculously survived a car accident with only a scar, whereas my parents died."

Draco could've felt furious on his behalf, but he was feeling too calm to do so. Plus, he didn't want to cause Harry any trouble, should he get too loud. Shaking away his thoughts, he was about to
continue the original topic of conversation when a voice interrupted the young heir.

"'Arry," a voice boomed from Draco's left. He certainly did not jump, but Harry giggled at him anyway. Draco stuck his tongue out at the other wizard. "Mister Malfoy, ye father's gettin' is 'earing fixed. I'll take ya wit' me and 'arry to continue our shopping if ya got yer money."

Draco just nodded, smiling enthusiastically along with Harry. Draco was especially eager to continue their time spent together. He'd never had a true friend before, and he could already tell that this could be a long-long one.

As the two boys, and one half-giant, spent their day together, they both had to admit that it was probably one of the best days of their lives.

They even made easy conversation as they got their robe measurements done, Draco filling Harry in on what Madam Malkin was doing as she waved her wand around his thin figure.

"Draco," Harry asked as they walked towards the last shop of the day. There was a sign above the door that read, "Ollivanders: Makers of Fine Wands since 382 B.C."

"Yeah, Harry," Draco turned towards his new - dare he think it- friend.

"When I got close enough to you and your father earlier, I heard some of what he had said," he stated, placing a calming hand on Draco's elbow.

Draco felt ashamed of what Harry must've heard. "How much did you hear?"

"How was he going to punish you?"

Draco's heart pounded and he winced. "Imperius," he whispered, ducking his head.

"He was going to use an Unforgiveable called the Imperius Curse in order to make me obey him the rest of the day. Or at least make me act like him."

Draco moved away from Harry's arm span, though he pasted a big, fake smile on his face as he said, "Let's go get our wands, huh?"

He saw Harry warily nod his head, and felt sorry for how he reacted. He just didn't want to talk about it right now. Or ever. Never would be a safe bet. After all, while Draco was busy devouring all of the books found in the manor library, his father had been in meetings with dark wizards that shouldn't be warranted a Malfoy's respect.

While all of the books he could find on muggleborns were about their inferiority, Draco couldn't believe it for a second. After all, all of the evidence they used to prove their theories was old and invalid.

When they walked into the shop, Hagrid was already talking to the owner, Mister Ollivander.

When Ollivander caught sight of Draco and Harry, his eyes widened.

He walked swiftly towards the pair of young wizards, "Master Malfoy, Mister Harry Potter. Here to choose your first wands?"

Draco shook the man's hand, and encouraged Harry with a smile to do the same.

Ollivander gave a toothy grin in return, walking over to his shelves of wands.
"Now, let me see," he muttered, "The perfect wand for the Malfoy heir and Mister Potter..."

The portly man came back with a few boxes of wands, "Now, do not get discouraged, should these not give off any spark. It's hardly easy a task, choosing a wand."

The man placed a single box in front of the two. "Whichever one of you wants to try first; just give it a wave."

Harry took the initiative, and picked up the wand, giving it a quick wave. It didn't spark at all, "That's quite alright, my boy," the older man murmured, gesturing for Draco to do the same.

When the flaxen-haired boy picked up the wand, he knew on first contact that it wouldn't be his to master. He shook his head, laying it back inside of its box.

Ollivander just placed box after box in front of the two of them, making Harry and Draco all the more frustrated when none gave a single spark or even shocked one of them. No, instead, they were even going so far as to move away before they could touch them, as if they were sentient.

Ollivander tapped a finger on his chin after replacing all the wands that were used back on their designated shelves with a flick of his wand. "Hmmm, very interesting..."

The man walked into a back room, and after several long seconds, came back with two wand boxes caked with dust.

He blew on both of the boxes, running his hands, wrinkled with age, over them both, in order to get rid of the extra dust, and then set them down in front of them, a box each.

"I created these two wands long ago, but neither witch nor wizard had the capabilities of mastering them.

"Having exhausted other options, I decided to let you two try them out."

Like always, Harry went first, taking off the cover of the box. He stared at the wand thoughtfully, adjusted his glasses, and then picked it up.

Draco could feel a rush of pure magic; magic that seemed to cheering. It calmed and excited his magic and everything else, including his soul. He felt like jumping up or running around in circles. His father probably would've been appalled, had he been here.

After opening his eyes, though not even realizing he had closed them in the first place, Draco felt a look of awe take possession of his face.

Harry's own skin had an ethereal glow to it, and Draco could just feel, taste, maybe even smell, and the happiness that came off of him in bounds.

Ollivander, meanwhile, was muttering, "Curious, very curious."

"What?" Harry had asked, rubbing his thumb and index finger over his new wand.

"I can recall all the wands that I have created and sold; wands such as James Potter's, but this wand could be expected, though it wasn't. After all, its brother gave you the scar that you now bear."

Harry froze, growing somber. Draco placed a hand on his arm, letting him feel just how content he had felt just then. The raven-haired boy's shoulders slacked from the overwhelming emotions swirling within the flaxen-haired boy, shooting Draco a thankful grin.
"Now, Master Malfoy," Ollivander started, tapping on the box.

Draco didn't need any more to be said. He carefully took off the box and picked up the wand in reverence. It was thin, though hard.

The waves of magic that came off of Draco were much calmer than Harry's exuberance. However, neither was stronger than the other by feel. It filled the shop with a sense of easy and comfort, exactly how Draco felt at that very moment.

When Draco lowered his wand, the magic dispersed, settling down in content.

"Wow," Harry commented. "That was amazing..."

Draco beamed at Harry, still feeling the effects of both their magics.

"Mister Potter, your wand is sturdy, eleven inches... It IS most curious indeed; both yours and He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named's wands' cores both came from the same Phoenix, though yours is Holly. Perfect for Light spells.

"Though, Mister Malfoy's wand is not in the least less powerful. Yours is Hornwood, one of the most stubborn of wand woods. I used Unicorn Hair as the core to provide a delicate balance. It is ten and a quarter inches, sturdy as well."

Ollivander seemed to be very proud of the matches, though Harry and Draco didn't quite understand the significance of both of those wands.

However, Draco was concerned about Harry's wand being the brother of the Dark Lord's own. But it wasn't something he had to ponder on right at this moment. If it ever became a priority, he would remember to do some research on it.

"Draco," Harry said, bringing him out of his thoughts, "I had an amazing time today. I hope we are able to become friends at school."

Draco beamed at Harry, pulling him into a hug, "I hope we are, too."

Hagrid used his umbrella and called for something. Suddenly, there was a bus racing their way.

It took some maneuvering, but he was eventually able to get on. The man was huge, after all. And the door for the bus was so thin.

"Where to?" The man and head said, both smiling at their small trio. Draco cleared his throat, "Uh, Malfoy Manor."

The man nodded his head and warned them all to hang on. Draco, knowing to heed warnings when given, held onto whatever was in reach, even effectively coaxing Harry to take precautions, too.

And was the ride terrible. Even worse than the travel you took to reach a vault at Gringott's, and that was saying something. Made it seem like walk around a Quidditch pitch.

The bus came to an abrupt stop in front of the manor's pearly white gates, causing them all to jerk. Draco stood up, wiping his sweaty palms off on his trousers and waved a quick goodbye to Harry and the half-giant.

He gulped as he walked down the stairs of the bus and jumped off, landing on the dirt road of the manor.
Cautiously, he walked towards the gate, allowing it to examine his magical signature. Following that, he pricked his finger on a nail, allowing it to assess his blood.

When all was good, the gate opened. He walked through, automatically landing in his quarters.

Not a moment too soon, his mother came in. "Draco," she cried, hugging him to her chest.

"M-mum," he stuttered uneasily, "what's the matter?"

"Your father called me, furious about you escaping before you were punished. I fear he may do something worse than the Imperius."

Draco cringed, "Are you absolutely positive?"

His mother just held him tighter to her bosom, confirming his fears.

"Oh no," Draco murmured, "Harry... Mum, I made a real friend today..."

She held her son at arm's length, fear swirling within her eyes, "Poppet, no..."

Draco swallowed thickly and nodded slowly, "I don't want to lose my only friend."

Just then, they heard the distinct footfalls of his father's shoes and cane.

"Draco," he said coldly, walking into his room, "I believe we left things... unfinished. Come."

Draco looked at his mother and clutched her to him, before standing up and facing his fate.

"Dragon," she said, "who was this friend?"

"Harry Potter." He whispered the taboo, smiling fondly at merely mentioning the boy's name.

His heart dropped to his stomach, smiling fondly at merely mentioning the boy's name.

'Let's just hope it's not too bad...' he thought.

Chapter End Notes

Next update will be either tomorrow, or the day after.

I used the HP wiki page and the Wizarding Realm wand core and wood guide when picking out Draco's wand.

All errors are my own. I an very sorry D;

I think it was mentioned somewhere that Narcissa went and purchased Draco's wand for him while he was in Madam Malkin's, which is why I changed it. Plus, I wanted him to look a little like a BAMF in this chapter xD
The days leading up to the start of the school-year are spent in excitement. Harry explores the grounds with Hagrid, as the friendly man explains the smallest things to him.

"Hagrid," Harry calls one day, swinging his feet side-to-side on the steps leading up to the hut.

"Hm?" the older man asks, patting his dog on the head. Fang just drools in response, causing Hagrid to chuckle merrily.

"How come you don't have a wand like everyone else?"

Hagrid sits up straight and looks over at Harry, "Why do ye ask?"

Harry shrugs in response, a slight roll of the shoulders as he lies back on the step sideways, arms crossed beneath his head as a cushion. "Just curious."

"Well, ask me some other time, 'kay 'arry?"

Harry nods his head and slips into a light doze as Hagrid takes Fang out of his usual walk around the grounds.

Several days later, Harry twists and turns in his sleep as his mind is plagued by the darkest of premonitions.

A man layered in the darkest of black robes, glaring down at an innocent child wearing glasses...

Professor Quirrell unraveling his turban...

Draco sneering at Harry hatefully, surrounded by students wearing similar green and black robes...

Burning...

Screaming...

Harry wakes up, the screams still ringing in his ears. Then he realizes that he's the one screaming and puts a stop to it, eyes dilated from fright, panting from the adrenaline rush.

Before he lies back down to try and fall back to sleep, he lazily thinks, 'Draco...'

Later that morning, Hagrid bursts into the living room and booms, "'arry, time ter get up! First day o' school!"

The raven-haired boy wakes up, stretching, hair mussed even more usual, and blearily rubs at his
eyes. Then he jumps, "First day!"

Hagrid chuckles under his breath, shaking his head as the child runs to change his clothes. "'m takin' ye ter King's Cross ter get on the train, so hurry up!"

Harry pauses in his dressing, glasses hanging precariously off the edge of his nose. "What's King Cross, and what train?"

"Just get dressed; I'll let ye know when it's time."

Harry just nods his head, walking over to the bathroom attached to Hagrid's small hut. He squints at his reflection, unhappy with his appearance.

Pouting, he bubbles up his cheeks and sucks them back in, making a sharp sound. The young raven-haired wizard giggles at his reflection and washes his face.

After he's done brushing his hair and teeth, the boy fixes up his clothing, then realizes he needs to actually use the toilet, leaving him embarrassed and unhappy with his morning. All that time, wasted!

Several minutes pass after his routine, and Hagrid still hadn't called for him. Harry is terribly bored, playing with his hands and making odd noises with his mouth.

"'arry!" the man finally calls, and Harry is quick on his feet, running straight for Hagrid.

Hagrid is holding his umbrella, face bright. "Ye ready to go, 'arry?"

Harry smiles, skin glowing a tiny bit. Hagrid doesn't notice the change.

They walk down the path, passing the Green Houses, walking down already-familiar corridors to the Hospital Wing when Harry bumps into someone.

The boy rubs the, now sore, spot on his head and ducks his head, "I'm sorry!"

The man grunts, and Harry shakes his head, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!"

"Quiet down, boy!" the man sneers from above Harry, causing the young wizard to freeze, eyes wide in terror.

"Boy, what did I tell you about running in the house?"

"But Dudley was chasing me around!" he huffed, arms crossed in front of his chest.

Suddenly he's on the floor, having hit the wall, face burning in shame from the slap the man had just delivered.

"Don't speak back to me, understood?!"

"Yes, Uncle Vernon," he bites out, trembling from the brunt of the slap.

"I don't think you quite do..."

When Harry comes back to his surroundings, Hagrid is sitting next to him, calling out, "'arry, 'arry," frantically.

Harry feels a hand on his back and cries out, "Please, I'm sorry, I won't do it again, Uncle Vernon, just not the belt, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!"
A distant voice snaps at Hagrid, "Take your hands off of him, you imbecile! The child is obviously in shock!"

The weight of a limb on his back is gone, and Harry uncurls slowly, lifting his head up to look at the man he had bumped into.

He looks vaguely familiar, and Harry begins to wonder where he's seen him before.

He is covered in black, face pale and hard. He's carefully expressionless, and his eyes get a bit wider when he spots Harry's scar. Immediately, he tenses up and he's now looking at Harry as if he's a bug on the bottom of his shoe.

He walks away with the turn of his heel, robes billowing behind him, dramatically.

"H-Hagrid..." Harry starts, "Who is that man?"

"That's Professor Snape, 'arry.'e didn't like yet father much back then."

Harry nods his head, and then erases any emotions from his face, "Can we not go on the train?"

Hagrid looks at the child sadly, "Okay."

The large, bearded man holds out a hand for Harry, and the boy hides an automatic flinch for him. It wouldn't do for him to overreact; after all, Harry shouldn't have ever run in the house.

He takes the hand and weakly smiles at Hagrid, walking down the winding halls towards the Hospital Wing.

When they get there, Madam Pomfrey is meticulously cleaning the Wing, despite the fact that it is completely spotless.

"Hi, Madam Pomfrey!" Harry giggles.

"Harry, lad, shouldn't ye be on the Hogwarts Express?"

Harry sweetly answers, "I wanted to spend some more time with you before I have to live in the dorms and abide by a curfew, though..."

She laughs softly, pulling the child into a hug, "Come on," she pats his shoulder after a few seconds. "Take to take your medicine."

Harry makes a disgruntled sound in the back of his throat, face twisted in disgust. "Do I have to?"

"Yes, you do," she answers nonchalantly, as she locates the potions he needs. She points her wand at Harry, when he climbs atop of his usual bed, and waves it a bit, satisfied after a few sparks. Taking out a spoon, she measures out careful mouthfuls for him to take until both vials are completely empty.

Harry is nearly begging for pumpkin juice when a cup is handed to him, sighing as the aftertaste of the terrible concoctions is washed away by the drink.

"Need any help, Madam?" he asks, placing the cup down on the cart next to the bed. She nods her head, and then points towards a few beds, "Be a dear and make those up?"

Harry nods enthusiastically, smiling brightly. "Anything for you!" he says, wrapping his arms around her waist in a tight embrace. The child lets go and makes his way to the few remaining beds in need
of a change of sheets and cases.

When he hears Hagrid come in an hour or two later, he's just finished helping the matron organize the Wing for the new year.

"Express comin' in!" he laughs, picking Harry up and running out of the Hospital Wing. "Bye Poppy!"

The pleasant-faced woman just rolls her eyes in mock annoyance before cupping her hands around her mouth and wishing Harry a good first day.

'Draco,' Harry thinks to himself. 'I am going to see him again!'

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter should be in three to four days, mmkay?
As Hagrid carried Harry closer to the train, Harry grew wary. It didn't feel... right. There was something wrong coming.

Something dark.

Trying his best to school his expression into one denoting excitement, Harry asked Hagrid, "Do you feel that, too?"

"Feel what, 'arry?" the burly man asked back, continuing his trek towards Hogsmeade Station.

"Never mind," Harry brushed off, staring down hard at the coat of Hagrid's clothing.

'So, I'm the only one that feels it?' he asked himself, forehead wrinkling in confusion and concern.

It wasn't just a vague feeling, though. It hung in the air, like a suffocating miasma. As Harry got closer, his vision began to blur. Disconcerted, the young boy took off his glasses and dragged the back of his hand across his eyes, alarmed at the wetness found there.

Blinking back the tears, Harry was content to notice that it grew less thick the closer they got to the train.

But a different feeling layered on top of the previous one. This one filled him with melancholy. It was distressed and beseeching. This time, the heaviness in the air was pure, intense emotion.

Harry was sure that he saw a bird fly in the air and slowly let itself descend to the ground. It was such an odd sight, that he almost forgot about the evil murk coming from within the forest.

Almost.

"Hagrid," Harry said, tugging on the large man's sleeve. His current caregiver stopped and looked down at the boy.

"Yes, 'arry?"

"Don't be mad if Draco doesn't turn out to be my friend, today. He said his father was in the middle of punishing him when I screamed."

Eyes widening by the smallest degree, Hagrid was shocked beyond all reason by the youth's words. Likewise, after Harry had insisted that they not talk about certain things - due to his "slipping", so to speak - he had assumed the boy wouldn't speak about anything like that, to him.

Nodding his head, Hagrid cleared his throat and suggested, "'ow 'bout, when we see 'im we wait to see if 'e comes near us, okay?"
Harry nodded tightly, and then motioned towards the Station. "We should probably go, now. The train will be here in a few minutes."

Agreeably, Hagrid carried the raven-haired child in his arms, and then quickly set him down when they had neared Hogsmeade Station enough.

Harry grinned up, ecstatic beyond belief as they drew closer to the Station, until all of the professors were in-sight.

Hagrid pointed to a tall, straight backed woman in the background, "She is Professor McGonagall, she teaches Transfigurations. She's the 'ead o' Gryffindor 'ouse, too."

Smiling at the man, Harry nodded his understanding. Hagrid never seemed to notice the change in his skin.

Pointing towards a small man, Hagrid explained, "'e is Professor Flitwick, he is 'ead o' Ravenclaw 'ouse, and 'e teaches Charms.

"Professor Sprout," Hagrid nodded his head at the woman standing next to him, "Teaches 'erbology. She is the 'ead o' 'ufflepuf'ouse."

There were several others there that Hagrid took the chance to point out to Harry, though he insisted on keeping a certain distance from them.

There was a loud fuss as the train pulled in, grandly, and all of the professors ambled towards it hurriedly. Hagrid and Harry took up the rear.

"Now, 'arry," Hagrid yelled over the cacophony. "I 'andle firsties, so jus' stand next to me, yeah? We're goin' on boats to the castle."

"Boats?" Harry question loudly, bewildered by the choice of transportation.

"Tradition." Hagrid explained, simply.

Shrugging his shoulders, Harry merely agreed to the idea.

He could see Professor McGonagall holding a wand to her lips, tip up, and then suddenly her voice was booming.

"First years go with Professor Hagrid," she called. Harry tuned her out to focus on the students walking closer.

Two hulking figures came towards the two, and Harry could see Draco standing between them. Even after long-accepting this fate, Harry still wasn't happy that Draco just turned his nose up at him, not recognizing his friend.

Hagrid shared a glance with Harry, acknowledging what he'd seen. All he needed was confirmation.

When the other first year students drew near, Hagrid clapped his hands and yelled, "All firs' years, gather 'round!"

A bumbling boy walked quickly towards the large group of students, offering a sheepish grin, "Sorry, I got lost."

Hagrid gave the child a comforting smile, then motioned for all of the students to follow him, giving instructions about this and that, introducing himself as the Groundskeeper.
He was unsettled by a rude comment made by young Malfoy about his parentage, but shook it off. If Harry wanted him involved, he was positive that the child would tell him.

Sneaking a glance at the boy, Hagrid noted how dull he looked. It was a strange observation that took him by surprise, but it wouldn't do to stay off-task.

Harry, meanwhile, was standing next to the bumbling boy, chatting enthusiastically about the school.

"I heard there were ghosts!"

"Oh," Harry said. "I've seen them. Make sure to keep away from Peeves, he's a prankster."

"Oh," Neville marveled, "Who are you?"

"I'm Harry Potter." Harry smiled impishly, skin regaining a bit of its, normally shining, luminescence. Neville didn't notice the change.

As they neared the Great Lake, Hagrid made preparations, calling out for students to go ahead and start boarding the boats.

Harry took a seat in one with Neville, along with a quiet, mousy girl with long, bushy hair. She was fiddling with her robes, nervously, smiling at Harry and Neville.

Quite suddenly, she cleared her throat and struck up conversation with, "Hello, I'm Hermione Granger, a muggleborn. And you are?"

Neville was, noticeably, fumbling over his words. Harry decided to take pity on the poor boy. "I'm Harry Potter."

Her face was blank with shock, as silly as it sounded, but she regained her footing rather quickly. "I've read all about you! Is it true about the..." She trailed off, poking at her own brow.

Harry smiled softly, moving some of his fringe out of the way. Hermione and Neville gasped, though Harry didn't see the big deal in a scar.

"So, when your parents...

Neville gave her a Look, shutting down her direction of inquiry. Harry just raised an eyebrow at her, wondering at her lack of tact.

As the boats were released around to the water, Harry and the others glanced over at the lake, noting the sudden darkness of the sky.

"Wow," Harry gasped. "I didn't think it was this late."

Neville nodded his head, slowly, "We boarded the train at eleven o'clock. I guess it took a lot longer to get here than I thought."

Hermione inquired, "Did you find your toad?"

Harry looked bewildered at the odd question, and Hermione understood. "Earlier, Neville had lost his toad on the train. I never did hear whether or not he found it."

"Trevor," Neville started. "My toad," he paused to explain, "Was just in my bag. I had to put him back with his tank."
Harry nodded, and then jumped when the boat suddenly jerked to a start. Hagrid walked out of his own, putting down the oar, and cupped his hands around his mouth.

"Get ou' an' follow me to the castle!"

Harry, Neville, and Hermione scrambled out of the boat, heading for Hagrid. A loud, red-haired kid grumpily commented on the journey.

Hagrid looked over all of their heads and directed all of them to a huge door.

"Welcome... to 'ogwarts," he announced opening the doors.

Beyond them was a nicely decorated hallway. Torches lined the corridor, as if they were in Gringott's.

Hagrid met up with Professor McGonagall, who took over the reins.

"All first years, this way," she instructed. She turned on her heel, and led the huge group of young children down the long corridor, to another door.

She opened it, guiding them to a small room.

Once everyone had shuffled inside, she stood at the front of them all, "Welcome to your first year at Hogwarts."

She then went on to explain the Four Houses: Gryffindor, the House of the Brave; Hufflepuff, the House of the Loyal; Ravenclaw, the House of the Intelligent; and Slytherin, the House of the Cunning.

"During your seven years, you and your fellow housemates will sleep in the same dorm, eat at the same tables, and study in the same common room.

"They are, essentially, your family throughout this time.

"You will earn points for your House by studying, answering questions, et cetera. It would be best if you remember that, though you can earn points, you can also get points deducted.

"At the End of Term Feast, the House with the most points wins the House Cup.

"Now, let the Sorting begin!"

And with that, the first day of Harry's new life started.
McGonagall calls for all of the first-years to settle themselves into a line. Harry is nervous, at first, due to Draco's indifference to whom he was. Not even the smallest amount of recognition of Harry. Harry's just mournful of the loss of the boy he bonded with, that day at Diagon Alley.

He's content, to note, that Neville is behind him, face twisted in the slightest bit of fear. The chattering muggle-born, Hermione, is right in front of Harry, spouting a load of interesting information she'd managed to absorb from her books.

"I've read about this in my copy of Hogwarts, A History," she explained, twisting her sleeves in her hands. Harry got that this was probably her way of dealing with unfamiliar scenarios; chattering excessively about books and information. "It doesn't go into much detail, since the book is usually read by students of a higher level them me, but it says that all children are Sorted into their house, based on personality, ambitions, et cetera."

Harry nodded his head, and a boy farther behind him in the line crowed, "My brothers said that they curse you!"

Another kid piped up, "I heard it's a series of riddles that you need to solve by yourself."

As more children argued over what they believed was behind the huge doors in opposite of them all, an apparition hovered in from the wall.

"Ow!" it yelped, "I never do get used to that."

When the figure grew closer, the students in the back squealed, "It's a ghost!"

Harry's just too stunned to react properly.

The ghost chuckled, dressed in clothes from another century, arms hanging loosely at his sides. "Hello, first-years. I am the Gryffindor House ghost, and on behalf of all the ghosts of Hogwarts castle, I greet you!"

And with that, he left as fast as he had come. Hermione was speaking ceaselessly about what she had read about ghosts in her books, and, as maddening as it was, the raven-haired boy dealt with it.

Neville, behind him, was silent, so Harry turned in line, "How are ya doin' there, Nev?"

"Nev?" the boy questioned, brows wrinkled in confusion.

"Yeah, Nev." Harry smiled brilliantly, his skin shining just the slightest more in his happiness. "After all, we're friends, right?"

The brunet bobbed his head in acceptance of his friendship, and the new nickname. "I'm doing alright, Harry. This all just feels... so new..."

Before Harry could comment on that, Professor McGonagall had opened the doors, and ushered all of the students inside.

Harry inhaled sharply at the depth of the room they were steered into. There were more than a few hundred students nestled at their tables. They seemed to all be talking about one thing, or another. Some merely appraised the new students, smiling encouragingly.
There were four different tables, and Harry contemplated what Houses they were for.

Thinking back on his classes during primary school, he furrowed his brow in thought.

'There are four different houses, four different main colors.' he mused, lips pursed. 'Red, blue, yellow, and green...'

Red was a sign of... passion, excitement, danger, and daring. So, the table full of red and black robes must be Gryffindor House, the House of the Brave.

He observed the students surrounding the table. They seemed a lot louder than the other houses, all laughing or smiling. It was a boisterous environment, and Harry couldn't help but want to see what it felt like to be there, a part of it.

Continuing his thoughts, Harry thought about the color yellow. 'Yellow is... hm... It's bright, so cheerfulness... intellect, and joy...'

Gazing at the next table, Harry saw a genuinely prideful group of students. They were all talking quietly, but their gesticulations signaled it was anything but quiet. They, too, were all smiling, seeming to enjoy chatting with one other. The House of Loyalty.

Harry would be proud to be in a House, such as that one.

Going back to his reveries, he rocked back on his heels, arms crossed behind his back, and thought at the color blue. 'Blue signals calmness, like water. Tranquility... and confidence.'

The students settled at that table were all composed, talking amongst each other in quiet tones. A few had huge tomes open, ensconced in them. Harry didn't think he'd do well in that House. It was too quiet, and Harry longed for chatter, and kindness. People with the same likeness of mind as he.

Then, the last table. Slytherin. Those students were not quiet, nor were they as loud as the Gryffindor table. They seemed at ease with one another, though several of them were watching the Sorting.

Each was impassive in their own way, though their mannerisms signaled that it was a learned quality. Harry silently contemplated the meaning of the color green, comparing it to those students. 'Fertility, which is growth in life, or the ability of creating life. Money, definitely. And efficiency."

Harry had been so engrossed in his meanderings, that it took a touch from Neville to bring him out.

"Huh?" he questioned. He was at a loss when he realized that there were very few students in front of him. "What's going on?"

"They're getting Sorted by the Hat," Neville answered, giggling at Harry's fumble. "Your turn is coming up soon!"

And it was. Hermione had been called up, and the Hat settled itself upon her head for a few seconds, before calling out, "Gryffindor!"

Harry nodded his agreement with the Hat's choice, though he was perplexed as to exactly how such an unusual object made such complex decisions.

Tuning in to the rest of the Sorting, Harry observed the Hat. "Greengrass, Daphne!" McGonagall called. A girl with blond hair - pale, but never as pale as Draco's - sat on the stool next to the professor. The Hat was placed on her head, and with that one touch, the Hat immediately called out, "Slytherin!"
Her head held up high, the girl strode on to the table. The only table cheering.

Harry paused, and then looked back at Neville. "Nev, how come no one is clapping for Greengrass?"

Neville shrugged his shoulders, not quite understanding, either.

When Greengrass got to her seat at one of the tables, she was met with friendly faces, all of the Slytherins letting their masks down for a quick reception.

As the Sorting continued, Harry was stuck with that one image. It didn't feel right, that the Slytherins clapped for every Hufflepuff, every Ravenclaw, and every Gryffindor, but very few of each of those Houses clapped for the Slytherins.

Arms crossed in front of his chest, Harry decided to use his new-found status for something worthwhile.

After Neville had said goodbye, having been Sorted into Gryffindor, himself, Harry thought hard at the implications of what he was about to do. Yet, he had a strong resolve to continue on.

It would only take convincing the Hat.

Harry continued viewing the Sorting, heart clenching when Draco walked past him without a peep.

The Hat sat a bit longer on Draco's head than anyone else's that Harry had seen. The Hat cried out, "Slytherin!" after a few seconds, but Harry could tell something was wrong.

Of course, that peculiarity passed without another word, as the Sorting continued.

Glancing at the Slytherin table, Harry could see the Slytherins greeting the flaxen-haired boy as warmly as they did all of the other Slytherin first-years: with a nod of the head, and open arms.

Harry braced himself for when his name was called after Sally-Anne Perks.

"P-Potter, Harry!" McGonagall stumbled, and the Great Hall was still. A pin could probably be heard dropping to the floor, the silence was so eerie.

With a deep breath, Harry walked up to the stool, feeling hundreds of pairs of eyes on his back. Trembling at the scrutiny, he settled himself onto the stool, and waited for the Hat to be placed on his head.

It weighed near nothing, though the top did.

Harry could feel a second consciousness in his mind, and tensed up at contact.

"Calm down," the Hat soothed. "I'm just searching for what's needed for the Sorting."

Harry took a deep, shuddering breath, and released his hold on his mind. A slight tug, and the Hat muttered, "It seems you've already made up your mind for Slytherin House. A worthy task, though I would've suggested it, anyway."

With a mental shrug, Harry thought, "It didn't seem fair."

"Come to me if you need advice, lad," the Hat said. "I want to know how it goes."

And with that, the Hat opened its mouth and roared, with a twinge of pride, "Slytherin!"
Slytherin House was a bit more subdued in its clapping, though Harry hardly noticed. The other three Houses had numerous glares set on the House of the Cunning, promising retribution for taking away Harry Potter, of all the people.

With another deep breath, Harry swiftly walked towards a table, and sat down when room was made for him.

A teen seated across from him shrugged and said, "Well, looks like this will be a rather interesting year."

Several nods were given, as an acceptance of this fact. Harry just smiled joyfully at his new House.
Smiling brightly, Harry waited out the rest of the Sorting. That loud kid with the red hair was Sorted into Gryffindor, he mentally noted.

A clap was heard, and all eyes were on an older man, with a long, white beard. He commanded the other students with an air of leadership, and said, "Welcome to all of the first-years, and another splendid Sorting.

"I hope that this year is yet another memorable one," he smiles at that, then announces, "Now, let the Feast begin!"

He snapped his fingers, and dishes filled with food lined all of the tables. Harry was star-struck by the different varieties. He'd never seen so many different foods before, and it all smelled so good.

All of the Slytherins were chatting about professors, lessons, and answering questions that the first-years had.

While he listened to the conversation carrying on, merrily, around him, the raven-haired boy filled his plate with as many foods as he could, then paused to look around for Draco.

He could see the bob of slicked-back flaxen hair a little ways closer to the front of the Great Hall. One of the ghosts was sitting next to him, and Harry could tell, by the way he was gesticulating, that he wasn't happy by the slightest.

Taking a bite of the Shepherd's pie he'd only ever seen Dudley demolish, Harry smiled. It was so delicious.

A first-year sitting across from him, Blaise Zabini, arched an eyebrow at him.

"What?" Harry asked, taking another bite.

"Nothing," he shrugged, paying attention to his own plate of food.

Harry just turned to the left, and greeted the girl sitting next to him, Greengrass.

"Hello," Harry smiled, holding out a hand for her to shake. "I'm H-

"-arry Potter, I know," she rolled her eyes, shaking his hand. "I'm Daphne G-

"-reengrass, I know," Harry chuckled. "So, are you excited by anything in particular, this year?"

She giggled, nodding her head enthusiastically. "Potions! Professor Snape is supposed to be the best!"

Harry tries not to frown at that, forcing a bright smile on his face. "Oh, okay!"

Daphne turned to her left, talking to the girl that had come right before Harry's own Sorting, Perks. They giggled about something, and Harry decided to concentrate on the large amount of food left on his plate.

After a few minutes, Harry glances up again, just observing the rest of the professors.

He notices Professor Snape, the man is still dressed in dark robes, speaking with Professor Quirrell.
When Snape meets his stare, Harry feels an odd burning sensation concentrated near his eye.

Bringing a hand up to rub at his eyebrow, he realises that the problem is his scar. Dropping his fork, the boy slumps over, breaking eye contact with his Head of House.

He feels a hand on his shoulder, and jumps in shock.

"Huh, what?" he asked, relieved that the pain is receding.

"I asked if you were okay," Greengrass answered worriedly.

"Yeah, I'm okay," Harry lies, smiling bemusedly. "Just had a bit of a headache. It's going away."

She nodded her head, though her expression portrayed her disbelief. She then raised an eyebrow, making him feel as if she knew he was lying, but would humour him. The raven-haired gulped, then looked back towards the two professors; however, they were gone.

A few minutes later, the Headmaster stands up. Calling everyone to attention with a single clap, he says, "Now, I have a few warnings this year.

"Mister Filch has updated his list of disallowed objects. Please, if you need to see it, visit his office.

"Another thing would be the third-floor corridor; no one is to be up there. It is closed off, and anyone found up there will get fifty points deducted from their House, as well as a full week's detention.

"As always, the Forbidden Forest is not to be entered.

"Now, Prefects, if you would show the first-years to the common rooms?"

With a nod, the plates and dishes disappear. Harry stands up, and sees an older teen calling for first-years. With a smile, he shuffles in closer, hands stuffed in his huge robes pockets.

The prefect nodded his head, then beckoned for all of the children to follow him. A girl followed from the back. She seemed to be making sure they all followed and listened.

"Now," he started, stopping near one of the stairways. "There are several things you need to know about the Hogwarts' corridors, but I'll just tell you the most important fact.

"The staircases move whenever they please, empty cupboards and classrooms do as well. You'll need to memorise where you are going."

He turned on his heel, guiding all of the younger students down the stairs, deeper into the school. A portrait of a regal man appraises them, then nods in approval.

"The Slytherin common room is housed in the Dungeons. Our Head of House, Professor Snape, teaches Potions conveniently located near his personal rooms and the common room."

Harry gazes up at the torches lining up the hallways, marveling at the mysterious atmospheric feel of it all.

They dark-haired prefect stops in front of a brick wall on the right, then knocks twice. He announces the password, for the first-years' benefit, "Serpent's tongue."

The wall slides open, slowly revealing a passageway even deeper into the room.

Looking over his shoulder, the prefect warns, "Keep that password to yourselves. Don't write it
down, don't do anything involving it. Memorise it, but do not, under any circumstances, give it out to someone that isn't in Slytherin."

Harry can hear Draco snort something about "muggle-lovers", but he shakes it off. Draco would never actually say that.

When they enter the common room, all of the first-years gasp. Harry's eyes go wide behind his rounded glasses frames, looking this way, and that way. He's unsure of where to keep his eyes.

The room is definitely dark, and pretty cold, but it's something. The couches are some sort of expensive material, gleaming wherever the fire place's light hits them.

The fire place's flames are a greenish tint, adding to the green and black décor.

Looking towards the prefect, Harry asks, "Are we underneath the lake?"

He looks startled at the question, then smiles. "Yes, we are. Good question."

"Make sure you all have plenty of blankets. Since we are in the Dungeons, we don't get much warm air."

He walked over to a sign board next to a bookshelf. "This shows all important dates, from Quidditch Try-Outs, to study group meeting dates."

Tapping at the top part of the board, he turns around to look at all of the younger students. "The Slytherin password is changed every fortnight. Try not to forget it. In any case, it's written on the board."

Harry turns at the slam of a door in the distance, and grows a bit nervous as footfalls echo off of the Dungeon walls.

Professor Snape strides out from a corridor that the raven-haired boy hadn't noticed was there, situating himself on one of the seats.

Motioning towards the students, he wordlessly asks them to gather around. When they are all comfortably seated within his vicinity, he clears his throat.

"Hello," he greets with a nod, gazing intently at the group. "And welcome to, not only your first-year at Hogwarts, but to Slytherin House."

"My name is Severus Snape, and I shall be both your Head of House and Potions professor."

"While you are in Slytherin House, you shall follow a few important rules."

"First, no Slytherin student is to wander the corridors alone. While you are going from class to class, you must walk in a group."

"However," he said. "If you are on a free period, then you must go to the common room immediately. If you are with a group of friends, preferably more than one or two, then it is perfectly fine."

"Despite the infamy surrounding Slytherin, rumours stating that only those that dabble in the Dark Arts are produced, don't believe it."

"Many of the wizards and witches in this House have grown to become very important individuals. Not just those that have taken a liking to the Dark Arts."
"My next rule," he makes eye-contact with a few students. "Slytherins stand together. No one is to take any disagreements out into the corridors. No students should be caught," he puts a great amount of emphasis on that word. "Doing anything against the rules. I will handle any and all detentions from all of you, and you must have a good reason for making a fool of yourself.

"My final rule would be to always study for courses beforehand, especially for my class. I do not wish to fail one of my Slytherins, if you didn't understand something you were assigned. Ask someone for help. And, as you should know, study groups being next week."

With that note, the professor stood up gracefully. When he left the common room, one of the girls squealed, "Professor Snape sure does know how to keep an audience captivated!"

A boy, Theodore Nott, nodded his head. "Yes, that trick with his robes does call ones attention."

One of the prefects, a girl, clapped her hands. "All Slytherin girls, follow me to the dorms. Boys, follow Cuthbert Smedley."

The prefect that had lead all of the students to the Dungeons nodded his head, making his way from the wall he had been leaning against.

Harry and the rest of the boys, follow him down another corridor connected to the common room. The hall is lined with doors.

Smedley turns around, then stuffs his hand down his robes pocket. Taking out a piece of parchment, he unfolds it. "All rooms have been assigned by Professor Snape. If any if you have a legitimate complaint," he emphasises the word legitimate. "You may take it up with him."

Pointing at each door, he calls out the group of boys assigned to it. Harry is slightly disappointed that he is to room with Theodore Nott and Blaise Zabini, while Draco shares with Vincent Crabbe and Gregory Goyle, the two boys that had been by his side the entire evening.

When he enters the room, he cannot help but be surprised by the luxury of it all. The beds are medium-sized, all a few feet away from each other. He can hear the lake, and feels a bit tired.

As he looks through his trunk for the new clothes Madam Pomfrey and Hagrid had splurged on, a week or two ago, he realises that school starts tomorrow.

Gulping nervously, he hopes it's a good day.
When Harry stirred the next morning, it was to a loud banging on the door.

"Get up!" a voice called, "You have thirty minutes before we leave for breakfast!"

Harry was startled when he heard the mumblings of two other boys near him.

'Oh, yeah,' he thought to himself. 'Slytherin dorms...'

Sitting up in his bed, he paused to admire the overhead hangings on either side. Along with everything else that he could see in the dorm, the predominant colour scheme seemed to be black, green, and silver.

Stretching, Harry proceeded to rub the sleep from his eyes, and then turned on the bed.

Pushing off the soft bed spread and then standing up, Harry shivered. The Dungeons were a very cold place, and it seemed to hurt his feet just to stand in one place.

Walking over to his trunk, the boy opened it up and took out his toiletries.

The other boys, Zabini and Nott, were just beginning to rouse from sleep, and Harry strode towards the bathroom as quickly as he could.

He was disconcerted when he realised that the tiles, here, were just as cold as the flooring of the Dungeons, maybe even more so.

Taking out his toothpaste and brush, Harry began his early morning ablutions, and then walked back to his trunk, taking out his neatly-folded uniforms, and a fresh pair of boxers.

He made for the bathroom quickly, taking off his clothes and getting under the spray. He sighed in relief at the warm water pouring in from the shower head. When he was done showering, Harry dried himself off hurriedly, taking time only with his raven-hair. Of course, like always, it was unable to be fixed.

Shaking his head, the boy pulled on his boxers and shirt. Pausing in his dressing, he pinched his nose and sneezed. The change of temperature tended to do that to him.

Right when he reached for his trousers, one of his dorm mates walked in. 'Zabini,' he acknowledged.

Harry took a more rapid pace in his dressing.

When he was done, he noticed that the other young wizard didn't have anything with him except a towel and his clothes.

Harry walked away, tucking away that bit of information for later. Wizards, no doubt, dealt with
their needs in different ways from muggles.

Shaking the unpleasant thoughts of what his relatives were doing, Harry pulled on his socks and shoes, and then fiddled with his tie.

When he felt that he was done, he put on his glasses and outer robes. The amount of clothing he was wearing was a bit claustrophobic, since the Slytherin had never had anything as tight as this to wear.

He picked up his bag, just when Zabini had come out of the bathroom and Nott took his place.

The dark-skinned boy glanced at Harry, before holding out his hand, "I'm Blaise Zabini."

Harry looked up from his bag, and held out a hand for the other boy to take. "Harry Potter."

They looked at each other for a moment, before Zabini finally asked, "Well, how do you think our first year will turn out?"

Harry thought over this for a few seconds, fringe hiding his expression as he replied soberly, "Interesting..."

Zabini merely shrugged, unaware of Harry's change in mood. He seemed to sigh in relief when Nott was out of the bathroom, straightening up his clothes. "Come on, Theo, time to go!"

Harry picked up his school bag, and strode towards the door. When he felt Zabini and Nott at his back, he opened the door.

One of the prefects, a different one from yesterday's introduction, was leaning against the wall. Looking up, he motioned his head in the direction of the common room, "You're the first ones ready. Wait in the common room. I advise you to do something productive with your remaining fifteen minutes."

Harry nodded his head enthusiastically, walking to one of the couches with haste. The young raven-haired child took out his Potions textbook and turned to the next page.

"Good idea," Zabini complimented, following his lead. "No doubt, Professor Snape's class will be the hardest we'll have to take."

Harry glanced up at the other boys underneath his fringe, noting that, while Zabini was the most sociable of the lot, Nott was much quieter and subdued.

Content with his assessment, Harry read through the procedures for preparing a few of the ingredients, and basic instruction. It was all very complex and confusing, and Harry was grateful for the time he was given to look over the material.

Before long, he registered several of the girls were arriving. The chatter in the common room grew just the tiniest bit more with every additional student, and Harry found himself smiling.

He heard the familiar voice of his old blond friend drawl something about Potions being his favourite class to a dark-haired girl on his right. Crabbe and Goyle were no doubt, close-by.

Just when Harry found himself entrenched in a theory, Smedley was calling all of the first-years to attention.

"Alright, you lot," he began, while another Slytherin prefect looked as if she was counting all of the students present. "All first-years are to arrive at the Great Hall in one entire group; this is to ensure
that you all arrive in class, on time, and that there are no stragglers. If no problems have arisen after a month into this term, we will discuss the possibility of more freedoms.

"I regret to inform you, however, that Slytherin isn't the most well-liked of Houses in Hogwarts. This procedure is to, also, ensure your security. Older students find it enjoyable to... victimise us, mock us, and even bully us."

At that, the common room was silent. Harry looked up with trepidation, unable to understand how such a thing was possible. *All of the Houses participate in such sport? Why?*

Smedley nodded his head solemnly, "But do not allow this to deter you. Slytherin House is your friend, it is where you will make future connections, alliances, and help build your skills for whatever career you are to start when you finally leave these castle walls."

The honey-blonde Slytherin prefect standing next to him cleared her throat, "Now, after breakfast, we'll all be receiving our time tables. I'll instruct you on where to go, depending on which class you will start the year off with."

With that, all of the first-years packed up anything they had taken out to review, and followed the two prefects out of the common room.

When they arrived at the Great Hall, there were several of the older years already there. Harry saw a head of bushy hair leaned over one of the textbooks, a plate of food next to it, barely touched.

Turning around, he admired the Great Hall. It was a very large room, larger than the cafeteria that had, long ago, grown familiar to Harry, at his old primary school.

All first-years were sat at the same table, a prefect on either side.

Piling his plate up with a bit of breakfast, Harry buttered his toast. He glanced at Draco. Draco was currently chatting with Crabbe and Goyle, at the end of the table, near the blonde prefect.

Before long, the Great Hall was full and loud with chatter, the clatter of plates and silverware, and giggles.

A few minutes later, Harry was pushing away his food. Suddenly remembering something, he called over to Smedley.

"Yes, Potter?"

"I have to go to Hospital Wing to see Madam Pomfrey."

Raising an eyebrow, the prefect nodded his head, pushing away his plate. When the teen had stepped away from the bench and picked up his bag, Harry followed his lead, and headed towards the table the teachers were eating at.

The Headmaster looked up from his plate, and some sort of candy, and asked, "What do you need, dear boys?"

"I have to go see Madam Pomfrey, Professor," Harry winced, clutching at his stomach. "I'm in a bit of pain."

The older wizard considered Harry for a few seconds, and then turned towards the Slytherin Head of House. "Professor Snape, may I have Messers Potter and Smedley's time tables?"
Professor Snape looked at them both, before shuffling through the time tables, handing both of them theirs. Harry thanked both of the professors, and then followed the prefect out the Great Hall doors.

First-Year Slytherin’s Time Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Potions</td>
<td>Transfiguration</td>
<td>Potions</td>
<td>Charms</td>
<td>Potions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Defense Against the Dark Arts</td>
<td>History of Magic</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 PM</td>
<td>Herbology</td>
<td>Flying</td>
<td>Charms</td>
<td></td>
<td>Astronomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnight</td>
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"Nice performance back there," Smedley complimented. "But what was it for?"

"Nothing," Harry smiled.

Shaking his head, Smedley didn't ask anything more.

When they arrived at the Hospital Wing, the prefect walked inside with Harry.

"I'll be here to take you to your next class, which would be...?"

"Free period. I have a double period of Charms right after, though."

The prefect made a noise, which Harry took as his acknowledgment, and dropped into a seat.

"Madam Pomfrey!" Harry called. Smedley watched him, wide-eyed. Before he could tell Harry that he shouldn't do that, the Dragon of the Hospital Wing came out of her storage room.

"Oh, Harry," she greeted. "Here for your potions?"

He nodded his head reluctantly, wincing at the thought of drinking them again.

She sat him at his bed, taking out her wand in the process. After a few spells to check his condition, as of far, she frowned. "How much did you eat this morning?"

"Not a lot," the raven-haired boy sighed. "I ate more than I was used to last night, during the Feast, and I'm still a little full."

Nodding her head, she brought out his Nutrition Potions. Once he had taken them, the white-haired medi-witch exchanged her glass of pumpkin juice for the empty vial.
Once she had checked his health, again, she allowed him to leave.

Harry picked up his bag and walked back to Smedley. "Common room?"

The prefect nodded his head, picked up his own school bag, and led the younger student out the doors.

Glancing up at the brunet, Harry said, "Thank you for taking me to the Hospital Wing."

"No problem," he smiled, ruffling the boy's raven hair. "Did you review for Charms?"

"No," Harry shook his head, keeping pace with the older student without difficulty. "I was reading through Potions."

"Good," Smedley replied. "He has the toughest class. Just don't neglect any of his homework, and take very careful notes. You'll get by. Make sure you look over all of your coursework, though. Familiarise yourself with the material beforehand."

When they had, at last, arrived at the entrance to the Slytherin Dungeons, the prefect spoke a quick farewell, sprinting towards his own class.

Harry tapped on the hidden entrance the same way he'd seen the prefect do last night, and whispered the password.

Walking deeper into the Dungeons, he opened the door to the common room, and strode closer to his classmates, "Hi!"

Zabini and Nott turned on the couch. Greengrass, whom was sitting cross-legged on the floor, waved hello to him.

"'Ilo," Zabini greeted. "Where were you?"

"Hospital Wing," Harry confessed. "Had a bit of a stomach ache. She gave me something to ease it, though."

They nodded, and then picked up their stuff for class.

"Better get ready soon," Zabini warned. "We'll have to leave in about half an hour."

Nodding his acknowledgment, Harry settled on a chaise near the fireplace, waving to any of the first-years in the common room. One of the girls, Parkinson, just sniffed in reply, turning away from him. Harry frowned at her back.

Harry took out *Magical Drafts and Potions*, skimming through what he'd already read. A few pages into some of the other material, a bell rung. The boy closed his textbook and shoved it into his bag, standing up and stretching.

Harry walked towards the entrance, waiting patiently for the others to line-up. Once they were all ready to go, Harry opened the door and they all sashayed towards the Charms classroom together.

Once there, the Slytherins each took a seat. Harry followed Zabini towards one of the desks, and then took out his Charms textbook.

Turning towards one of the spells they would learn during first-year, the young wizard wasn't surprised to note that magic was a lot more complicated than he had originally thought.
The Charm they would be using would be the Levitation Charm. Harry smiled at the thought of the fine that creator of the spell, Jarleth Harbot, was charged with. "Outrageous silliness", indeed.

Looking over the wand movement and the spell name, Harry felt disconcerted. They didn't teach Latin at his last school, so how was he supposed to pronounce the spell?

Just when Harry was about the give up at mouthing the spell, a small man walked into the room. Recognising him as Professor Flitwick, Harry looked up.

"Hello, and welcome to your very first Charms class!" the squeaky-voiced wizard stated, smiling widely. He stepped up onto a stool.

The minutes flew by as he shared stories of creative uses of Charms, and asked a few questions, such as the proper pronunciation of the Levitation Charm, and then demonstrated the wand movement.

Harry watched, awe-struck, as the professor levitated a feather in the air with practiced ease.

Left to their own devices, Harry and his classmates carefully pronounced the Latin and waved their own wands.

"Wing-gar-dee-um Le-vee-osaa..." Frowning, Harry tried again, putting more emphasis on the o, instead of the I.

"Wingardium Leviosaa..."

Looking over at Draco, Harry smiled to himself when he noticed the blond had been successful. Professor Flitwick praised him.

Determined to get it right, Harry said, "Wingardium Leviosa!"

Gasping, he lifted the feather up above the table.

"Good work, Mister Potter!"

By the end of their double period, Greengrass, Bulstrode, and Nott had managed to levitate their own feathers up a few feet.

Groaning, Harry hit the couch with a sigh. "As stuffed as I am, why did we get assigned eleven inches to explain..." he took out his notes, and squinted at his own penmanship, "The practical uses of the Levitation Charm, and advantages compared to the Hover Charm."

Zabini shrugged, taking out his own quill and parchment. "At least we don't have class until next week."

Nott nodded in agreement, already scribbling away on his essay.

Taking the signal, Harry bent over to take out his own things, when he bumped into someone.

"Ow," he rubbed his head. "I'm sorry!"

Draco merely looked at him, "Don't touch me, you filthy Half-Blood."

Mouth gaping open in shock, Harry nearly retaliated when he realised that this truly wasn't the Draco he knew. Sighing, he retorted, "I'm pretty sure I take a shower every day, Malfoy, unlike your..."
friends."

Draco sneered at him, before stomping off to the dorms, dramatically.

Chapter End Notes

I'm really sorry for the late update!

I actually worked on the time tables for a good two hours, before the classes were settled. However, the fact that the teachers look like they will have to use Time Tuners in order to teach all of their years, does boggle the mind.

I reasoned that, since Harry never went to the first two Potions classes, that he must've arrived on a Wednesday. Gryffindors' classes for Thursday are Charms and Transfiguration. Friday, the next day, is marked on HP Wikia.

Here's the rest of the time tables:
http://s1291.photobucket.com/user/Annalisse_Rubisher/library/Mentality
Pass: serpentstongue
Sorry for the wait XD I originally uploaded this a few days ago, on Thursday, but I had a few things to fix up on a working computer before I felt I should add the chapter here.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The next day started off just as the previous one had. Harry woke up blearily, started from the overhead ceiling, and suddenly remembered where he was. Bleakly, the brunet wondered just when he would get used to being in Hogwarts enough to not always start off his mornings so spectacularly.

After picking up his bag and checking his timetable, Harry collected the things he would need for his first class – '1 cauldron (pewter, standard size 2), 1 set glass phials, and 1 set brass scales' – and headed towards the common room, nodding his head in greeting to the, now familiar, prefect standing outside the door.

A few minutes later, Blaise settled next to him, groaning in distaste.

"What is it, Blaise?" Harry's emerald eyes only lifting for a second to acknowledge his new dormmate.

"I absolutely dread waking up in the mornings, but the bloody prefects are always screaming at the tops of their lungs to wake us up!"

"Shut up, Blaise," a voice startled the both of them. Harry glanced up in shock to see Theo sitting across from them.

"When did you get up?"

"Longer than it took you to," Theo waved off the question negligently, before sticking his nose back in one of his textbooks.

Harry acted in turn, re-reading one of the sections in his Potions textbook. It still didn't make much sense to him the third, fourth, or fifth time around when he finally slammed the bloody thing closed with a slight thud.

"What's wrong?"

Harry turned to his right where Daphne Greengrass sat, cuddled into the corner of the sofa. Turning back to his Potions textbook, Harry shook his head, tracing the outside cover with a finger. "This book is so bloody vague. I hardly understand the mechanics behind how to stir, let alone what a…"

Harry opened the book back up and turned to one of the pages. "Counter-clockwise Trachet turn is."

"Oh," Blaise murmured, tipping his head back. "I think Draco would know what that is. He had a personal Potions tutor, because he showed a certain aptitude in that particular field."

"Have you seen Malfoy," Harry shook his head in exasperation. "All he's said so far is blatantly linked to my blood heritage."
"Well, he's a little…” Blaise snapped his fingers. "What's the word?"

"Shy?" Daphne said.


"I haven't seen anyone shy act like that," Harry flipped his textbook back open to the first chapter again.

When he finally looked back up from his reading, his year mates were all seated in various places within the common room, and two prefects were standing at the front of the room.

"Okay, firsties," a blonde girl clapped her hands. "Let's head out to the Great Hall. Same as yesterday."

He stood up and dragged his leather satchel over his shoulder, heading out into the hallway of the Dungeons with the group of his year mates. As Blaise and Daphne chattered on about something that must've been pretty bloody funny, if Theo's belly deep laughter was of any consolation, he felt a twinge on the back of his neck. When he turned around and saw nothing but the bobbing heads of his classmates, Harry shook his head and told himself he had imagined things.

But a sort of sixth sense he'd had ever since he could remember, one he knew to never disbelieve, told him he hadn't been.

"I'm so bloody full," Theo whinged as their group headed towards their first class of the day.

"You shouldn't have eaten all those pancakes, then."

"Everyone has something they just cannot live without, though," Daphne grinned slyly, hands cradling her things to her chest as they rounded a curve in the corridors. "For him, it just happens to be pancakes."

"I just couldn't stop at one," Theo groaned, hand going in rapid circles over his over-stuffed stomach.

Harry shook his head in amusement, lips quirking up in a small, secretive smile. When he looked ahead, he noticed that familiar shock of white-blond hair from within the depths of the crowd. His smile slowly died on his lips.

With a nudge, his friends brought his attention to the door up ahead. It wasn't different from the ones he'd seen before, and he realised it would be some time before he'd be able to discern one from the other. The door swung open before them, and Harry had to withhold his own gasp. He heard a quiet one beside him, and shrugged his shoulders at Pansy Parkinson.

Of course, she didn't really react very well to sharing a silent joke with Harry, and stuck up her nose with a slight huff.

Slightly discouraged from ever making friends with the other girl, Harry breathed in deeply. Letting it out slowly and steadily, he stepped within the classroom.

The room was incredibly structured; well, a different type of structure from Professor Flitwick's Charms classroom, and the calm darkness of Slytherin's common room.

Glancing around the classroom, Harry was completely oblivious to his classmates' seating themselves within the rows up ahead, instead his curious mind thoroughly fascinated with the odds and ends
before him.

As he took a step towards one of the walls, fingers outstretched, the brunet felt a rather ominous presence at his back and visibly stiffened.

"H-hello, Sir," Harry nervously turned, bringing his arm back to his side as he steeled himself for the reprimand that, no doubt, awaited.

Professor Snape, however, merely gazed at his face for a few moments. Reading this as a sign that he should probably find his seat, Harry ducked out of the way and headed towards his group of friends. The chair next to Theo was open, and Harry slid in beside him with a relieved sigh.

"Why didn't you sit down immediately?" Blaise whispered, as he took out his parchment and ink well. His dark quill feather was already laid on the table.

"I'm not very sure," Harry shrugged his shoulders, following suit. He thought back to the walls, and what felt like nostalgia within reach of his fingertips. Those poetic words seemed more truth than fiction to him, as opposed to how fantastical it may seem to an outsider. "I could've sworn that there was something there…"

"You were staring at the wall," Daphne sniffed.

"I probably looked like a right berk, huh?"

"Yeah," all three muttered beneath their breath, at once.

Harry pouted slightly, before he stared straight ahead at the Professor. The man was as dark and disarming as he had seemed the day before, and Harry felt a shiver cascade up and down his spine at the reminder of memories uncaught. Gulping slightly, he glanced to the right and saw the familiar mops of chestnut hair and bushy head sitting at a contrast from one another; the former slumped shyly, head ducked, the latter confident with her head raised high.

The Slytherins and Gryffindors sat away from each other, a clear space further dividing the two houses from one another. Harry wondered vaguely about why this was apparent, but then remembered the harsh truth of how prejudice could blind people so. After all, he still lived with it…

Shaking his head mentally from those buried thoughts, Harry concentrated on gazing straight ahead.

Harry's heard many speeches before, including the one made by Professor Flitwick the day before, but nothing like the one his Head of House intoned with a low, scathing inflection. It made him sit up straighter in his chair, and definitely proud clothed in green and silver.

Half-way through the oration, Harry slumped over in his seat, eyes fluctuating from one point of the classroom to another. Having a low attention span, as far as he knew, was undeniably a burden. As magnificent as the lecture was, the brunet felt his concentration level flagging with every second passing.

When he lifted his pupils from the wall he had examined before, he felt a shadow loom over him. Startled, he realised half-listening wasn't the way to go. Tracking the professor with his eyes, Harry slumped back and started to play around with his hands.

Just when he had started to contemplate the mysteries behind the wall, Professor Snape's hands were within his view, and with them came the Professor and his foreboding manifestation. Calm in tense situations was never Harry's strongpoint, but he felt the need to sit upright grasp him by the neck. He lifted his eyes from the hands, up the lengths of the older man's arms, to his head.
"Hello, Mister Potter," the teacher's blank stare was unnerving. At least Uncle Vernon was more straight-forward when he was angry; frothing at the mouth with undisguised rage wasn't all that subtle, after all.

"Hello, Professor," spoke Harry calmly. If the classroom had been silent before, Harry's rapidly beating heart could plainly be heard from deep within his chest.

"It seems our newest celebrity hasn't deigned to pay attention in my class, first day," Snape's words were precise in their enunciation, seemingly laden with poison. "It seems he knows everything there is to know about the fine art of potions-making.

"Tell me, Mister Potter," his eyes emanated a distinct air of satisfaction. "Just how would you use the Venomous Tentacula to retrieve the carapace of the Chizpurfle for use in potions-making?"

Harry's mind went blank at the precisely asked question, and he searched the recesses of it for anything he may have gotten from the Potions textbook. Shaking his head slowly, Harry said, "I don't know, Professor."

The former-Slytherin's eyes flashed for a second. With a turn of the heel, the Professor walked to the board and tapped his wand once. The words, "Lumos Duo" slowly revealed themselves upon the surface.

"This was the correct answer, Mister Potter," Snape drew in closer to the boy. Harry mentally drew into himself as the man approached. "Now, what would this particular ingredient be used for, in most cases?"

Harry scoured his mind for the answer, but he just didn't understand what any of the words meant, let alone how they connected in Potions-making.

"I do not know, Professor," he lowered his head slightly, before shaking off the shame and lifting up his head with a higher dose of determination.

Snape's eyes swept from one part of the brunet's face to the other, before he backed up a few paces. Two taps on the board removed the last answer, but brought with it the words "Cure to Uncommon Poisons". Out of the corner of his eye, Harry could see Hermione's desperate hand raised in the air. Neville's head was still ducked slightly.

Snape's robed arms were tucked behind his back as he approached Harry once again. "Why is it the Bezoar is an ingredient in the Cure to Uncommon Poisons' counterpart, but isn't in, itself, a cure?"

Harry sat up straighter; he'd read something about the Bezoar within his Potions textbook. "Because it..." Harry thought really hard, searching his mental recollection of the pieces of text he'd absorbed. "It cannot cure everything?"

"Are you asking me whether it cannot cure everything, or are you telling me, Mister Potter?" Snape's voice sounded a little different this time, though his face and eyes gave nothing up.

"I-I'm telling you, sir," stated Harry decisively. "That's why it is a key ingredient in the Cure to Common Poisons."

Snape nodded his head once, for some indecipherable reason; nonetheless, Harry felt his earlier enthusiasm brighten. Casting his eyes to his friends on either side of the room, the brunet was greeted with small smiles and nods. Even Neville gave him a sign of pride.

"What do you think you're doing?" Snape barked at the entire class. It got silent, once again, though
you wouldn't have known that they were making any sort of noise, before. "Write this down!"

Harry quickly uncapped his ink well and dipped his quill within the contents of it, jotting down the questions asked unkindly. Once he finished, he put his quill pen within his ink well and sat back.

"That was pretty rough," Theo shook his head. Harry, once again, wondered how the other boy managed to do everything so silently and quickly.

"Yeah," Harry shook his head. "It was. I don't know why I was the only one getting badgered."

"He probably thinks you have some sort of blown up head," Blaise commented, head balanced on the palm of his right hand. "He made sure to attack you first; he used it as a way to make everyone well-aware that there would be no preferential treatment, and to show that you are as unknowledgeable as the rest of us."


"You mean rather Slytherin," Daphne retorted, hand wound through a tuft of her blonde hair. "He's not just our Head of House for show, you know."

Before Harry was able to comment on that, Snape's tap on the board brought their attention.

'He's quite good at that,' Harry couldn't help but think to himself. 'He certainly knows how to coordinate a good performance.'

"These are the ingredients to your first potion of the year," he drawled, eyes locking onto every other student's. "I suggest you get started, immediately."

When no one immediately went for their things, he practically growled, "That means now, you fools."

At that, everyone practically flew for their things, and Harry's last thought on anything but the Boil Cure Potion was, 'I can see that this class will be my least favourite.'

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading XD
Potions lasted for what seemed to be forever. Despite having been put on the spot, and underneath a rather impressive amount of spotlight and scrutiny, Harry relaxed a few minutes after he had properly got into the process.

He briefly recalled having a lot of fun cooking, even if he was technically guilt-tripped into doing it... and was wary of the punishments that were guaranteed if he ever felt the need to test the length of leash.

Potions was really a song and dance; a rhythm, a beat, precision in timing. Harry found himself grinning slightly as he and Blaise met the requirements of the potion's recipe, a second and single shake of the wrist at a time. Though their potion wasn't very well-done, and quite possibly not even good for drinking - their potion came out a rather alarming shade of greyish-green instead of the deep blue it was supposed to be - Harry found his opinion of magic itself growing all the more swiftly.

By the time the group of Slytherins had left the confining Potions room, Harry was still finding it difficult to understand just what had got into him earlier. Though he'd had, undoubtedly, fun throughout the remainder of their class time, the beginning was still bugging him. Blaise and Theo, who had worked with a boy called Crabbe, were chattering on Harry's right. Sighing, Harry hefted his bookbag up higher on his shoulder.

When they had rounded the corner, an unmistakable voice met their ears. Harry paused in his walking, allowing Hermione to catch up.

Glancing back, he noticed the familiar slumped form of Neville also meandering in closer, on Hermione's right side. Giving them both a soft smile, Harry continued walking, a little ways behind Daphne and Millicent, who had shifted in closer to Blaise and Theo, heads ducked slightly in conversation.

"Professor Snape was a little hard on you," Hermione mumbled, tucking her quill away in her bag. Neville raised his head when she nudged his shoulder slightly.

"Yeah, he was." He nodded his own agreement.

The silence between them grew to be a tad bit uncomfortable, and Harry cleared his throat, searching his head for another topic of conversation.

"Oh, yeah," he finally had something to say. Looking to his right, Harry said, "What classes do you have after lunch, if any?"

"Nothing," Neville piped up, once again. "We have a completely open afternoon and evening, after this."

"I do, too," Harry sighed. "I'm actually already looking forward to the weekend. Can you believe the length of the essay Professor Snape assigned to us, already?"
"Well, Harry," Hermione started. "It's not like he's doing it for his health. He also needs t-

"Blast!" Harry shook his head, pausing in his tracks. "I forgot to go to Madam Pomfrey this morning!"

"Madam Pomfrey?" Hermione inquired, though her question had come in too late. With a shouted "good-bye", Harry was already running ahead of everyone else.

"Oy, Harry!"

"No time!"

When he made it to the stairs, he immediately made his way up the long flight, letting instinct guide him towards what he recognised as the best route for the Hospital Wing. It felt like he'd been walking forever, having given up running as a bad job half-way through, when he finally made it to the doors.

"Madam Pomfrey!" he called out, closing the door softly behind him. The room smelled as sterile as always, though there seemed to already be an occupied bed, the hangings closed all around the exterior of the nearest one.

A few seconds later, the familiar grey head of hair came out of the office.

"Oh, Harry!" she greeted. "Finally remembered your appointment, did you?"

Harry nodded his head, already making his way back to what he thought of as his 'reserved' bed.

"Yeah, I didn't mean to. I guess the excitement got to my head, and it completely slipped my mind."

"It's perfectly alright," she flapped a hand in a negligent gesture. "I knew it was a possibility. We'll just need to work out a better schedule, that is all.

"Now," she finished straightening up the curtains, the needed potions already standing on the bedside table. "Hold still as I perform the necessary spells."

She narrowed her eyes in concentration, lips pursed as she waved her wand in a few swipes mid-air, mouthing them silently. The familiar sensation enveloped Harry's body, and he inhaled a shocked breath. A few seconds later, and Pomfrey cut the spell off with a "Finite Incantatem."

"It seems you've taken great care in making sure you start eating bigger meal sizes," the older woman said, smiling softly at Harry. Harry shrugged, though he nodded his head slightly.

"Yeah, I have," he said. "It's a lot easier now than before."

"And what would you mean by that?"

"Nothing at all," Harry quickly answered. Swinging his feet to and fro, he leaned back on his hands on the sturdy mattress and awaited the standard potions. Once he'd drunk the needed dosages and had a large gulp of pumpkin juice, he jumped off the bed and head towards the doors.

Pausing at the entrance, Harry looked back at the ever bustling Mediwitch and murmured, "Thank you."

Before she could properly respond, Harry had already slipped out the Wing and headed towards the Great Hall entrance.
Arriving later than usual, he quickly made his way towards the table, settling in next to Daphne when she indicated the seat.

"Where'd you go?" Millicent asked, taking a bite out of her muffin.

"Hospital Wing," Harry waved off, piling up his plate with a few of the foods still available on the table. On the other end of the table, towards the middle of the Great Hall, were Draco, Parkinson, Crabbe, and Goyle. Harry averted his eyes when Draco met his eyes, pretending he hadn't just been staring at the other boy in half-longing, half-disappointment. Worry gnawed at Harry's gut, and he found it hard to eat all the food he'd promised himself he would eat.

Sighing deeply, as he'd been wont to do ever since Potions, Harry straightened his shoulders and picked up his fork. At this moment, all he needed to do was worry about getting a healthy amount of food in himself. Draco and his damned case of amnesia could take a break. Harry had already known, vaguely, that it would happen anyway, and he couldn't help but remember the words the other boy had mumbled to him before they'd entered the Wand shop.

"He was going to use an Unforgivable Curse called the Imperius Curse to make me obey him the rest of the day. Or, at least make me act like him."

It wasn't a typical sort of thing another kid could nonchalantly declare, and it really made Harry wonder if Hagrid being there, though unreasonably suspicious of Draco, had made Harry seem all the more safe a person to confide in. Or whatever.

Harry felt like kicking himself. He should've told Hagrid about it before they'd dropped the boy off with an obviously violent father, but...

A touch on his shoulder roused Harry from his thoughts. Chewing the food he'd had in his mouth and swallowing, Harry turned towards Daphne.

"Yeah?"

"I've called for you for ages. Considering we're sitting next to each other, it shouldn't have been so hard," Daphne pouted slightly. She took a deep breath and asked, "Do you have any idea where to find the information needed for the essay in the textbook?"

Ever the hard worker, or at least that's what Harry was thinking Daphne was, now, the blonde girl seemed to have long ago shoved her empty bowl of food aside. Atop the table was the standard Potions textbook, and she seemed to have looked through it for some time, now.

Harry frowned. "Um, what was the essay on, again?"

Daphne wrinkled her nose at the question. "It was on the usage of all the ingredients used in the Boil Cure Potion, and a reason for each."

"No wonder I didn't remember it," Harry shook his head.

"Why?"

"It sounds like a bloody nightmare. I must've blocked it from my mind."

"Yeah, it is," she shook her resignedly. "It feels like he's trying to make some sort of point to us."

"Maybe that he'll always been an insufferable bastard?"
"Harry," Millicent kicked his foot. "Can you please try to not get on the bad side of our Head of House?"

"It's not like he doesn't already think of us in some similar light," Harry rubbed his calf. Damn, but Millicent had quite the leg on her. "He doesn't seem to like children."

"Not in the least," Blaise said.

"Right?"

"But it doesn't mean we should return the sentiment."

Harry allowed his head to fall on the table, thankful for the cold that embraced him in return.

The first two weeks, including the weekend, at Hogwarts were to be spent familiarising themselves with the Castle and their future classes. This was as per the unspoken rule the first-years quickly came to know.

Head hanging off the edge of his dorm bed, Harry read through the text for his Potions essay. Unlike his last year at Primary, it would take time for Harry to finally understand the best way to research and write down the things he needed. As he got through each sentence at a time, he felt his mind drifting from the boring task, to his schedule and other classes.

Giving up half-way through, he had plenty of time before Monday came, Harry sat up and rifled through his things. Grunting in success, he took out his Defense Against the Dark Arts textbook and flipped through the pages. It seemed less vague than Magical Drafts and Potions, though Harry had a feeling he wouldn't really know until his first class with the Professor.

Frowning, Harry felt a headache come on, and heaved a great sigh. He placed both textbooks back in his bag and let the sac fall on the floor with a thump. A few seconds later, Blaise and Nott came barrelling into the room.

Raising an eyebrow at the boys' actions, Harry asked, "What's going on?"

"Nothing," both answered in unison. Harry shrugged his shoulders in acknowledgment, though he made a mental note to ask Daphne or Millicent about it tomorrow. It seemed to be getting a tad late.

"What're you up to?" Blaise asked from behind the overhead hangings surround his own bed. He seemed to be looking for something. Harry didn't feel the need to question it.

"I was trying to study," Harry said, the words skating across his tongue; he'd never thought he would say that phrase before. It seemed eerie. "But I gave it up. I'm entirely too tired, and I have this throbbing headache right between my eyes."

To emphasise his point, Harry took off his glasses, reaching up with one hand to massage his closed eyelids as he placed his glasses down on his lap. "Urgh!"

"I know the feeling," Blaise made a sympathetic noise. A few seconds of silence, to which Theo had used to his advantage to curl up in his bed, and Blaise seemed to have found what he was looking for, denoted with an exultation of victory.

"Did you find what you were looking for?"

"Yes," Grinned Blaise as he shoved his curtains aside. In his hands rested a box, the sort you'd store
raisins within. Harry was unable to come up with a reason Blaise could look so gleeful about a snack most people would associate with camping; but, hey, who was he to judge? Harry loved eating pickles, and Dudley liked to make the weirdest innuendos involving them.

Lost in his thoughts, Harry was surprised when he heard Blaise grunt in what seemed to be...

Disgust.

"Are you okay?" Harry asked, jumping off the bed to get closer to his friend. Blaise had the most amusing expression, reminiscent of one a person would wear if they had taken a huge bite of a lemon.

"Yeah," he appeased Harry, waving a hand to wade off any worry. "I just got earwax, again."

"Earwax?"

"I'm eating Bernie Bott's Every Flavour Beans."

At Harry's quizzical expression, Blaise hit the open palm of his hand on his forehead. "Sometimes, I forget you're a Half-blood."

"Here, it's better to taste one than for me to explain what they are."

After Blaise had deposited a single jellybean in Harry's cupped hand, the brunet speculatively inspected the new snack with a few careful sniffs and a squint at the texture. Ignoring Blaise's own glance, Harry always took great care when he was offered food, he slowly took a careful bite of the jellybean.

When the taste of bubblegum filled his mouth slightly, Harry took relish in virtually swallowing the rest of it.

"Good?" Blaise bit back a laugh, teeth on the edge of his lip. Harry nodded his head, offering a hand out for another.

"Feeling lucky?"

"Sort of."

Harry felt an odd sense of glee when he ate another jellybean, this one tasting of cotton candy.

Yeah, maybe he was feeling terribly lucky.

All worries about incoming classes and amnesic friends pushed to the back of his mind, Harry just lived in the moment.
The weekend went by in what seemed to have been a flash. Harry and his friends, something he hadn't really thought he would make any of, had toured the Castle, accompanied by a prefect who had offered. During the evening, study sessions would take place within the boys' dorm, to the vaguely approving eyes of their Head of House, who had visited the common room on fewer than one occasion.

However, despite the surprisingly good weekend, when Harry was shook awake from a fitful sleep by Theo, he just knew it wouldn't be a good day. He could barely remember what he'd dreamt about - something dark and dangerous, shadows and miscellaneous figures vaguely familiar, yet escaping him.

After showering and dressing, Harry packed his bag with the things he would need for Potions and Defence Against the Dark Arts, double-checking to make sure he didn't leave anything behind. If today was going to be as terrible a day as he thought it would be, then he would make sure he'd make the most of it, and not more difficult than it needed to be.

Stumbling into the common room, Harry nearly tripped over someone's feet.

"I'm sorry," he murmured apologetically, scrubbing his face with a hand. Stifling a yawn, he looked at the person he'd nearly run over in his quest for the chaise. Draco. Crap.

"Watch where you're going, Potter," the blond spat, arms crossed over his chest as he folded his previously stretched legs underneath himself. "That's what you've got the glasses for."

"It's too bloody early in the morning, Malfoy," Harry sighed.

Feeling newly awakened, he stifled a yawn and headed straight for his friends.

"Potter."

Pausing, Harry turned to glance back at Draco. Despite the bored expression fixed upon the other boy's face, Harry could feel the vestiges of curiosity come off him in waves. "Yes?"

"Why do you insist on coming to class with the most untidy hair I've ever seen?"

Narrowing his gaze, Harry frowned and ran a hand through his hair. He'd tried to tame it this morning, but he'd been too tired to actually try very hard.

"I just had a bit of a long night," he answered simply, though he remained a mixture of bewildered and happy. Even if the blond refused to acknowledge their previous, albeit short-lived, friendship, it was nice to know that he was at least interested in him.

Before he could say anything else, Draco's demeanour shifted slightly, and he sneered at Harry, "Why are you still standing there like a buffoon? Go play with your little friends."

Eyes widening slightly, Harry didn't hesitate to do what his old friend demanded. Glancing back forlornly, he noticed Parkinson and the blond's two hefty friends, for the first time. Or had they been there before, and Harry had never been aware of them?

When he finally sat down at the couch, his thoughts were still a storm. What had just happened?
"Harry," Daphne called, as always, to his right. He looked up at the empathetic girl, who was watching him with a question in her eyes. "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine," he said, dubiously. Nodding, Daphne reluctantly shifted in place before ducking her head to read through the rest of her textbook.

Feeling inspired, Harry took out his own edition of *The Dark Forces* and skimmed through its pages. Diagrams and descriptions littered the pages, amongst paragraphs teaming with knowledge on wand movements, pronunciation, and the history and usage of each spell, as they did in the Charms textbook.

Right when he'd reached a brief overview on a few of the magical creatures they would learn in the future, it was already time to leave for the Great Hall.

After making a quick stop at Madame Pomfrey's briefly for his daily potions, Harry felt more awake than how he'd felt earlier, when he'd tripped over Draco's feet. The encounter still left him confused, most especially when the blond had suddenly snarled at him for being near him despite being the one to start the conversation. There really wasn't anything Harry could do, though. For all he knew, Draco wasn't necessarily bothered about his dismissal of Harry's existence.

With these thoughts settled within his mind, Harry filled up his plate and tried to remember if he had managed to complete the entire essay due for Potions.

"I feel sorta bad for Longbottom," Theo said, hefting his shoulder bag higher up. "He just doesn't have any talent in Potions."

"And then he ends up getting in trouble with Professor Snape, despite how hard he tries," Harry added thoughtfully. "He was working with Hermione on Friday. I wonder why the Professor had to assign us partners, today."

During their hour of Potions, Professor Snape had started off the class by rearranging seats. While he had been careful to keep the Slytherins and Gryffindors divided, he had also made it very clear who was going to be paired with whom for the next few weeks as they studied many different combinations of potions' ingredients. Neville had got the short end of the stick, ending up with a red-haired boy who didn't look like he understood what he was doing either.

It hadn't turned out well. By the end of class, both boys had already been sent to the Hospital Wing, suffering from a joint case of the hiccups set off by clumsiness and cluelessness, if nothing else.

"Hopefully, he'll be alright."

"He *will* be alright," Millicent assured, rounding the corner with the rest of their small group. "I have no doubt the mediwitch is competent enough to deal with something as slight as that."

Harry nodded his head slowly, though he remained a bit worried at his friend's ordeal.

Once they'd settled down, bags set on the floor, one of the prefects stood up and walked to their table.

"You lot have DADA next, right?"

When he only received confused stares at his question, he rolled his eyes before correcting himself, "Defence Against the Dark Arts, I mean."
Harry nodded his head along with his friends. Draco, nearest to the prefect, answered, "Yes."
"I've been assigned to guide you over to your next class," the older boy said, bent over the table slightly, hands holding some of his weight up on the edge. "When the bell rings, I advise you lot to line up outside the Great Hall, beside the doors, and wait for me."

Glancing at his friends, Harry carefully bobbed his head at the prefect, before ducking his head, fork scraping against his plate as he pushed around his food listlessly.

"Are you sure you're alright?" Theo asked. "You've seemed down all morning."

"Yeah," Harry said, waving away his friend's concern. "It's nothing to worry about. I just didn't get much of anything but a fitful sleep last night, for some reason, and I'm feeling a bit knackered."

Scrunching his mouth to the side, Theo nodded his head, before concentrating on clearing the rest of his own plate.

"Father says Hogwarts loses teachers every year for Defence Against the Dark Arts, and they grow more and more incompetent," Harry heard Draco's voice pipe up from the end of the table. Peeking to the side, beneath his customary fringe, he gazed at a vague, blurry shape with pale skin, dark robes, and white-blond hair, gesticulating in other blurs. Cursing his terrible eyesight, Harry mentally shook his head before deciding that he could, indeed, watch Draco without people thinking oddly of him, or something to that degree.

When he finally got the courage to glance up, the boy had the smuggest look on his face.

"Just in case, Father taught me a few of the basic spells beforehand."
Crabbe and Goyle, Draco's large friends, nodded in acknowledgment, still ploughing through their plates. Harry was starting to realise he was lucky he wasn't accustomed to eating that much; those two boys would surely eat the entirety of the table if they were allowed to do so.

"Really, Draco?" Parkinson simpered across from his, elbow on table and head balanced on her hand. "What sorts of basic spells?"

Though Draco seemed to be enjoying the attention, he frowned and raised an eyebrow at his friend.

"What?"

"Get your elbow off the table," he chided. "Or did your parents not teach you proper manners?"

Parkinson turned a bright red. "You know we had the same teacher."

"Well," Draco drawled, head cocked to the side. "You obviously didn't get much from the lessons."

Scowling, Parkinson cleared her throat before gesturing for the other blond to go on with his story. Before Harry could listen more to what Draco had learned from his father, an elbow jabbed into his side.

Grunting softly, he glanced to his right.

"What is it?" he asked, rubbing the pulsing ache.

"It's almost time for us to go," Blaise raised an eyebrow at Harry. "You need to stop staring at Malfoy. He's going to be here for the entire year."
"I was not staring," Harry denied. Because he hadn't been. That'd be weird. "I was just listening in on his conversation."

"Oh, so you were staring and eavesdropping."

Across from him, he heard the unmistakable sounds of muffled snickers.

"Do you have something you would like to add, Theo?" he gritted his teeth, eyes narrowed at the betrayal.

"Nothing," Theo giggled, hands held up in a signal of surrender. "It was just funny."

"What was funny?"

"How you didn't even bother to deny that you were doing both."

Groaning, Harry pushed his plate of food out-of-the-way, swinging his bag over his shoulder as he headed for the Great Hall doors.

"Where are you going?"

"Somewhere where I won't be ribbed at for merely listening to a fascinating story!" Harry called back, already halfway towards the doors. When the doors opened, a pain lanced through his forehead, causing him to clutch desperately at it.

"Mister Potter," the dulcet tones of his Head of House met his ears. "What are you doing out of your seat?"

A dark, crawly feeling soon accompanied the pounding headache. Harry shivered harshly, before peering up. Standing beside Professor Snape was the man Harry had met at Diagon Alley with Hagrid, Professor Squirrel, or something to that effect.

"Hullo," he winced. "Excuse me."

Carefully sidestepping both professors, and hiding just how shaken he really was, Harry stood in front of a wall and leaned his head against it. The cool surface did wonders for his headache, and he wondered just what had caused the mysterious pain. He'd never felt anything exactly like it, bar the time he'd managed to break his arm at the park. Ironically, Dudley had played no part in that particular misadventure.

When he felt he'd sufficiently recovered from the experience, and the headache had settled into a small, pounding ache, Harry turned and leaned his back against the wall.

It really was incredibly unfair just how much he'd already endured at the beginning of the year. This was only his third official day at school, and he'd already made an enemy - or frienemy, or whatever Draco was to him, nowadays - a professor who seemed to dislike his mere presence to a nonsensical degree, and had even come down with a mysterious migraine-like headache.

What was even more troubling, was the terrible, awful feeling Harry had about that professor. It felt like a bit like what must be paranoia, but Harry was reluctant to shake off the feeling when it had morphed and manifested into something else; something creepier, and scarier.

Looking down, Harry he registered an alarming, crimson liquid streaked upon the surface of one of his hands.
Great, and now he was bleeding due to the headache.

Just how much more could go wrong?
While on his journey to Madam Pomfrey's unit of Hogwarts, Harry felt a tense frustration at both the rhythmic pounding in his head, and the dizziness caused by his consecutive loss of blood.

Today wasn't going to go well, at all, just as he had prophesied earlier.

"Mister Potter," Madam Pomfrey gasped, the hand previously handling a tray of medicinal potions launching up to cover her mouth in surprise. "What in the world happened?"

Harry realised he must have looked a lot worse than he felt, which was something awful if the dedicated thumping of his head was of any consequence.

"I have no idea," Harry muttered. "I just know that my head hurts, and I'm bleeding from my forehead."

Madam Pomfrey immediately directed the brunet towards his usual place in the ward, bustling about for his regular doses of potions. When she'd reached his side once again, Harry was laying back on the cool pillows and sheets, wondering just why this had to happen to him today, of all days.

"Sit up, Harry," she instructed fondly, gaze flitting to his forehead for the site of bleeding. A quick wave of her wand dissipated the blood. Her face tensed up in a frown, observing as a small trickle of crimson liquid flowed down from Harry's scar. "How long has this been happening?"

Thinking on the question, Harry asked, "Do you mean 'how long', as in how long has this been happening today, or if this happened before?"

Madam Pomfrey nodded her head in assent for the latter, and Harry answered sedately with, "This has only happened once before, when I collapsed out in the Grounds with Hagrid, I think. Everything about that day is a bit hazy, though."

She harumphed at that declaration, flicking her wand this way and that, checking for things which Harry could only guess vaguely.

"Alright," she sucked in her bottom lip for a second before releasing it and shaking her head. "Let me know the next time this occurs."

With that being said, she carefully measured out his first doses of medication for the week, along with a bit of headache draught to help dull down the incessant pounding in his head, followed up with a stern advisement to take it easy.

Harry nodded his head at her orders and jumped off the bed, leaving the Wing with a wave of his hand and a call of farewell.
When Harry arrived at the Dungeons, he made it just in time to meet up with his familiar group of Slytherin cohorts.

"Harry," Daphne greeted with a dimpled smile, shrugging her dark schoolbag further up her shoulder. Her gaze narrowed at his pale appearance and she asked softly, "Are you feeling okay?"

Harry waved off her concern with a gesture of his hand and an exasperated grin. "Don't worry, I'm fine. I already saw Madam Pomfrey. I just had a bit of a headache," and a bleeding scar remained unsaid. Daphne looked worried enough, and they'd only known each other for a few days, even.

She bobbed her head at his explanation as they stopped near the door of the classroom, though a gleam of suspicion remained lurking within her bright blue orbs. That gleam said more than words could, at that moment, of her certainty that there was more to Harry's little detour than just a simple headache. But before his perceptive friend could open her mouth and follow-up with another question, Professor Snape's classroom door swung open.

Harry felt grateful to whatever deity was faithfully watching over him for allowing him to dodge that bullet and hurried into the classroom, taking a seat next to Theo. The quiet boy gave a silent nod in Harry's direction, to which the brunet reciprocated similarly.

Carefully avoiding Daphne's curious concern took little to no effort as Harry set out his supplies, thankful that he'd managed to remember to grab his textbook that morning. The chatter of the room slowly dulled down to a murmur as the last of the students filed in and settled, waiting for their strict and intimidating professor to sweep into the room.

Seconds ticked by into minutes, and Harry was tapping his fingers in a sign of boredom on his tabletop. He was startled out of his musings about the type of wood the tables were made from - mahogany, maybe? - when Professor Snape burst into the room and slammed the door closed just as suddenly as he had appeared.

"Class," said Snape, eyes narrowed at every first-year in his classroom, dark and judgemental gaze flitting from one child to the next. Harry checked his sigh before it could escape at Neville's expression. The other boy's jaw was locked, brown eyes wide in a show of nervousness. Harry then realised Neville would never catch a break when he suddenly fell out of his seat, and a large majority of the students in the classroom began chortling.

"Poor Longbottom," Harry heard Blaise murmur. "He's doomed to be this year's dose of comic relief."

"How did he even fall out of his seat?" Millicent questioned in a low mutter. "He's been still since we got here."

Any and all possible answers were soon extinguished at Snape's bark for attention and utterance of five points from Gryffindor. Harry mentally winced at that. Neville, one of the first students to lose house points, already? Oh no.

At the call for essays, Harry scrambled for his homework and laid it out on the table, slightly crumpled from the handling it'd been put through over the past few days since it'd been assigned. To his left, Theo remained still, homework having already been set out since they had arrived, Harry would wager. In contrast to his own parchment, Theo's was neat and straight, not a wrinkle in sight. Harry made a mental note to ask his housemate about his observation, later.

The rest of class went by much faster than the first had, despite the predictably slow start. Snape paced down the rows of tables, drawling in explanation that the single hour they'd spend together on
Mondays would be the theoretical portion of the class, while every Friday would be their practical session, elaborating on that being why Friday was extended an additional hour. This was, in fact, true for most classes, Harry learned.

By the end of class, Harry had taken more notes than he knew what to do with, and he was left to gaze forlornly at his barely legible handwriting.

He wished himself luck in deciphering his notes later on.

Next class was Defence Against the Dark Arts, the only one Harry was actually dreading, in light of which professor would be teaching the course. Professor Quirrell literally gave him a headache earlier, as it definitely hadn't been Snape, and Harry was already wishing his life was operating a bit higher on the scale of normality he'd conjured up within his mind.

The door to the classroom was already opened as the Slytherins arrived and trickled in, supplies for Potions having been traded out for DADA earlier on in their walk. Harry wondered if the group had been shown the way earlier by the prefect; and, if so, would Harry be able to memorise the path himself soon enough?

The atmosphere of the classroom was colder than it had been in Potions. Odd, in retrospect, considering Potions was held in the iciest section of the castle possible. A few posters littered the walls in a last-ditch effort to add some character to the plain room, though to no avail. All the images of various magical creatures did was creep Harry out.

The professor was already seated at his desk as they settled at their own.

"Welcome," the man announced quietly, standing up from his desk in a smooth motion, belied by his shaky demeanour. His footfalls were practically silent as the last of the students settled in, Harry sitting between Millicent and Blaise, this time. Theo and Daphne were further in front and Hermione and Neville sat closer than they had during Potions, though still at the opposite side of the classroom.

Quirrell's turban was the highlight of the lesson, however. Harry felt his gaze oddly drawn to the long, thick cloth, and not for any reason other than it didn't feel quite right. As the professor stepped in closer, shuffling feebly through the aisles that provided a wide walkway for him to transverse, Harry grew warier and warier, a firm case of goosebumps prickling the flesh of his arms and legs.

"M-m-mister Potter?" Professor Quirrell stuttered, gaze locked on Harry's own. "I-is there s-s-something you would like to sh-sh-share with the c-cl-class?"

The problem with teachers was they always believed whatever the student was thinking was exactly what they would announce to the class.

Shaking his head in denial, Harry redirected his curious gaze to his desk and gritted his teeth.

Something wasn't right about Professor Quirrell. As weird as it seemed, Harry felt it down to the basest components of his very being: his bones, his hair, even his flesh felt that Professor Quirrell was an oddity, and not one Harry wanted to ever be caught in a room alone with for the rest of their year together.

Hopefully, such a thing wouldn't happen.

Glancing up at the professor again at his words of instruction, Harry felt that he could only hope.
After class, Harry groaned along with Blaise at the amount of homework they'd already been assigned, second official day of school.

"It's simply unbelievable how much they've managed to give us, in such a short period of time."

"No," Daphne shook her head in irritation. "What's absolutely unbelievable is the amount of whinging you've managed to voice, in such a short period of time."

Millicent smirked at Daphne before laughing at her comment.

"You're right about that, Daphne," the taller girl shook her head in disbelief. "How about instead of whining about it, you look into completing it?"

All Harry and Blaise did at her question was turn to each other and groan, once again.

"Do you mind?" Malfoy called from his perch near the corner of the room. "Some people are actually in the middle of finishing their work."

"Some people would notice that others don't care," Blaise made a swotting motion towards Draco, to the blond's irritation. "Leave us alone, Malfoy."

"My father will hear about this," the blond vowed, eyebrow arched. "And think about how your mother will feel, getting a Floo call from him at such a busy time of her... cycle."

Blaise launched up from his seat, the atmosphere of their small section of the common room now tenser than it had ever been before.

"Don't speak about my mother in that manner, Malfoy," Blaise's fists were now clenched in a show of his anger, wand still tucked away in his robes pockets.

"Or what, Zabini?" Draco stood up from his seat, each tap of his heeled shoes on the floor another upset to add to his already extensive list of rage-inducing tactics. "I already laid the terms on the table. Would you rather I also include an assertion about you striking me to my list of complaints, I may make to my father?"

Harry watched in confusion as the two boys stared each other down, Blaise's jaw twitching and fists slowly uncurling, Draco's eyes shining with a mixture of one part mischief, two parts vindictive joy. Whatever had happened to the boy Harry had met and spoken with and laughed with and was guided by, it was serious.

It was too much like Draco was a completely different person.

"Zabini," Pansy started from across the room, where she had been speaking with Draco before. "I recommend you back down, now. You know you can't win, at this point."

Blaise continued to stare at Draco up until the moment he finally backed away, though his stance still promised a reckoning if Draco decided to open his mouth once again, to hell with the consequences of whatever the blond was currently holding over his head.

And Harry was still confused. Sharing a look with Theo, whom was just as confused as Harry, Harry then shot a glance at Daphne and Millicent. Both girls were whispering to the other in concern, as if they understood what had just occurred between Blaise and Draco.

They both just shook their collective heads in dismissal of an explanation, and Harry withheld yet another sigh.
Oh, splendid. Yet another mystery Harry wasn't sure he'd be able to solve.

When Blaise finally settled back on the couch, he sighed and dropped his head in his hands. After rubbing at his eyes for a few moments, he packed up his things and promised to see them later on during dinner, deciding to forgo lunch for a long-needed rest, to which no one denied him.

Glancing down at his homework, Harry pondered the Draco Malfoy problem, all thoughts of Professor Quirrell and the woes of essays tucked away at the moment.

Seriously, what was going on?

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