

## A Life of Insanity: Take Two

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# A Life of Insanity: Take Two

by [animeotaku20](#)

## Summary

Harry always knew that life was insane, but having your own father as a soulmate and ending up in the past was so far beyond normal it wasn't fair. Can he and his - mad - other half learn to grow up together? Without destroying the world, that is.

## Notes

Hello all, and thanks for reading! Just a few things to begin with.

Firstly, this does contain incest and sort-of incest. If that's not your thing, then click back.

Secondly, there will be a few chapters with explicit content. They will be fully marked with warnings at the beginning, so read the notes to know if there's anything you don't want to read. The explicit scenes will also be very explicit, with a lot of really dirty/kinky/filthy material. If you don't want to read it, don't.

Thirdly, this story will have updates only every three weeks or so. I don't have much pre-written, not to mention I have absolutely no idea where this is going. It is NOT plot-based, there is no over-arching story or complex idea, I simply wrote this because I was bored. I also started this about a year ago and I still have no idea where it's going; that should give you a clue about how little story/plot planning goes into this.

If you read all that, thank you, and I hope you enjoy the results of my twisted mind meeting boredom. Enjoy!

# I have a what?

## Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Finding out that you unknowingly have a soulmate is a bizarre experience, no doubt about it. Finding out that your soulmate is actually your father is also a rather bizarre turn of events. Finding out this occurrence only happened because of a fuck-up of epic proportions with Fate going off the rails due to boredom, was so far beyond the realm of bizarre that it begged the question of what he had done in a past life to deserve living a life without a speck of normalcy.

Dying and coming back to life once was bad enough, let alone a second – very much unwanted – experience with the afterlife. When he'd come back to life the first time he'd been an emotional wreck that got swept up in the unrealistic expectations of others, and inadvertently found himself in a career that he secretly despised and a wife that he couldn't comprehend in the slightest. He *could* comprehend that his interest lay more in his wife's rather fetching brothers, but *oh well, too late*.

Years later watching his children grow up and become adults, children that he didn't know how to relate to at all, going through the motions of life in an unfeeling daze ... he had been exhausted. He'd miraculously made it to his late fifties, his children had fully grown and hadn't needed him anymore, and his wife had left him years ago when she'd finally clued herself in about the pathetic nature of their marriage. So when he'd seen the flash of green light sailing towards him signalling his end, he'd simply stopped where he stood and closed his eyes.

He'd stood in front of the curse that had failed to kill him twice previously and vehemently hoped that the third time would be the lucky one. That he would actually die and gain some semblance of peace this time, that he could see the loved ones that he'd lost over the course of his sad and miserable life.

When the spell had hit him and he'd fallen down, he hadn't thought at all of his wife and their pitiful marriage. Nor did he picture his children and how they used to look at him so adoringly. Or even the people – too many people – that he'd seen die right in front of him.

He' thought of the man called James Charlus Potter.

Which brought him to where he was now, stood in his twenty-year-old body – for some unknown reason – face to face with an entity that was calling itself Death, and the newest

fuck-up in the never-ending shit-storm that made up the life Harry James Potter, The-Boy-Who-Lived-To-Never-Be-Normal. He didn't know whether to laugh or cry at this point.

"So, what you're saying is that my soul was actually supposed to be born in another body so that I could be a romantic partner to James Potter, my father?"

The hulking black mass calling itself Death nodded sedately at the annoyed but resigned man in front of him.

"And that the only reason I was born as his son was because Fate wanted to fuck around because they were bored?"

Another nod from the eerie black mass. Harry thought that it was enjoying itself. *Bastard.*

"And that my father didn't actually love my mother so much as had to marry her when he drunkenly slept with her and got her pregnant?"

Harry briefly wondered if naming two of his children after the couple was actually a bad omen as Death nodded calmly once more.

"So why am I here? I'm dead. Even if I were to go back to where I was when I died, the James Potter we're talking about right now doesn't exist. There's no soulmate there to go to."

Harry was rightfully confused about their current conversation. What was the point in discussing something like romantic soulmates when there was no possible resolution to the situation. It wasn't even the fact that apparently his own father and he had supposedly been destined to be romantic partners – the random teenage fantasies he'd had of the man that he'd sworn he'd never admit to on his deathbed probably helped him come to terms with it – it was that Harry couldn't see a solution to the situation at all.

Death tilted its head – or what Harry thought was its head – to the side before saying, "There are many different worlds that exist in our universe. One of which is very similar to this one. It is identical in nearly every way possible, except for some occurrences which don't affect the major outcome. Your souls can be put there to live as you should have lived in this life."

Harry blinked in confusion. "Souls?"

He was startled as two strong, muscled arms slipped around his waist from behind as he was pulled into a broad, firm chest. The man was obviously taller than Harry as he felt a nose nuzzle into his hair before a chin rested on top of his head intimately. He shivered as his stomach tightened in delightful anticipation. The arms tightened around him a little, not hurting him in the slightest but instead encasing him in a warmth that had him shivering from head to toe. Harry felt strangely secure in the mystery person's arms, and held on to the arms around his waist without even realising what he was doing. Before he could speak a low voice interrupted his thoughts and spoke directly in his ear.

"Hello, Harry."

Harry got the impression that Death had a shit-eating grin on its face as it looked back at him. He wanted to question them but he was more concerned about his body's traitorous response. He did not usually get certain *stirrings* whenever someone touched him so intimately, let alone a complete stranger grabbing him from behind.

His curiosity got the better of him. Pulling at the arms around him carefully, he loosened them just enough to turn within the confines of them. For some reason he didn't want them to let go of him. He turned around and when he finally came face to face with the man's chest, he looked up.

To see one James Charlus Potter looking down at him with a positively sinful smirk gracing his face. Harry couldn't stop his cheeks from flushing a deep red which only seemed to make James grin even more. He looked extraordinarily pleased with himself, and there was a possessive gleam flickering in his hazel eyes as he looked down at the man he was still holding. The gleam made Harry think of the fabled Black madness, which it seemed James might have inherited from Dorea more than previously thought. Harry felt curiously excited at the look.

Harry knew logically that the man in front of him was his biological father. He knew that there was an entire lifetime between them. And he knew that the mere thought of being with this man in a romantic fashion should make him cringe away from him with disgust. But Harry James Potter had long surpassed thinking logically, and honestly his life had been full of instances where logic had been thrown out the window. As he stood content in an intimate embrace with the man who had sired him he just blushed even more.

It was anyone's guess what James was thinking as he stared into emerald eyes, but considering one of his hands had slipped down and under Harry's shirt, stroking the skin at the small of his back while the other had come up to cup Harry's jaw and swipe his thumb across his lower lip, Harry had a good idea. The heat he felt heading south said he wasn't as opposed to those thoughts as he probably should have been, too.

"Before you start molesting him, how about we explain the situation?"

Death's sarcasm caused a flash of annoyance to cross James' face and he tightened his grip on the smaller man briefly before letting go of his face, instead keeping one arm tight around Harry's waist possessively as he turned his head back to Death and glared at the supernatural entity.

The three watched as the endless white around them shifted into what appeared to be a replica of the Gryffindor common room. Death sat down on an armchair while James guided Harry to a sofa across from Death where James threw an arm around Harry's shoulders. His fingers were stroking random patterns across his throat and neck as he played with the strands of Harry's hair. Harry feared at this point the red hue on his face would be permanent, as would the growing tent in his jeans.

"To make a long story short, the two of you are soulmates and should have been together if not for Fate messing things up on purpose. I can offer you two the chance to be put into another world, where you will have the opportunity to live as you should have previously.

You will have to deal with Voldemort again, however this time you will not be a Horcrux and I'm sure you have realised how simple it will be to destroy him this time.

"What you do after that is up to you. You are only being given this chance because your lives were filled with too much suffering last time around. There will be a few differences, but nothing that will affect you directly.

"So, do we have a deal?"

"Wait a moment! That's it? Just kill Voldemort and be together, is that what you're saying? Surely there's something else, it can't be that simple." Harry was sure there was something Death wasn't saying, whether on purpose or not, and he was still trying to come to terms that he was apparently going to be sent to another world to shack up with his dad. The mental image of that wasn't helping the issue in his jeans.

James looked over at Harry as he mused on the situation. He honestly didn't think of him as his son, he just couldn't. His son was a tiny baby with chubby cheeks that couldn't even talk properly, not this beautiful man before him with glowing green eyes, high cheekbones and the softest looking lips he'd ever seen. James had long since come to terms with his own special brand of insanity and the skewed morals that drove him, and he truly had no problem being with Harry.

He would fully admit, to those he cared about at least, that he was a bit mad and possessive over what he saw as his. He also had no qualms admitting he was cruel; it only took one look at his actions at school to see that. While he could admit he could have gone about doing things differently, he didn't feel the same amount of guilt others would feel if they were in his shoes. His family had always known he was more like his Slytherin mother than was entirely comfortable, so he'd tried to cultivate a Gryffindor persona to placate them. Brave, loud, and daring: that had been James Potter. It hadn't gone so well.

He'd ignored logic and ran with his emotions instead. Just off the top of his head he could think of a dozen or so incidents that he could have done differently. Not necessarily nicely, because he honestly wasn't that nice of a person, but he could have managed them without causing too much unnecessary pain to other people.

The idea of being able to be with this amazing person next to him was exhilarating to James. Lily giving birth to Harry was probably the only decent thing she had ever done with her sad little life. He was probably being too harsh on her but he didn't care in the slightest. Growing up he had constantly asked her out on dates because it had amused him how it pissed her off, not because he'd wanted to. He'd given up after fifth year when he'd realised that she was a petty, immature bitch. Even *he* knew that Snivellus had only called her a mudblood by accident, but she couldn't even bring herself to notice that her childhood friend had said it because of embarrassment and a bruised ego, not because he had thought of her like that.

Admittedly she had seemed to grow up during their last year and so when she'd asked him out he hadn't really see the harm in it. He had been in the Auror academy and she had been studying for a Mastery so they hadn't seen each other enough for him to get annoyed with her. Unfortunately his parents had died when he graduated the academy at nineteen, and after a haze of alcohol and bad decisions Lily had been pregnant with his child.

The quick wedding hadn't been too suspicious as most people had been doing it because of the war, but James had honestly already been planning for a divorce in the next few years. His views had only been strengthened when he met her sister; Petunia was a bitch, yes, but Lily was condescending towards her, acting as if her sister couldn't begin to understand what they were going through, and so she basically ignored and patronised her.

He knew damn well that muggles were smarter than most wizards gave them credit for (Dorea had long since impressed on him the stupidity of ignoring the people that outnumbered them by millions) so James was well aware Lily could have just said there were terrorists and Petunia would have understood the level of danger at the very least.

Going into hiding had brought with it the realisation that Harry was the only reason that James had married Lily, and she had been pissed with him to the extreme. Months upon months of being locked in a tiny cottage together had caused their pitiful marriage to fracture even more than before, and an agreement had eventually been made for a divorce when they came out of hiding.

Of course nothing ever goes to plan, and instead they had been murdered never to see their beloved son again. What people don't understand is that spirits who've passed on can't just go and watch their loved ones whenever they want. They can get vague emotions and feelings if they concentrate on them, but they cannot see them at all.

So when James had been informed that his son was dead, he'd had no idea what to expect when he met him. When he had been told that Harry was actually his soulmate he'd been confused but not disgusted. Harry had died at fifty-seven as a grandfather, his son had only been fifteen-months-old when he'd seen him last. He couldn't reconcile the two as the same person, especially when he had already been considering the implications of them being soulmates.

Being offered the opportunity to live once more with said soulmate was brilliant in his opinion. Coming across said soulmate in the afterlife talking to Death had been an opportunity he couldn't pass up; he hadn't been able to help himself and he'd grabbed him around the waist without a moment's hesitation. The shiver he'd caused stroked James' ego immensely, and when Harry had held his arms he hadn't been able to stop the satisfied smirk.

His anticipation had been rewarded when the man turned around and looked at him. He was breath-takenly beautiful. Just because he didn't like Lily didn't mean he didn't think of her as attractive, and Harry had taken the best parts of them both and made them even better. His face was reminiscent of James', but softened by Lily's features with a softer jawline, high cheekbones, and a vaguely heart-shaped face. His almond-shaped glowing green eyes were framed with thick black lashes, under which was a straight nose like his and soft, pouty pink lips. Of course he had the Potter hair, but his was a little longer than James', leaving a just-been-shagged look that got him hard immediately.

The attractive red flush across his cheeks didn't help either, and if James didn't know any better he'd have thought Harry was seducing him. That it was working was obvious too if his growing erection was an indication. He was trying not to squirm where he sat as his trousers were starting to get a tad uncomfortable.

James looked back over at Death as he answered.

"You will be sent back to the point where you will meet for the first time. It is the point in time where you two should have met originally, if Harry's soul hadn't been re-directed. That point will be just before your first year at Hogwarts."

Both James and Harry were stunned, though for very different reasons. Harry Potter, despite his age, was still rather pure and lamented having to grow up again, while also celebrating the chance to have a different life. The idea of having to be a child again was disheartening, but having someone with him who cared for him made him happy at the idea of having a better childhood this time.

James was just pissed they wouldn't be able to have sex. While he was happy they'd be able to have a long life together, he was dreading being eleven and being unable to do anything with Harry. Anything substantial, that is. He knew others would be disgusted at the incestuous relationship between them now, but even in their world he wouldn't have cared about their opinions. Just because people didn't really do it now didn't mean it was illegal. There were a few families that didn't care if members were in a relationship with each other, and the soulmate angle would have helped immensely.

Soulmates were rare. A few pairs at most were discovered every century, and the blessing of such a phenomenon meant there numerous laws in place to protect soulmates. When soulmates come into contact with each other their magic naturally draws them to each other until they finalise the bond. Those who do not are slowly driven mad. The exception is if one or both of the individuals have died.

Soulmates who remain in close contact with each other are driven to form a fledgling bond in preparation for the full bond. A kiss is usually the method utilised to do so. At this point the bond is fragile but will keep the couple sane as they develop their emotional relationship further. Sexual activity and intercourse can increase the bond further, as the physical intimacy has no bearing on the success of a magical wedding between the two in the future.

The wedding is the point at which the bond is fully realised, and the two individuals are bound as one forever. Such a bond is sacred for magical communities, so even when family members have been found to be soulmates law states that no betrothal contracts and the like can be used to keep them separate and the bond stands above all others. The magic of soulmates also negates the possibility of problems with their offspring so there is no real issue with related soulmates being together.

"Are you sending us back right this instant?"

It appeared his attempt at casual nonchalance failed spectacularly by the amused impression he got from Death.

"I will retrieve you in twenty-four hours." And with that the being got up and vanished.

"What did he mean by –" Harry's confusion was cut off by a forceful kiss that took his breath away.



James groaned into the mouth beneath him before licking at Harry's lips asking for entrance which was granted immediately. Licking into the warm cavern he inwardly smirked at the moaning coming from the other man and carried on.

Keeping his mouth busy James stood up and lifted Harry around his waist causing him to grab his shoulders tightly and wrap his legs around his waist. James thrust a little against Harry, causing what he thought was the most adorable squeak ever to escape the smaller man.

He carried him over to the thick red plush rug and laid him down gently before pulling back to breath. He looked down and had to grit his teeth to stop himself from coming in his trousers. The beautiful man on the floor looked utterly debauched, with hooded eyes, a red flush across his cheeks, and swollen red lips shiny where James had licked and sucked them. He looked him in the eye and saw his pupils dilated with arousal, barely a ring of green around them. His chest was heaving and the older man's eyes were drawn to the thin white shirt he was wearing and the sight of the erect nipples barely visible underneath.

"I know you probably want me to explain why I'm okay with being with you and everything, but we only have twenty-four hours as adults and I intend to make the most of them. Okay?" His voice was throaty with sheer want and need, and he prayed the smaller man would just ignore the situation's logistics and go with it.

Considering his response was to sit up, rip James' shirt off of him and shove his tongue in his mouth, it seemed everything was going in the right direction after all.

## Chapter End Notes

Hello people!

Those of you who've read some of my other stuff will realise this is a lot more mature than what I usually do, but I honestly just wanted to try my hand as something like this for once.

I know more than a few people will be very turned off by this pairing and story, and if that's how you feel I respectfully ask that you simply leave the story and find something else to read. There's nothing to be gained from flaming me and leaving hate. I'm not forcing you to read this.

As mentioned above there are explicit scenes, and I have in fact written a chapter that takes place immediately after this which is entirely smut. That's it. The next chapter is a few thousand words of purely explicit material.

Thanks for reading. Until next time!

# I'm probably going to Hell

## Chapter Notes

Warning: SMUT, LOTS OF SMUT. This chapter is entirely smut and has no actual story content whatsoever. If you want to read it you can, or you can skip it entirely. It is also very kinky, with multiple mentions of a daddy kink.

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Harry thought about how he had always ended up in the strangest situations, but sat in the afterlife straddling his shirtless father and snogging him senseless was up there with the strangest of them.

He placed his palms against the older man's chest and gently slid them up and down his torso before gliding his hands down to the clasp of his trousers, starting slightly when his hands were grabbed and pulled to the sides.

James pulled back from the kiss and slid his mouth across Harry's jaw instead, peppering small kisses and bites as he made his way to his neck, which he was determined to cover in marks of his possession.

When he got to his neck he sucked and bit down on the skin, leaving behind a smattering of red marks that only served to turn James on more. Harry didn't seem to mind either if the moaning and grinding of his hips had to do with it. James couldn't remember the last time he'd been so turned on and they'd barely done anything yet.

He skimmed his lips to the front of Harry's throat and sucked harshly on his Adam's Apple, which was apparently rather sensitive if the keening moans were anything to go by. As he did that he quickly let go of the smaller man's hands and began to undo the buttons of his shirt rapidly, determined to see the skin underneath. The other man's hands were now rubbing up and down his arms as he worked, encouraging his actions.

He finished unbuttoning the shirt and slid it off Harry's shoulders so the sleeves were still on his lower arms. Apparently the half-dressed look on Harry was erotic as fuck. His skin was a shade paler than James' and he could see the scars from his life dotted around his body, on his hip, his chest ... Honestly the older man didn't think they detracted from his appearance at all, but he had a feeling Harry wouldn't see it that way. His stomach was toned and quivering with want which he grinned at, and he took a moment to wonder if those small dark nipples felt as hard as they looked.

Harry had never quite been in a situation like this, with someone looking at him like a predator, like he was a piece of meat to devour. He couldn't say he hated it though, especially

if the throbbing in his dick was anything to go by. He'd never actually been with a man like this before though, having someone take control away from him entirely. In the wizarding world others expected the 'great' Harry Potter to be in charge of everything, and he'd never really been able to get to know any muggles either, so his right hand it was.

The other man looked at him with desire, with *need*, and he found the experience thrilling. This wasn't someone excited by the stories of his life, or had some bizarre hero complex, this was a man who was a little mad – Harry was naïve, not *stupid* – and possessive over someone he considered his. He took the simple idea that they were soulmates, the fact that he was – somehow – attractive, and all but pounced on him with no hesitation. And the way that he took charge without even asking? Well, Harry was just thankful he hadn't come in his jeans yet.

"Lift your hips up." After taking Harry's shoes and socks off, James ran his hands around Harry's waist, unzipping his jeans before yanking them down and off with his boxers, leaving him in just the half-on shirt.

"Lay back." He manoeuvred the smaller man around as he wanted, using the shirt to his advantage. Soon enough Harry Potter was laying on his back, completely naked, with his arms stretched out above his head and his wrists tied together firmly with his shirt. He'd never been harder in his life.

James on the other hand was counting from one to ten and back again to stop himself from coming in his trousers, or foregoing preparation entirely and just fucking the smaller man into oblivion. The other man was toned all over from Quidditch, but he was lithe and compact, with a slim build unlike James. The muscles in his arms were strained, and those in his stomach and thighs were clenching and quivering as he lay there aroused.

But the main prize was underneath that thin trail of dark hair leading down from his navel, sat nestled in a patch of close-cropped curly black hair. James couldn't help but admire the view. Harry's cock was just a tad longer than his if slimmer, and the pale skin was flushed a deep pink. The end was an angry red that made the leaking pre-come stand out even more as it beaded from the tip. His legs were just slightly parted, giving just the barest hint of his ass underneath the soft-looking bollocks lightly dusted with dark hair.

Laying on the floor naked with his wrists tied together was strangely exhilarating for Harry. He could hear his blood pumping in his ears as his heartbeat raced in excitement. His dick twitched constantly under the hungry gaze of the other man and he couldn't help but imagine what was to come. Would he suck him? Give him a handjob? Fuck him, with his dick sliding in and out ... He whimpered at the mental image and clenched his ass, suddenly feeling empty.

The sound jolted the other man from his perusal of the body on the floor and he stood up, intimately aware of the green eyes tracking his every move. He moved to the side and toed off his shoes and socks before slowly undoing the clasp on his trousers, smirking at the swallow that followed the action. He pulled the zip down before dropping his trousers and boxers in one go, letting his dick jut out. He hummed at the cool air before looking at Harry's face.

Thick. That was the only thing he could think of. James' erection was *thick*. Just the thought of being fucked with that was enough to make him spurt a bit of pre-come onto his stomach. He sincerely hoped he'd get fucked and he'd beg if he had to, pride be damned. He *needed* that inside him.

It was veiny and flushed a dark angry red, liberally dripping pre-come at the tip making Harry want to wrap his lips around it and taste. His balls hung heavy between his legs and the entire area was covered in more hair than his. It was wild but trimmed, and Harry could help but appreciate the sheer masculinity he exuded.

The older man was broader than him in the shoulders, with a heavier musculature from head to toe. His thighs were especially appreciated, thick and strong, and Harry had an errant thought that he'd love to trace the lines of those muscles with his tongue and teeth. He hoped he got the chance to.

James couldn't get over the sheer desire in Harry's eyes as they roamed his body repeatedly, committing to memory every inch of him. He didn't think Harry even realised he'd licked his lips when he stared at his dick. Having those pink lips stretched around his member was certainly a tempting image but that could wait. They had twenty-four hours to explore each other, but for now he really needed to fuck the smaller man.

Harry shifted his hips as James crouched down over him parallel, his arms bracketing his head and his legs straddling his thighs. He instinctively knew the other man wanted him to keep his arms back, and he clenched his fingers into fists with James so close but not touching him. He could smell a hint of musk coming from him and he was overwhelmed with how much he desired James Potter.

Said man finally took pity on Harry before lowering his hips to rest their members against one another. The sigh of satisfaction made James' stomach flop with pleasure, and he watched the face of his soulmate before he clenched his muscles and thrust against him.

Eyes blown wide and mouth open, Harry couldn't believe how good the simple action felt. He was barely aware of the keening moans spilling from his mouth as he thrust back against the man on top of him. Coherency was lost as all he could do was rub back against James harder and harder. All he could think about was that lovely fat cock, rubbing all over his own again and again, slick with pre-come from them both and their scents mixing together with their sweat. He was throbbing so badly, and he realised he was already close.

"Oh God! Gonna come, wanna come, please let me come ..." He kept babbling over and over again as thrust up, begging for release. His breathing was coming faster and faster, and he lifted his legs up and wrapped them around James' waist to pull him closer.

James couldn't believe how sexy the picture underneath him was. He was covered in a thin sheen of sweat, skin glistening as they rutted together. The smaller man's arms were where he left them, and in the back of his mind James wondered if Harry liked being submissive. Hearing him beg though, that was delicious, and he decided to try something. He knew it was kinky, and it had the potential to go so wrong, but his horny brain wasn't thinking straight.

"Good boy. Such a good boy. Go ahead and come for Daddy."

Harry's eyes widened rapidly before rolling back in his skull as he shook, coming so hard his toes curled, as he spurted all up his stomach and chest, a little even hitting his chin. Several spurts of thick come covered his skin as he froze in orgasmic bliss. Eventually he stopped coming, but his chest was heaving as he struggled to breathe and he kept twitching as aftershocks plagued his body from head to toe. He didn't think a Daddy kink with his actual father was something most people would agree with, but he didn't think he'd come so hard ever. If James could do it ...

He looked up to see intense hazel eyes boring into his, looking like the cat who got the canary at Harry's come-soaked chest, but a little uncomfortable with his still rock-hard erection. He glanced up at him coyly before deciding he was probably going to hell anyway.

"I think Daddy needs to come. Come on me, please? Come on my face, Daddy."

James was floored at the utter filth that passed those dainty lips, even as his member gave a violent twitch at the very idea. Harry's torso was already covered in his own come, and the prospect of painting Harry's face white with James' seed was too tempting to pass up.

He shuffled forward until he was balanced on his knees over Harry's chest. He could feel some of Harry's come against his legs and thought about tasting it afterwards. His cock was inches from those wet lips, and a pair of green eyes was rapidly flicking between it and his face.

Taking his dick in hand he started pumping quickly, before stopping and reaching down and scooping some of Harry's release from his chest and using it as lube to fuck his own fist. Smearing the other man's come all over his own dick was filthy and fantastic, and it took just remembering Harry calling him 'Daddy' before he came.

He held on to his cock and directed it at the beautiful face before him, covering him with several thick ropes of come. His forehead, over one eye, and all over his mouth was decorated with his essence before he stopped. Breathing heavily, he watched as Harry had one eye closed from the seed on the lid before making direct eye contact with him, and proceeded to poke his perfect little tongue out his mouth and lap at the come around it, making sure to get as much as could.

The older man groaned at the image. He did take some inspiration from it though, before shuffling back and proceeding to lick Harry's stomach and chest clean slowly, pausing to lave and suck at his small nipples, watching as they peaked after he blew cold air on them.

He made his way up before sucking his own come off the face in front of him, watching as Harry flushed red and groaned, wiggling his hips. He lifted his face to grin quickly, before initiating one of the wettest, most obscene kisses ever.

Harry was drowning in arousal. He'd just orgasmed on himself, had someone come on his face, licked all their own seed off of him before shoving their tongue down his throat. He could taste it all. His come, James' come, it was all in his mouth, mixing with his saliva and dribbling down his chin which was licked up again and again by the man on top of him.

He could barely concentrate when a few muttered words from James caused a slight burning sensation then wetness in his entrance. He jumped in shock before the other man leered down at him proclaiming cleansing and lubrication charms. James' smirk was simultaneously arousing and worrying.

Before he could open his mouth he felt a light stroking sensation at this entrance. It was flicking back and forth gently, pressing slightly on the wrinkled flesh but not penetrating. He shivered at the sensation; he'd done a little of this to himself before but it didn't compare in the slightest to someone else's hand doing it.

James thought Harry's debased look was gorgeous as he finally plunged his finger in his body, watching as Harry jumped a little. He pulled it back a little and slowly fucked his body with his finger, watching the display of emotions on Harry's face as his finger was sucked in over and over.

When it got to two fingers he dropped his head down and kissed Harry's inner thigh. He began sucking and biting it, and soon two fingers were stretching him open as his thighs were dotted sporadically with red marks. He ignored how his own member was hard again and focused on the moans coming from the other man instead.

Three fingers got a slight hiss of pain, which James responded to by finally sucking the come off Harry's dick. He licked up and down the sides of the shaft while his fingers were opening him up. If the keening sounds were any indication it was a fantastic idea, especially with the garbled stream of words proclaiming he was close to coming again.

The older man licked his lips before taking the tip of Harry's dick in his mouth and bobbed his head up and down. Harry was rocking his hips, fucking himself on the fingers enthusiastically before James deepthroated his erection and sucked hard, making him shoot down his throat. James pulled back a bit to catch some on his tongue before swallowing it and licking his lips.

Harry was breathing heavily on the floor looking blissed out after two orgasms. By now he was relaxed enough, so James lubed up his dick before grabbing Harry's legs under his knees and pulling them up and spreading them wide apart. He sat for a moment admiring the view of his entrance, the dusky pink colour shiny with lube, watching as the hole winked open and closed at him.

He let go of one his legs – which Harry kept up in the air – and took his cock and guided it to the tight hole below him. He pressed down gently feeling some resistance, before he pushed harder and the head breached the hole.

It was tight, and wet, and oh-so-warm, and James had to stop himself from just thrusting in and taking what he wanted. He could see a slight grimace of pain on Harry's face so reached down and grabbed his dick, swiping his thumb across the tip. The light teasing distracted him as James pushed in further and further before he finally bottomed out, his bollocks resting against the smaller man's toned arse. He took a deep breath as he waited for a sign from Harry to move.

Harry was having trouble breathing. He couldn't comprehend the pleasure he was feeling now the pain was gone. He felt full to the brim, but he also wanted more; the pleasure was making his brain fuzzy and he couldn't make up his mind. James' dick was so hot and hard, and Harry could feel every inch of it pressing into his walls. His nerves were on fire inside and he was hard again, leaking even though he'd already come twice. Maybe it was because he was dead, but he honestly couldn't care less, and he felt stretched beyond his wildest imagination.

"Move ... please ... fuck me Daddy."

He felt the dick twitch inside him at that and the look on the other man's face filled him with a perverse sense of pride. It was *him* making James look like that, *his* words that caused such a reaction, and Harry couldn't help but be a little smug at causing such a loss of control.

He was rewarded after that as James pulled nearly all the way out, before slamming right back in. Right into his prostate.

He screamed, over and over again as James hammered that same spot with a feral grin on his face. He looked more than a little mad, and *so* attractive it was ridiculous. He grabbed Harry under the knees and pushed them up to his chest, exposing him even more. With the new angle he managed to slide in even deeper, and Harry was now crying in pleasure, tears streaming down his face as he whimpered, begging for more.

James was determined to make Harry come before him, hopefully without touching his member. This was admittedly going to be difficult with how sexy he looked at the moment. His tearful eyes, red cheeks and mussed hair turned him on way too much, and he just knew this image was going to feature in his fantasies for a long time to come.

Harry was so tight around him and he could easily say this was the best sex he'd ever had. His insides were so warm and it felt as if he was being sucked in every time he pulled out. He couldn't imagine ever being bored of this. Harry's walls massaged him with every thrust and it took all his willpower not to come from the blissful feeling.

He could see Harry was close, his cries had turned to screams, his muscles were twitching, and his walls were starting to contract. He looked beautiful and James vowed to never let him go.

"Come for Daddy, Harry."

With a shriek of pure noise Harry seized up and came all over himself. Practically bent in two as he was, most of his come ended up on his own face. His whole body was thrumming with pleasure from his third orgasm. His dick felt a little sensitive and his chest was heaving like he'd run a marathon. He felt very light-headed and James still thrusting inside him made him feel like he was about to pass out.

The sight of his soulmate coming on his own face was too much for him, and it took just a few more thrusts before James emptied himself inside Harry, thrusting as he came to prolong the pleasure for both of them.

He leant forward on Harry's legs which were still in the air, breathing heavily. He looked down at the tear-stained face looking dazedly up at him before turning to press an intimate kiss on the inside of Harry's knee.

James lowered the legs gently before leaning forward to cover the smaller body with his own, pressing a kiss to Harry's lips with a sweetness that belied their earlier activities. He felt two arms, still tied together, slip around his neck, fingers playing with the hair at the nape as the kiss was returned lazily.

He pulled back gently to gaze down at the smiling and come-covered face beneath him before he grinned wickedly and caused Harry to freeze in apprehension.

"You know we still have way over twenty hours, right?"

The last thought Harry Potter had before James descended on him once more was, *I'm going to die.*

## Chapter End Notes

Hey guys, if you read that and don't think I'm incredibly twisted you're amazing. Thanks for reading!



# My life is ridiculous

## Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Charlus Henry Potter was admittedly rather confused at the moment. His son had always been more like Dorea than him, preferring to sit back and look at everyone with a calculating eye instead of making friends upfront, and Charlus was okay with that, no matter what the rest of his family said.

James may have been the spitting image of him in terms of looks, with messy midnight hair that stuck up in the back, a strong jawline and warm hazel eyes, but he was Dorea's son through and through. She was a true Slytherin, he thought, hiding on the edges of society and flitting through life until she could escape her family before they even realised. The Blacks never suspected their relationship at all, and when they decided to get married the contract was drawn up before anyone could complain.

His parents had worried about his wife being a Black, but they had wanted him to be happy and acquiesced to his pleading. He knew Dorea was different. Sure she was a Slytherin and a Black, but she was kinder than her relatives, more open-minded, and she wanted a life where she didn't have to constantly look over her shoulder waiting for her family to stab her in the back.

Charlus loved how she was so different. Her dry and sarcastic sense of humour was hilarious and sometimes inappropriate, and their differences made it so their relationship was never boring, filled with light-hearted banter nearly every day.

Just because his Dorea was a little different to what his family had expected didn't mean that she was going to ruin the House of Potter. Charlus knew that change needed to happen to maintain progress, and if that change included the influence of cunning Slytherins, then so be it. Dorea was a force unto herself and Charlus found his life with her the furthest thing from boring.

James just made things even better. He'd been a beautiful baby and so intelligent, and the parents had delighted in seeing their son grow. They'd known as he got older he was rather possessive, and when one of his cousins had tried to take something of his once, James had ripped into him verbally, tearing apart the child until he'd run off crying. He had a mean streak too, which Charlus was sure could become very cruel if he was provoked, but he knew James only acted that way when he felt genuinely threatened. Charlus knew his son wasn't mean without provocation, and even if he was he was still his son and he loved him.

Right now his son looked a peculiar mix of annoyed and downright miserable, and Charlus genuinely had no idea how to rectify the situation. It was the morning of September the first and the family of three was getting ready to take James to Hogwarts for the first time. Charlus had thought his son was excited, as he'd been all but bouncing around the house for the past few weeks in anticipation of attending Hogwarts.

Now though his aggravated expression made the father think otherwise. He didn't think James was upset about missing them – his son was fiercely independent – but he couldn't figure out what was going on and how it even started.

Earlier he thought he heard his son muttering under his breath about his height and his body, but he was only eleven for Merlin's sake. What did it matter if he was small?

After the three of them Apparated to the platform Dorea began subtly fussing over her son making sure he had everything he needed. The blank look and raised eyebrow she got in return made Charlus turn red from holding in his laughter.

The family of three stood for a few minutes saying goodbye to one another before the boy boarded the train and his parents left.

James looked around with a determined grin before looking down at his body and scoffing in disgust. He shook his head and left to look around.

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Lily Evans was excited for Hogwarts. She had her equipment, and her books, and magic sounded so fun! Sev had tried explaining as much as he could, but without demonstrations she could only understand so much. She was happy he was trying to explain everything, and the fact that she was going to school with her best friend was great!

Her and Sev were sharing a compartment with two other boys – Remus Lupin and Sirius Black – and they were all discussing the differences between the muggle and magical worlds. Remus seemed really interested in books and comparing the two worlds, and from what Lily understood of the Houses it seemed Ravenclaw would likely be his destination.

Sirius on the other hand was somewhat excitable, and Lily had initially thought Gryffindor until he started rambling on about history and the correlation between magical and muggle events. She certainly hadn't seen that coming. He and Remus seemed to get along like a house on fire, and soon they were all talking amicably, even Sev.

She knew Sev didn't come from a happy family so made sure to bring him around a lot to get him away from his house. Tuney might be annoyed at their friendship but she couldn't help it if Tuney didn't understand; she wasn't a witch and Sev said that she was probably jealous, so talking about magic in front of her all the time was cruel. The look on his face said he was probably thinking of his magic-hating father when he spoke about it.

The four of them were discussing the various differences in the Houses, with Sirius pointing out some of his nicer family members to prove they weren't evil when *he* walked in. The boy who would quickly become her enemy.

James had forgotten just how satisfying it was to piss off Lily Evans. Watching her face redden to match her hair and her green eyes – nowhere near as beautiful as Harry's – glow in anger had always been a source of twisted amusement for James, and it seemed he was set to carry on the pastime in this universe. She could never keep her composure, especially at the age of eleven, and even if he knew it was immature to argue with an actual child when he was mentally an adult he didn't care. He didn't need others to tell him he was twisted, it was a fact of life for him.

He knew full well that mocking her like this was probably setting her up for future pain, but if she wanted to be petty and act out because of his words it was her own fault. Besides, she had Snivellus to help her if anything went wrong.

He'd walked past the compartment door hearing her discuss the advantages of Slytherin and he couldn't help but rile her up in a drawling, mocking tone.

"You *do* realise Slytherin is the House of the cunning, don't you? Slytherin is a House where you hide who you really are, dance around others and work things to be in your favour. It takes a very special person to be able to survive in the snake pit. Perhaps you should look elsewhere, little girl."

That last dig was probably a bit harsh, even for him, but he was pissed off. He couldn't find Harry anywhere and thinking of those twenty-four hours, those *glorious* twenty-four hours, wasn't helping his frustration. This body hadn't even started puberty yet, and even remembering Harry keening and calling him 'Daddy' didn't do anything. He couldn't feel a thing, not a single stirring below the waist. He knew he was going to go crazy from sexual frustration by the time anything could happen.

Pissing off Lily Evans hadn't actually been his plan for the day – not yet anyway – but he couldn't resist the temptation. She was probably going to take his words as a challenge and end up in Slytherin, which was *not* going to be a happy place for a muggle-born. *Oh well.*

He felt a little pang as he looked at the tiny versions of his two previous best friends and realised they weren't going to be as close as they were before. He knew he and Sirius would be okay as cousins, but Remus was a question that had yet to be answered. He and Sirius were already close and were probably going to become inseparable as the years went on.

It was a little strange trying to reconcile his two sets of memories with the people he knew. When he had ended up in this new world he'd received the memories of the James Potter he was replacing and it was quite interesting to see the differences – even if he didn't know where Harry was in this world.

This version of Sirius had lived through a miracle, and by that he meant Walburga Black had done everyone a favour and died a year ago, years earlier than before. To the public, the Black family had suffered a tragedy, none more than Orion Black, when Walburga had fallen victim to a potions experiment gone awry and it had blown up in her face. The House of

Black was in mourning as the future Lady of the house had died in a horrific accident that stripped the world of a young and talented witch.

The truth was the potion *had* blown up, but it certainly hadn't been as tragic as what the public assumed, especially considering the 'potion' had been yet another dose of a mind-altering poison she'd been slipping to Orion over the years trying to kill him. It seemed that Walburga and Orion's marriage had actually been because of the poison, and she was trying to kill her husband to gain control of the family for when the current Head died. James had overheard Dorea mention that after her death Orion had eventually gotten flat-out drunk and pissed on Walburga's grave, so clearly there was no love lost there.

With his father back in his right mind Sirius had finally been taught the truth about dark magic, not his mother's fanatical approach, and had gotten a well-rounded education in the different Houses and the true nature of magic. With Orion more open-minded about his sons' personalities, Sirius was no-longer the prank-loving loud-mouth James knew originally, and instead was very enthusiastic about history.

Sirius and Regulus' relationship had been saved as well, as without his mother's poisonous propaganda and her habit of playing the two brothers against each other they had bonded together over their new education. The brothers were both now extremely close to one another, and Sirius had taken the role of big brother to the extreme and was very over-protective. Regulus appeared delighted at this change in Sirius.

Sirius and James were already acquainted in this life with his mother dead, and the two got on fairly well by all accounts. They weren't the same as before, but having Harry with him would be okay – if he showed up, that was.

Remus seemed the same as before if a little annoyed at James' bitching at his new friends. James reassured him he was just joking and pasted his 'Gryffindor' smile on and asked Sirius if he passed at imitating their relatives, receiving a wry smile in return.

The other three occupants seemed to be surprised the two were related, and they reluctantly let him join them. He just grinned at them and ignored the voices around him as he stared out the window, thinking about what he could do to his soulmate when he could finally hold an erection.

He was startled out of his reverie when he heard a soft melodic voice ask, "Excuse me, would it be okay if I joined you?"

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Harry hadn't experienced anything this confusing in a long time, which was truly surprising for him considering the general fuck-ups that seemed to plague every inch of his life. Sat at the dining table with his older cousin Melissa he pondered the most recent adventure in his existence.

After having twenty-four hours of hot passionate sex with the man who was his father – his face burned whenever he thought of what they had done, even as he was disappointed at his body's lack of a reaction – he'd woken up in the body of a boy who lived in a secluded manor with his cousin-slash-guardian, and with the boy's memories to boot.

Henry Antioch Peverell. That was his name now. (He wondered if Death was laughing at the irony after all his years of avoiding the Peverell name.) His body looked very similar to his past one, with slightly curly hair as opposed to his past messy locks and a sharper chin. His skin was soft and smooth, looking pale as snow. He looked even less masculine now, even if he could begrudgingly admit he was rather cute. He ignored the voice in his head telling him he was only happy with his new looks because James would probably like them.

Henry Peverell was a half-blood wizard born to his pure-blood father Leon Nikephoros Peverell and his muggle-born mother Maria Helen Peverell nee White. Shortly after his birth, his parents had died when they contracted a nasty case of Dragon Pox, and Henry Peverell had been left an orphan. However, unlike Harry Potter he had a guardian who was all too willing to take care of him.

Leon Peverell had a niece who had just turned seventeen before he and his wife passed away, and the young Melissa Johnson abhorred the idea of her baby cousin growing up alone. Her own parents Phoebe and Michael had died a few years previously and Leon had helped her through the situation. She'd refused to repay her selfless uncle by allowing his son to be tossed aside without a second thought. Henry had immediately been adopted by Melissa and she soon sequestered the two of them away in Mors Hall (named for the three brothers and their encounter with Death) where they'd hidden for the next eleven years.

Their very existence was considered a secret to the outside world, as for generations the Peverell family had been considered extinct in the name, as their only descendants existed in the form of the Gaunt and Potter families. The main line which descended from Antioch was a secret, primarily because of the fanatics who believed the story of the three brothers and were determined to hunt their family down – granted the story was true, but that really wasn't the point.

They had only managed to stay alive by using a different last name in public, keeping the existence of the Peverell name completely secret, sometimes even from their spouses. When someone wished to marry into the family and were told the truth, they were bound with strict secrecy contracts and Vows that forbade anyone from mentioning the existence of the Peverell name. The result would be a loss of magic and death, but the others who married in were usually very understanding of the lengths the family went to when everything was revealed.

In recent years though, the family had made plans to finally reveal themselves to the public and take up their place as an Ancient House. For years the family had invested and started business ventures in assumed names to raise the wealth of the family, but nobody had had the courage to assume the place of Lord or Lady Peverell. Until Leon Peverell.

Leon had slowly been updating the security of their businesses, their home, and even the people of the family, so that he could eventually reveal the Peverell family in a controlled manner on his terms. His death had stopped his plans indefinitely.

He *had* managed to have a portrait made of him and his wife before he died though, and his journals were in storage in case his son ever decided to follow the same path as him.

Henry had grown up as a kind and somewhat shy boy, content with his life in Mors Hall, if a little sad he couldn't go outside without hiding who he really was. Leon and Maria had watched from their portrait as their son grew into an incredibly compassionate boy, as he'd often felt guilty about being the reason why Melissa couldn't leave their home and have her own life, no matter how much she reassured him otherwise.

Eventually his guilt had become determination, as at the age of nine he'd decided that he would attend Hogwarts like other children instead of being home-schooled like generations of Peverells before him. His father finally told him where his journals were, and Leon had never been prouder when his son told him that he'd complete Leon's plans for him.

The next two years Henry had studied relentlessly; his main area of study was the old laws concerning House Heirs as he didn't want to be in a position where he would be vulnerable, and make the House of Peverell vulnerable by association. He wanted to make their House strong for his father and he wanted to have a normal life. Henry Peverell wanted to be normal.

Harry assumed the similarities between him and Henry were too tempting for Death to pass up.

Henry Peverell's memories of being a determined young boy soon merged with the memories of an older, slightly twisted, and not at all determined but worryingly apathetic Harry Potter, and Harry almost felt bad for this new world as he just *knew* he and James would probably cause problems here. Almost.

When he'd arrived in the new universe Harry had sat down and tried to align everything he knew of that was the same and that was different in the two worlds to try and find any obvious differences. He hadn't found anything about the Potter family except for the family tree which was the same as before; James was the son of Charlus and Dorea, and his uncle Fleamont and his wife Euphemia had a son named Victor. At this point in time the other Potter cousins were still alive, too.

The Black family had supposedly 'suffered' the death of Walburga Black, but considering his memories of the insane portrait gracing the walls of Grimmauld Place, he figured her death was a blessing in disguise for the family, especially Sirius and Regulus. He hoped they'd have a better life this time, preferably without insane sacrifices and prison time. Orion Black too seemed to be different, as the articles about his public appearances were vastly different to what Harry remembered. The Orion Black of the past had been a recluse, so perhaps his wife's death had been a fortunate turn of events for him as well.

Other than a few skirmishes in the war with Grindelwald everything seemed to be the same. Dumbledore had still defeated him and taken on his positions with the Wizengamot and ICW, in the past few years he'd become Headmaster, and there was still a Dark Lord Voldemort on the rise recently.

A Dark Lord who would soon be dead if Harry had anything to say about it. As an adult Harry's education had improved immensely and he'd caught up on all the gaps in knowledge, before learning how to interact with other races. His discussions with the goblins (who had been surprisingly excited by his break-in success rather than murderous, thankfully for

Harry's life) had revealed to him many of the intricacies of goblin magic. They'd also revealed something that made him hate Albus Dumbledore forever.

Dumbledore may have been vastly intelligent and venerated, but his age made him assume that if he didn't know how to do something then there was no way to do it. The old man had thought that there was no other way to destroy the Horcruxes than to destroy the vessels, and for the one inside of him he'd obviously had to walk to his death.

Except that he hadn't had to die at all.

What is common knowledge to goblins is soul magic, and destroying a Horcrux without destroying the object it's housed in is something which a team of goblin Curse-Breakers can accomplish in less than ten minutes. Even more than that is the belief that Horcruxes are pathetic magic by goblin standards. A soul can be split into many pieces, but a soul will always be a single soul. Each piece will have the same magic signature, and no matter how far apart they are the pieces will resonate with each other. If the goblins possess a single Horcrux they have the ability to completely destroy the entire soul, no matter how far apart the pieces are. But this knowledge is not restricted to only the goblin Curse-Breakers who work at Gringotts, it is also given to the humans who work there.

Humans such as Bill Weasley and Fleur Delacour.

If Albus Dumbledore had, at any time from when he realised how Voldemort was alive, simply asked the Order of the Phoenix about Horcruxes, Voldemort would have died as soon as one had been located. It had never even occurred to him that someone decades younger than him could have possessed knowledge that he himself had never even dreamed of.

Granted the Order hadn't start up until Harry was fifteen, but by then Dumbledore had known the truth, so while perhaps Cedric wouldn't have been saved the others would have. Sirius, Remus, Tonks, Fred ... He could go on and on, but once more, if Albus Dumbledore had not held his cards so close to his chest then others wouldn't have died, at least in war.

Harry knew that killing Voldemort this time would be so ridiculously easy that he wouldn't even be an issue in his life anymore, unlike his relationship with James. He still couldn't believe that he'd just melted in James' arms and let him have his way with him, but he would be lying if he said he wasn't excited about seeing him again.

He pushed his food back and stood up to get ready. Melissa was smiling at him as he stretched nervously thinking about the upcoming day and seeing James.

It was the first of September, after all.

## Chapter End Notes

Hey guys!

I just wanted to introduce a bit of background before getting into the main 'story'. And by story I mean my incessant rambling that has no direction lol. There will be a few sections that switch point of view just to give an idea of the supporting characters because they're still part of the story despite not being the main characters. That and I just wanted to :D

Hope you like it. Until next time!



# I thought children were innocent?

## Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

For Remus Lupin, the opportunity to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry was too good to pass up. Without going to Hogwarts he would most likely be a burden to his parents for years to come, and while he knew that they loved him unconditionally he wasn't blind to their suffering. The pain in their eyes when they thought he wasn't looking, the fear when they realised the full moon was near, and the unease whenever he asked to go outside. He saw it all.

Such was the life of a werewolf.

It'd only been six years since the monster known as Fenrir Greyback had bitten him, but not a day went by without him hating his life. He caused his parents so much trouble, hiding his condition from others, making sure that he couldn't hurt anyone when he transformed; it was an exhausting life for his parents, though he couldn't tell who found it worse between the two of them.

His mother Hope Lupin nee Howell was a muggle, and there was only so much she could do to help. It was nothing against her inability to wield magic, but if Remus ever attacked her when he transformed there was no way she could defend herself. She hated the way her beloved son had to deal with his curse every month but there was nothing she could do to help him.

Hope had a weak constitution and was often ill, but in her spare time the woman studied muggle medicine in the hopes that there might be a non-magical cure for her son. She didn't have anything against magicals as a whole, but some of them were under the impression that if magic couldn't fix something then nothing could. Non-magical medical practices advanced all the time, and it was her most fervent wish that medicine would advance enough to give her son a pain-free life.

Her husband had had a different reaction to Remus' lycanthropy, however. He felt absolutely and completely miserable when he saw his son's most recent wounds from a bad transformation, or when he saw Remus curled up in a ball crying in pain, or whenever the boy saw a group of children playing together, knowing he could never have that.

Lyall Lupin felt guilty as sin, because he knew everything was his fault.

If he hadn't offended Fenrir Greyback the monster wouldn't have taken revenge in the form of infecting his son. If he hadn't been more focused on himself and his career, his family

wouldn't be paying the price for his arrogance. If he hadn't been lax with their home's security, his precious little boy wouldn't be suffering every single month because of his own mistakes.

Lyall and Hope Lupin both felt utterly wretched at their inability to completely help their son but they were determined to do the best they could for him. They made sure to move around a lot so people didn't become suspicious, and they banded together to give Remus a well-rounded magical and non-magical education in case he couldn't attend a proper school.

When Remus had been invited to attend Hogwarts by Albus Dumbledore he'd been immediately wary, but he'd written it off as being unused to the man. He'd been shocked at the Headmaster's offer for him to go to his school but he'd jumped on the chance to take the pressure off his parents. He knew that constantly caring for him made his mother even more ill and his father had been getting progressively more stressed.

The family quickly agreed and had gotten the boy ready for school, sending him off with equal anticipation and dread. Hope and Lyall were desperate for Remus to have a normal life, at least one more normal than they could provide. They would never give up their son for anything but he needed to develop and interact with more people than just them.

Though nobody would voice it out loud, the family of three all hoped that Hogwarts would give Remus a chance to live like the average child rather than as a recluse. Remus himself wanted to help his parents, and they in turn desperately wanted their son to develop in a way they couldn't help; the idea of Remus having close friends and other children to talk to was almost painful in how much they wanted it to be true.

Their son had never done anything to warrant such a life and they had long since resolved to help Remus in any way they could, even though it hadn't stopped the anxiety of seeing their son off on the Hogwarts Express.

Lyall had always thought it magnificent until the train was there to take his son away from him. He and Hope were nervous to say the least, and the fact that they wouldn't see Remus again until Christmas was a hard pill to swallow. Their precious son would be out of their direct protection and left to his own devices, and if anything happened he would be blamed immediately because of his condition.

Remus himself couldn't fault his parents for their nerves, as he too was almost dreading the journey now he was on the platform, but pulled up every iota of courage he could find and reassured his parents before getting on the train. He had to let his parents have some off time from him. While he had no doubt that they loved him he had no desire to turn that love into resentment if he burdened them too much.

Being a werewolf was about so much more than simply transforming on the night of a full moon. Learning to fear meeting new people in case they found out the truth, not getting close to anyone in case they got hurt, and living life without friends were just some of the issues that Remus thought about every day. The curse he had wasn't a one-time thing, it infected every area of his life until he felt trapped by his own reality.

He tried to push those thoughts to the side as he found an empty compartment on the train and soon immersed himself in a book on the history of dragons.

He was quite content until the door slid open to reveal the boy who would become his best friend. Sirius Orion Black.

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Sirius couldn't believe how much had changed in the past year. First his mother dies, revealing that she had poisoned his father, said father then – after coming out of a potion-induced haze – decides to become the sort of father that Walburga would have hated, seemingly to spite her, and then he'd learnt the truth about his family and dark magic.

To know that the woman who had given you life had been an insane psycho dedicated to removing control of the Black family from her husband's line was honestly awful, though the resulting relationship with his father and brother had more than made up for any unresolved issues with Walburga Black.

Sirius did feel bad about the woman's death, but it was more directed at himself than the woman who gave birth to him. He felt awful that he *didn't* feel bad about Walburga's death. She *was* his mother, yet he felt no anger, no sadness for her, and certainly no loss in his life. When he'd confessed as such to his newly-cognisant father after Walburga's funeral, Orion's face had twisted in a harsh scowl mixed with grief for his son, before bending down and enveloping Sirius in his arms, holding him while he cried for the mother he'd never had.

After that Orion had begun re-educating his sons about what the Black family really thought about blood purity, and the realities and capabilities of dark magic. Previously Walburga had been in charge of the brothers' education with them sequestered in Grimmauld Place, but now they had been meeting other family members without fear of being hexed.

When their grandfather Arcturus had found out about *that*, well, Walburga should have been grateful that she was already dead. Arcturus' temper was famous within the family; it took him a long time to lose it, but when he did it was a spectacle of icy fury. The result had been a thorough examination of the Black's family members and marriage contracts; Arcturus had usually allowed parents to create one for their children by themselves, but quickly took on the sole responsibility himself.

It was a good thing he did too, or Sirius' cousin Bellatrix would have been stuck in a fate worse than hell. Her parents had tried to betroth her to Rodolphus Lestrange using an ancient contract that gave the husband complete control over his wife, and had fallen out of use due to the woman usually losing her sanity. Bella was already a little off, and Arcturus had found out her parents had been systematically abusing her since she was a toddler.

Sirius remembered the Bella from when he was younger, and how she'd used to smile at him kindly and play with him before she'd started to become crueller. He'd thought it was because that's how a Black was supposed to be – as he had been told according to Walburga – and he'd started to revile his family. To discover that she had been going crazy because of her own parents made Sirius nauseous, and he felt sick to his stomach when he thought of something similar happening to Regulus.

Bellatrix had taken the brunt of her parents' cruelty to shield her younger sisters, which had resulted in her being tortured and losing her grip on reality. Her damaged psychological state had made her act out more, which caused her parents to abuse her further. It was a vicious cycle which had stopped immediately after Lord Black figured it out.

The young woman was now in the care of a personal Healer team to fix her mind and body, and she was indefinitely *unbetrothed* to the House of Lestrange. Arcturus had shipped off Cygnus and Druella to a Black property abroad in seeming exile, and Sirius had a feeling his family tree would be losing a couple of members due to 'accidents' in the near future.

With his family not falling apart anymore Sirius had finally been allowed to indulge himself with his passion: history. His mother had always sneered at the subject and threw scathing remarks to him about the unsuitability of such a topic for the future Heir Black, and had even burned some of his books in front of him before. Thanks to his father, Sirius was now the proud owner of a growing miniature library in his bedroom and had become more than a little obsessed with the subject.

He'd begun teaching Regulus about magical and muggle history as well, and he was no longer terrified to leave for Hogwarts and not be around to protect his brother. Now he could go off and enjoy himself and prepare for his brother's arrival. He didn't care at all where they both went, but he would protect his brother with his life if he had to.

Sitting on the Hogwarts express with his new friends was rather exhilarating for the boy and he knew he probably looked a little hyper to the others. In his defence he'd never had much of an opportunity to interact freely with others his age, and the group he was sat with were so different from each other that his curiosity was piqued.

Severus and Lily were clearly close to one another and the way that the boy looked at his red-headed friend proved beyond a shadow of a doubt he would guard her closely. He was rather surly, Sirius thought, but he was smart and had a rather sarcastic sense of humour which was surprisingly mirrored by his female companion.

Sirius was more interested in Remus though, as he had a feeling there was more to the thin and tired-looking boy than what was immediately obvious. When they began talking about history though, his green eyes lit up with an inner fire, and Sirius belatedly noticed the amber flecks which seemed to shimmer with Remus' enthusiasm.

Everything had been quite amicable between the four until Sirius' cousin James showed up. He knew James wasn't a horrible person per se, but he definitely had a different moral compass than everyone around him. He remembered once when one of their cousins pissed James off and ended up in tears, with a resulting phobia of the dark. Considering James had only been speaking, it was disturbingly impressive how much he could influence someone.

Sirius could see that James was agitated though, as he was only this caustic when he was uneasy or felt provoked. He knew his friends had a bad impression of James already, but it lessened somewhat when he pasted his Gryffindor-approved dopey smile on his face and pretended to be doing impressions of their family.

He was actually kind of impressed, even if he was a little disturbed by James' facial expressions after he sat down. The last time he had seen that face had been on his uncle Alphard's face when he'd been staring at the chest of a pretty waitress. Sirius was a bit concerned about why his fellow eleven-year-old cousin looked so lecherous, but decided if anything bad happened he'd just write to Aunt Dorea.

He was just trying to figure how to get his cousin and new friends to become friends with each other when they were interrupted by a soft voice that was rather pleasant to the ears. Apparently the voice was pleasant to James too, who whipped his head around and stared at the newcomer, grinning like a shark who'd scented blood.

*Oh, Merlin. Sorry Auntie, your son's turned into a pervert before he's even started puberty.* Sirius prayed that Dorea could do something, as he was very concerned for the continued innocence of the boy in the doorway.

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*Fuck me gently, he's beautiful. Is it bad I want him even at eleven?* James knew that Harry was gorgeous, always had been and always would be, but even he'd been curious as to how his looks would change in this new world. Call him fucked up, but he still wanted there to be a resemblance to him, a mark of possession that would show everyone just who he belonged to. He hoped for the green eyes to remain too; they were fucking hot, especially when Harry was spread out and looking up at him ...

He mentally shook off some of his most satisfying memories to date and focused on the small boy in front of him. If he'd been beautiful before he was utterly breath-taking now. Hair that previously stuck up in every direction now fell in soft waves past his ears with the ends curled, the midnight colour contrasting with the creamy pale complexion of his skin. His lips were now slightly thicker and poutier, and were a dark pink colour. His jawline had softened giving him a more androgynous look with his high cheekbones, and his luminescent green eyes had remained, though a little wider than before.

In other words, Harry was now a doe-eyed beauty that James would valiantly have to protect the chastity of, as even at eleven the boy was a walking wet dream. James once more cursed his body's lack of a reaction.

Harry's eyes had settled on him, and in response to his lascivious grin a red hue had surfaced across his cheeks as he blushed deeply and lowered his eyes submissively, no doubt remembering their last ... *encounter*.

Just as Evans opened her annoying mouth to invite Harry in – *his* Harry – James decided to see if he could make that delectable blush deepen any further.

“Well, well, aren't you just *adorable*.”

The fairly innocent words didn't do much to combat his overly suggestive tone, and in the corner of his eye he could see Evans and Moony go red, while Snivellus just widened his eyes and Padfoot gaped at him unattractively. They may have only been eleven but they all had a fairly good rundown of the birds and the bees and adult behaviour.

Harry on the other hand whipped his eyes up to meet James' hazel ones, taking notice of the smirk that promised untold filth before widening his own eyes and blushing to the roots of his hair. James belatedly noticed the colour resembled a certain other part of Harry's anatomy that also enjoyed James' attention.

A throat cleared and a slightly strained voice spoke. "Sure, yeah. I mean, of course you can join us. What's your name? I'm Sirius Black, and this is Remus Lupin, Severus Snape, Lily Evans and ... James Potter."

James would have to give Orion Black credit; in just a year he'd managed to instil some diplomacy in his oldest son, and the hesitation before James' name was barely noticeable unless you'd been listening for it. He thought it was quite entertaining how Sirius was obviously trying to take charge of the unsettling – for them, at least – situation and divert Harry away from James. If he hadn't known Sirius was being genuinely nice he might have spelled him bald.

Harry's eyes flicked to Sirius and James noticed a flicker of emotion that he could empathise with. It was strange seeing Sirius so ... whole and happy, but he worried that Harry would need talking to about still feeling guilty about the Veil incident. Even in the afterlife Sirius hadn't blamed Harry and instead wanted to find a way back to reassure his godson.

The oh-so-beautiful boy flashed a very convincing smile at Sirius and replied, "My name is Henry Peverell, it's nice to meet you."

James ignored the astonished looks from Snivellus and Padfoot as he tried desperately not to laugh. He knew full well that Harry hated his association with the Peverell family, and now he was a full-blooded member of the infernal House. Not to mention his name was now 'Henry' so James could still call him 'Harry' without it being weird. The irony of the situation was all but smacking him in the face and he couldn't help himself.

He snorted. Loudly.

He managed to catch a glimpse of four irritated looks directed at him before he collapsed in a fit of laughter. He knew he was coming across as an arsehole – which he already knew he was – but he didn't care.

He pulled himself together to look up at the still-blushing but amused face of his soulmate, almost getting lost in his eyes before a certain wench interrupted his perusal.

"What the hell is your problem?! He only told you his name, that's not –"

"Evans. I laughed because I was *literally* just discussing the Peverell family with my father yesterday. They're considered extinct in the male line, as only some of their descendants exist in other families such as mine. To actually come across a Peverell after being upset they were all gone is so far beyond the realm of coincidence it's ridiculous."

He gave her a slightly condescending look over the top of his glasses, causing her to flush in embarrassment, before he sent a cheeky grin to Harry and patted the seat next to him with a suggestive leer.

“Come and sit down then, *Henry*.”

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As he watched the blushing boy willingly walk over to the arrogant pervert and sit next to him, Severus wondered if the two were already acquainted. There was no way that someone would happily sit next to a person that had just been throwing suggestive – and rather disturbing – looks at them without *knowing* they were okay.

Henry – and where the *fuck* had the Peverell family been hiding? – was still blushing up a storm and looked embarrassed, though Severus thought he could detect a hint of happiness in his expression, as if he was glad the annoying git was paying him such attention. Severus didn't want to know what sort of childhood the other boy had had to be so accepting of those advances. Unless they really *did* know each other.

He desperately hoped so, because the glint in James' eyes promised something no eleven-year-old should even consider. If they really had met before it might explain why James was so immediately possessive of the other boy. He had his arm around Henry's smaller shoulders and had him pulled close so the two of them were plastered to each other's sides. His self-satisfied smirk rubbed Severus the wrong way but Henry apparently had no issue as he simply blushed more and flashed a small smile at James.

James was enthusiastically roping Henry into the group conversation and introducing him to everyone; he seemed oblivious and carefree, but the original four occupants of the compartment all noticed the arm that was now around Henry's waist which held him in a tight grip. It seemed as if James was staking his claim on the smaller boy and making it obvious to everyone else that Henry was his.

Severus was a little concerned about this behaviour. His mother in one of her rare lessons – when his 'father' was out the house – had explained how sometimes magical beings, including witches and wizards, find others that have compatible magic to their own and latch on. It was similar to soulmates in that the individuals were drawn to one another, but their bond wasn't as deep as a soulmate bond. Soulmates were incredibly rare with so few cases that Severus immediately wrote off that answer and tentatively decided they had compatible magic.

This was the only explanation Severus could think of that was likely, yet if anything it only brought up more questions. In any case of this phenomenon the individuals were only affected when they were exceedingly magically strong, and it didn't usually occur until they were well into their teens at the least. If James and Henry were experiencing a faux soulmate bond at eleven there was definitely more to them than meets the eye.

He may have been closed-off and cold but he wasn't stupid. If they were strong then he wouldn't alienate them. They could be cut off later if they were useless, but if they could help Severus with anything he would be courteous until he could figure them out. He was going to be a Slytherin, after all, and Slytherins used any means at their disposal.

Hello again!

I quite like the idea of getting into the minds of some of the other characters and how they are without James declaring his undying love for Lily. Though I have made him a preteen pervert, so there is that lol. I do actually have some plan for at least the first year, so we'll see how things pan out. (I really need to stop thinking up new story ideas instead of working on the ones I'm already working on.)

Until next time. See ya!



# God help the castle

## Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The Sorting Ceremony and the Start-of-Term Feast to start the new school year. Both were such monumental occasions at Hogwarts that were wondrous introductions to the school and the world of magic in general, and every single year saw throngs of new students eagerly taking in their surroundings, trying desperately to catch a glimpse of every single part of their new environment as they entered the hallowed halls of the spectacular castle.

The school year of nineteen seventy-one was no different. Students gazed around with wide and unbelieving eyes, unable to comprehend the bewitching magic of the castle, the expansive lake and the squid, or even the revered teachers who were responsible for delivering their upcoming instruction on magic. Everything was so new and eye-catching that the first-years always became enamoured with the castle immediately and were mesmerised by the new experience.

That was not the case with two of the new students this year.

James Potter and Henry Peverell were both too concerned with the yearning quality to their magic to pay even the slightest attention to the Sorting Hat's song in the background. Now that they knew the truth about being soulmates they could recognise the anxious feel to their magic that had started when they met on the train. Both could remember their magic rebelling during their weddings as it had flowed around, seeking another specific force to bond to, before reluctantly establishing the barest bond possible with their wives.

Their magic as it was now was tied to their time-travelling souls, and could ascertain that the person stood next to them was in fact the other half that they were destined to bond with. Their magic was roiling within them, reaching out without their assent to stroke and entice the magic of the other person in an attempt to settle their magic and initiate a bond.

The bond between them had gone so long unestablished and their magic hadn't ever been stabilised that right now their magic was all but screaming to be soothed, and the two men-turned-boys were fidgeting in place with the slightly nauseous feelings inside them. It was clear that the fledgling bond would have to be established very soon, preferably by the end of the night as their magic was rebelling at the unbonded feel to their souls.

Both boys were excited by the prospect of forming the initial bond, though once more their personal thoughts revealed that Harry was much purer in thought than his soulmate. Harry was hesitantly thrilled by the prospect of creating a tangible bond that could be detected by

them both, a bond that wouldn't recoil upon feeling the soul of the person on the other end. With Ginny the feeling of his magic could be compared to a wince whenever it had brushed against the violent waves of hers, and it had tended to withdraw whenever it possibly could. Now though, even without the bond Harry could tell that James' vibrant pool of magic would calm and sooth his perfectly; they would be perfectly complementary to one another.

The Potter Heir was – inappropriately for an eleven-year-old – entranced with the thought of having such intimate contact with Harry once more. Not to say that Harry wasn't excited by the prospect, but James' thoughts certainly had a suggestively mature edge to them. Harry was *his*, and this time around he would be the first person to claim those luscious lips. He couldn't wait to grab him and sequester his soulmate away some place secluded so that they could get more personally reacquainted.

He knew that their pre-puberty bodies couldn't do much of anything sexual at this point, but physical closeness wouldn't be an issue for them. Harry still had desperate cravings for physical affection stemming from his childhood – and if he could kill Petunia and her whale of a husband, he would – so James would make sure to bestow the beautiful boy with as much ardour as he could. If other people happened to figure out that Harry was his, all the better.

The two locked eyes and Harry smiled sweetly at James with a hint of red on his cheeks, who had to physically restrain himself from doing something no child should in the Great Hall. James settled on flicking his eyes down to noticeably stare at Harry's lips before looking into green eyes and smirking salaciously. Harry inhaled quickly and whipped his head back around to the front of the room with a red face as the Sorting Hat finished its song and the Sorting Ceremony began.

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The word 'worried' didn't even begin to cover how Lily felt right now. She knew full well that she had always had a temper and could be stubborn, and she knew that taking that prat Potter's words to heart would be stupid to the extreme, but the Sorting Hat had also said something about Slytherin House being the place to make true friends.

Sev had told her all about Slytherin, and while she knew that she would have trouble there as a muggle-born she also knew that she was stubborn enough to weather any problems and prove them wrong. Sev would be going to Slytherin no doubt, but their new friends would probably go somewhere else and she despised the idea of leaving him in that House all alone.

She might not have been too concerned if it weren't for the fact that, when she had been trying to avoid Potter, she'd overheard some of the other students who were convinced they were going to Slytherin talking about the greatness of You-Know-Who. She didn't know a lot about this new Dark Lord but what she did know sounded dangerous, and she wouldn't have Sev by himself with a bunch of crazy idiots who would sign up to join an even crazier idiot at the first chance they got.

Her friend didn't have the nicest home life and he could be a bit of a loner if she left him alone. Sev would be a prime target for recruitment if they were separated; he tended to go along with others' decisions to try and erase his sense of loneliness.

Lily would do everything in her power to stay with Sev and stop him from doing anything he might regret. If that meant going to Slytherin, well, she did look good in green.

*Speaking of green ...* She surreptitiously glanced over at the mysterious Henry Peverell, entranced with his vibrant emerald eyes, similar to her own except his were much brighter and almost glowed in their intensity. She was a little jealous of how cute he was to be honest, and she could tell that he'd probably end up even more beautiful when he got older. If he had been like Potter she'd more than likely hate him, but he was so genuine and sweet that she couldn't help but want to mother him a little.

His interactions with Potter didn't help at all.

Lily was a mature girl, and as someone who'd started puberty nearly a year ago her mother had made sure to educate her on the facts of life as best she could. She also made sure that Lily was aware of predators and ways to spot them.

James Potter was a predator.

It was obvious that despite being eleven, he had thoughts about Henry that no eleven-year-old should possess. Potter was a leech, and the way he looked at Henry made her feel dirty just from seeing his expression.

She was quite rightly worried for Henry; he seemed so cute and innocent that he was a perfect target for someone like the git Potter. What made it worse was that he didn't seem able to say 'no'. Whenever Potter did something too intimate Henry would just blush and stammer, like he didn't know how to politely tell him to go away. He was clearly uncomfortable with the behaviour but was way too polite to get out of the situation diplomatically.

It just made Lily mad with the desire to punch Potter in the nose. Or the balls. She just knew that she had to protect Henry's innocence. It was a little strange for her to be so protective over someone she'd only just met, but she also knew that she was the sort of person to get very determined about things.

Sev was her best friend and needed to be protected from himself. That was a promise that she had made first and she would keep it. But Henry Peverell was an innocent angel who desperately needed saving from perverts like James Potter.

And save him she would. James Potter was *not* going to get his hands on Henry Peverell.

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Being the Deputy Headmistress, Transfiguration Professor, and the Head of Gryffindor House all at the same time was rather time-consuming and tiring, but Minerva McGonagall prided herself on her ability to handle everything, as well as the observation skills that she had cultivated during her time in the castle, both as a student and as a member of staff.

She could easily spot which of her colleagues despaired silently over their job, she knew when Albus had eaten too many of those infernal sugar-filled muggle sweets that he persisted

on buying, and could easily spot which of her students were the troublemakers, or which ones were having problems in their lives.

She liked that she could interact with students from all walks of life. Minerva had worked with a variety of people in different places, and whenever the Sorting came along, she enjoyed connecting the wide-eyed new students with the people that she had come across in her life.

She'd gone to school with Cygnus Black and Eileen Prince and knew that their nephew and son respectively would be joining the school this year, as would Charlus Potter's son. She'd worked with Charlus when she was still at the Ministry, and the man was an exceedingly fair person who had shocked his family when he'd decided to marry a Black.

Dorea was a lovely woman though, and Minerva had somewhat considered her to be a role-model as a young woman; she was poised and graceful but with an inner strength that charmed everyone.

The Deputy Head hadn't ever met any of these children but she had assumed that they would all be similar to their relatives – a meek Prince, a cold Black, and a kind Potter.

She knew she shouldn't have made assumptions.

As she stood at the front of the Great Hall with the list of names, she gazed at the group in front of her and located the small drama going on between the children, wondering just how this had happened, and if she could resign *now*, please.

It seemed as if the problem had stemmed from a boy who was clearly James Potter and a smaller boy with beautiful features and glowing green eyes. James was eyeing up the other boy with an expression not expected – or wanted – on a child his age, and the recipient of the indecent look was blushing up a storm with his eyes lowered to the floor. If they were older Minerva wouldn't have been too concerned, but eleven was a bit young for what was obviously happening.

In the background she saw a boy who was obviously Eileen Snape nee Prince's son, looking at their interaction with a calculating gaze that Eileen had never quite perfected, as if the two boys were an enticing puzzle to be solved. He looked a little worried for the smaller boy and was clearly worried *about* the young Potter.

There was girl stood behind them with bright, fiery red hair who kept switching from smiling at Eileen's son – perhaps they were friends? – to glaring daggers at the young Potter with her icy green eyes, even if he was unaware of anything else but the boy he was eyeing up. She didn't seem jealous, so Minerva concluded that she was either disturbed by the scene or protective over the smaller boy. Or both.

Lastly to the side was the young Black Heir, with a despairing look on his aristocratic features when he caught side of the lewd look on his cousin's face – a far cry from the cold countenance of other Blacks. He appeared to be desperately trying to find a resolution to the situation, and the emotions playing across his face went against everything she knew about

the House of Black. The boy was clearly worried about the pair, as was the thin boy with sandy hair next to him, looking at the pair with red cheeks and wide eyes.

Minerva just knew that something was going to happen with the two boys in question, and the shiver she felt crawl down her spine at the grin on James Potter's face did nothing to reassure her. She would keep an eye on this little situation but perhaps she would prepare some letters home in advance in case anything happened.

She shook off the sense of foreboding and started the Sorting Ceremony. At the very least she hoped that they would end up in different Houses.

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Sirius was definitely going to write to Aunt Dorea the first chance he got. James looked like a pervert, plain and simple, and the poor boy who'd caught his eye looked way too innocent to fend off those advances. He was small and shy, and it seemed as if he couldn't quite figure out how to respond to the looks he was getting.

No-one else could either, and the Black Heir could see the students around them start to take notice of what was going on, and every one of them looked somewhere between mildly confused to downright freaked out at the obscene leer that James was aiming at Henry.

He could see Severus trying to figure out what was happening, Remus looked embarrassed, and for some reason Lily was furious. Even the woman at the front of the hall, Professor McGonagall, was eyeing James with wary agitation.

The boy who had caused all this mess hadn't looked away from Henry once, and Sirius reluctantly looked away from the pair as he refocused on the Sorting Hat, which had finished its song while Sirius was panicking about James' behaviour.

He watched the first two students be sorted into Hufflepuff, before a few others went to Ravenclaw and Slytherin.

"Black, Sirius!"

He took a deep breath and walked up to the hat, ignoring the whispers floating around the Great Hall. He knew that his family had a rather dubious reputation – and that was putting it lightly – so everyone was probably expecting him to be cold and calculating and end up in Slytherin.

Sitting down on the stool, he saw a sea of expectant faces before his sight was covered by the frayed hat.

"Well, you're certainly a tricky one, aren't you? Cunning certainly, very loyal to your family, bravery in spades, and a very quick mind. Hmm ... You are difficult, but where should I put you?" The bored tone was a little unsettling.

"Er... not Slytherin, if you don't mind. Not Hufflepuff, either." *A Black in Hufflepuff, my family'll go mad.*

“And why ever not?”

“I thought you could see everything in my mind? Surely you know why?” The hat was getting kind of irritating now.

“Oh, I can, I just thought I’d ask anyway. Well then, this should be interesting. Better be –”

“RAVENCLAW!”

Sirius blinked as the hat was lifted from his head and light flooded his eyes. *Ravenclaw*? He turned to the clapping table of blue and bronze and dazedly made his way down to the table and sat down next to another new student.

He was actually very grateful now he thought about it. He never would have fit in in Slytherin as he just wasn’t suited for such a political environment, but Hufflepuff probably would have been the opposite problem – he needed *some* form of challenge and they seemed a little *too* nice. Gryffindor would have most likely turned him into a loud-mouthed idiot, and now he was getting along with his family he didn’t want to disappoint them. Ravenclaw was a serious House that would challenge his thinking, but it was lax enough to not be too constricting. He just hoped he’d have a friend in his new House.

The boy lifted his head to see Lily stride determinedly up to the stool and sit down without a hint of nerves. He knew that James’ words had struck a chord with her and he hoped that she would be okay.

“SLYTHERIN!”

He wasn’t the least bit surprised at the decision, and he watched the girl walk over to the Slytherin table in a very controlled manner with her nose in the air, before sitting down gracefully and glaring the person next to her into submission. Her expression was a little scary to be honest and he considered that maybe she would be okay after all.

The Sorting Ceremony continued in a similar manner, with students going to all four Houses in a fairly even number, yet there was still nobody in Ravenclaw that he thought could be his friend. He knew that you could still have friends in the other Houses, but he would have liked to have a friend with him in Ravenclaw.

“Lupin, Remus!”

Sirius jolted in his seat and turned to watch his new friend walk slowly up to the stool and sit down. Just before the hat covered his eyes, Remus looked at him and flashed a small smile at him. Sirius wasn’t sure what that meant, but he watched as the hat soon opened the tear in the side and proclaimed –

“RAVENCLAW!”

He wasn’t even aware of himself clapping loudly and grinning, and he stood up and waved his friend over to him, returning the beaming smile sent his way. The two quite happily sat

down together and started chatting quietly, not paying that much attention until a name they recognised caused a very noticeable reaction in the Great Hall.

“Peverell, Henry!”

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Harry thought it was utter bullshit that he still had to go through being something of a celebrity even when he had a new name, and huffed under his breath as he dutifully walked forward and sat on the stool amid fervent whispers and stares in the hall.

(Though he'd admit to being viciously satisfied at seeing Pettigrew wearing yellow and black.)

He could feel the Headmaster's eyes boring into the back of his head, and he knew that he would have to be very careful in what he did at school. Dumbledore already had the Elder Wand (which wouldn't be in his possession forever) and Harry thought that he'd already had the idea that the cloak was with the Potter family. He knew that the old man had no idea about the stone, but Harry was just grateful that his Heir Ring prevented Legilimency attacks and poisoning attempts.

The Potter-turned-Peverell adopted a blank face as he surveyed the fervent wizarding-raised children discussing his name, as the edge of the Sorting Hat slipped down over his eyes.

“You never do anything by halves, do you?” Harry thought it was weird that a piece of fabric could sound so sarcastic.

“I'm sure I have no idea what you mean.”

A snort sounded in his ear. “Perhaps I should clarify: time travelling, being reborn in another body, you and your father fu-”

“Do *not* finish that sentence.” He just knew his cheek were burning. Merlin only knew what people were thinking.

The bloody thing just roared with laughter and he sincerely hoped that it wasn't laughing out loud.

“Don't worry, no-one can hear us. I'm not condemning you, by the way, I just thought it was entertaining that your life was more than a little mad.

“Never mind, let's get to the sorting. I'm afraid that while you do have a cunning mind, you don't quite have enough patience to employ it all the time, and you're more than likely to blow up at someone who annoys you. In the same vein, Hufflepuff would be a little too smothering for you and it would drive you insane.

“Ravenclaw would probably fit you as Sirius and Remus are there, however I understand that you would like to be with your soulmate. *He* is most likely not going in those Houses either, so neither will you.

“GRYFFINDOR!”

The table of red and gold proved just why they were the most raucous as they stood up and cheered wildly like a pack of animals, and Harry couldn't help but grin and remember Fred and George's "We got Potter" chant from his first Sorting.

He stood up and walked over to the mad table and ended up shaking a bunch of hands as they wouldn't calm down.

By the time he turned back to the front James was already sat under the hat and seemed to be enjoying whatever it was saying judging from the wide grin on his face. At one point he actually laughed out loud and Harry couldn't help but appreciate the sound of his voice.  
*Bloody hell, I'm such a sap.*

He sat there for another minute before the Sorting Hat opened its mouth and –

“GRYFFINDOR!”

James stood up with a grin and practically sauntered over to the table, smirking at the cheering before sitting down next to Harry and sliding up so there was no room between them. He leant over and whispered in Harry's ear, “Hiya, Harry.”

The whispered words that tickled his ear combined with the hand surreptitiously squeezing his thigh under the table left him with butterflies in his stomach and the return of the deep blush that he thought he'd gotten rid of.

He looked up at James from under his eyelashes and smiled gently, belatedly realising that Snape had just joined Lily in Slytherin.

Harry leaned into James side as they finished watching the Sorting, and when the last student was Sorted the Headmaster gave a quick speech which he ignored and the tables were soon filled with food.

The new Peverell eagerly filled his plate, all the while aware of the warm body heat of his soulmate plastered to his side.

## Chapter End Notes

Hello again!

Don't you just love misunderstandings? XD I love having the other characters have their own opinions and totally misinterpret the situation. Apparently Harry is an innocent angel lol. (Spoiler: he's not. He'll just take a while XD)

There's actually a double update today because of the way the chapters flow, so make sure to read the next one.

Until next time!





# One plus one equals goodbye rationality

## Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The feast was as glorious as James remembered and it was nice being able to sit down and eat his fill after so many years of being dead. Being trapped in the afterlife had been pretty crap; he'd had Sirius and Remus, true, but Lily and Snivellus had been hanging around too, and putting up with her self-righteous harping and his bitter commentary would have made him consider offing himself if he hadn't already been dead.

As it was, sitting next to his – quite frankly *gorgeous* – soulmate as he once more enjoyed the simpler things in life, he thought about how he was actually rather lucky. Not many people ever met their soulmate and even less ended up in a relationship with them. Yes, the situation with Harry was more than a little unconventional, but he had a soulmate who clearly reciprocated his feelings. It might not be love yet, but those twenty-four hours in the afterlife had been more than enough to convince the other man of his sincerity. And his lust, of course.

Just the thought of what had happened between them was enough to make his stomach flop. He might not be able to get any hormonal responses when thinking of their energetic sex marathon, but his mind was old enough to appreciate the memories.

He moved just a fraction, enough to slide against Harry's side to get his attention. Harry turned his head to the side, emerald eyes locking on hazel as James grinned at the smaller boy. Harry smiled back at him before he jolted, eyes wide and cheeks stained red.

James' hand was taking advantage of being under the table and hidden by folds of black robes to trace nonsensical patterns over Harry's thigh, fluttering backwards and forwards in a hypnotising manner which made Harry squirm. Just because his childhood cock was soft didn't mean that the motion wasn't associated with sex.

Harry whipped his head back to his dinner plate, eyes lowered on the food as he stared determinedly at the table, trying to ignore the tantalising hand which had dropped to his inner thigh, a mere inch from his crotch. He couldn't let anyone know what was happening, though he was torn between telling James to stop or asking him to go higher. The endless sex after his death had clearly addled his brain.

The Headmaster's announcements were completely ignored though Harry appreciated the interruption to James' fondling. He didn't really have an issue with the touching – which was a change compared to his previous aversion to touch – he just wished they weren't

surrounded by hundreds of people who could catch them. Aside from the inevitable embarrassment, there was also the fact that James was likely to get in a lot of trouble, even if they *were* soulmates.

*That* fact was something that they'd agreed to keep quiet, at least for a good few years. James' parents and Melissa had been raised with the knowledge of soulmates and how the bond developed, so they were all aware that the existence of such a bond wasn't usually revealed until sometime after puberty started. When puberty had occurred for a while and the body's magic had stabilised somewhat was when the magic of soulmates began drawing them towards each other.

This meant that they could probably reveal the truth when they were thirteen to fourteen, at which point they could plan for the future with their families. The initial fledgling bond wasn't officially recorded anywhere, so they would be able to keep their secret without the adults finding out the truth.

James looked around the Great Hall, rather bored in comparison to the other new students, though he took a look at his soulmate and considered the differences in his body and how they would affect him now. Those twenty-four hours together hadn't been constant sex as even dead men needed time to recharge, and they'd spent a lot of time revealing certain things about their lives to one another.

One such fact was that Harry had never really had a healthy diet, as years of near-starvation had led to him adapting to survive on a pitiful amount of food, and even when he had the opportunity to eat more he physically couldn't do so. Growing up hadn't changed this, and he'd grown to be an adult that often skipped meals for no apparent reason other than he was used to not eating.

He hoped that that wouldn't be the case now with a healthy body but he knew that mental scars were a lot harder to heal than the physical ones. As Headmaster Dumbledore – the manipulative bastard – droned on about some bullshit rules, James surreptitiously grabbed some food in napkins and hid them in his pockets. He'd make Harry eat if he had to, though he'd rather not force him if he could avoid it.

Harry was someone who appreciated the freedom to make his own choices and James wouldn't take that away from him, but that didn't mean that he would allow Harry to be self-destructive either. He knew the green-eyed boy had self-esteem issues a mile long, and he knew that he'd compliment him every day if he had to, to make him see his own worth.

The students collectively got up and the Prefects began pointing the new first-years towards the various common rooms. It wasn't the best system what with hundreds of students all trying to exit through the same door at the same time. He just grabbed Harry's soft hand and held on tightly as they were led through the castle on a pathway that the two time travellers both knew wasn't nearly the quickest way, but a new first-year revealing old hidden passageways wasn't a good way to go unnoticed.

Unnoticed or not, he hadn't realised how much he'd missed the castle and its magic. It had been like a second home to him when he was younger, and now he had the chance to experience it with the person who was literally his other half.

He looked at his companion who was still holding his hand and smiled. He wouldn't regret this opportunity.

---

Between him and James, Harry was well aware that he was the more innocent one and he was fine with that. He'd never really had the chance to develop the initial and 'simpler' emotions before moving onto deeper ones. His disastrous marriage had never really had a stable base to build on and the years together had just been painfully awkward.

He was glad that, even if he and James had started their relationship in such an intimate manner, that they now had the chance to develop the easier emotions between them before they were once again ready for anything more.

It was difficult and embarrassing for him to admit to James, and when they had been together he'd spoken with his head in James' chest so he couldn't see his reaction, but he'd told the other how he'd always dreamt of a relationship filled with simple romance rather than uncontrolled lust – not that he didn't want lust but it wasn't the biggest thing he craved. He wanted small touches, gentle kisses, coming home to someone already there, raising a family together ...

He knew he'd sounded like a sap but James had just pressed a kiss to the crown of his head and told him that he'd get everything he wanted. It had been such a sweet moment between them and Harry truly thought it had been just as satisfying as the sex.

Harry enjoyed thinking of the purer, more romantic moments of a relationship, but any and all thoughts of sweet romance were roughly driven from his head when he entered the Gryffindor common room, and realised that the room he was in was identical to the one where he had explored his body's flexibility and stamina with James.

His face burned as he looked at the plush rug in front of the fire which had been the centre stage to the majority of their exploits, and he just knew that the memories would haunt him every day when he walked through this room from now on.

He glanced sideways at James who had apparently been grinning at him as he perused the room, lost in memories of moans and pleasure. He glared at the hazel-eyed boy, though not very effectively judging by the amusement in his eyes. He could feel the blush on his face and wondered if the colour was as bright as it felt. It almost felt like there was a flashing sign above his head, proclaiming his naughty adventures for all to see.

He turned back to the prefects just as they were dismissed, the students splitting by gender and going to their respective towers. Harry followed James and the other first-year up to their dormitory before entering, finding that the room was less crowded than he was used to. What with Remus, Sirius and Pettigrew – *arsehole rat* – now being in different Houses, the dorm now consisted of Harry, James, and the Marauders' original other roommate: Frank Longbottom.

Frank was noticeably slimmer than his son was at this age – though Neville had eventually packed on a hell of a lot of muscle – and had a more oval face than his future son. They had the same brown eyes though, and hints of a similar jawline.

Right now Frank looked exhausted, but he had clearly been raised to behave correctly – remembering Augusta Longbottom, this wasn't a surprise – and the other boy turned to him and James with a tired, yet genuine, smile and introduced himself.

“Hello! I'm Frank Longbottom, nice to meet you!”

James grinned back at the other boy. “Nice to meet you, I'm James Potter.”

“I'm Henry Peverell, it's nice to meet you.” Harry smiled at Frank. This was someone he had never met but still respected immensely for what he had done and suffered through for his family. Hopefully this time he wouldn't end up in the same situation, and his future children wouldn't have to grow up with their father living in a hospital bed. (There was a chance that Neville wouldn't exist this time, but the way that Death had said that this timeline was similar to his original one gave him some hope for his friend's future existence.)

The three boys exchanged a few pleasantries before tiredness got the better of them, and they got changed and got into bed, sinking into the sinfully soft mattresses. Harry would have drifted off quickly if it weren't for the twisted feeling of his magic; the knowledge that his and his soulmate's souls were of-age yet unbonded left him feeling nauseous, and his magic was all but screaming at him to complete the bond, at least on an initial level.

He listened until Frank's breathing evened out, then he slowly got out of bed and closed the curtains around his bed before padding over to James'. His curtains were shut but they opened as he got to the side of the bed, revealing a tired but smiling face. James was looking at him intensely and the lack of a silly grin or smirk was making his insides squirm. This wasn't the slightly messed-up boy who enjoyed playing around with others, this was the other half of his soul and the person he was going to be with for the rest of his life.

“Get in, Harry.”

The smaller boy took a deep breath before clambering into the other bed, feeling the rush of magic as James spelled the bed curtains shut and silenced them. His magic cocooned the two of them and Harry shivered lightly as he felt it caress his skin.

James was laying down with his arms open in invitation and Harry dutifully crawled over to him and curled up in his arms with his head on James' chest. James pulled the covers over them before wrapping his arms tightly around Harry and burying his nose in his hair.

“You know, it's kind of weird how we ended up doing all that stuff together, yet we couldn't bond our souls because we were already dead. Yet now we can actually be together, and it'll all start with a simple kiss. It sounds like some sort of fairy tale.”

Harry hummed contentedly, agreeing with James as he felt fingers trail up and down his spine.

“The sex won't be very fairy tale-ish, of course.”

*Oh, for the love of –*

Harry lifted his head and squinted into hazel eyes. “You are such a bloody pervert, you know. And so do others. Didn’t you see how everyone else was looking at you?”

The older boy shrugged. “So what? It’s not like they can do much and they don’t know why, either. Besides, you blushing like a tomato wasn’t helping either.”

The green-eyed boy flinched a little at that, realising that their problems needed to be fought by both of them as it wasn’t just James drawing attention. He couldn’t help it though; James might have been acting light-hearted and provocatively, but Harry knew that he was genuinely invested in the two of them having a relationship and that the affection he showed was truly positive and loving. Harry was unused to someone paying him such attention without demanding anything in return and he didn’t know how to react.

Not to mention that sexual advances were completely out of his comfort zone, usually having been made because he was a celebrity – in the wizarding world – or because he was simply available – in the muggle world. Having someone come on to him so obviously because they were actually attracted to him was simultaneously bewildering and flattering, and he could never figure out how to respond.

“I’m sorry. I’ll try not to act like such a blushing virgin in public, but you need to tone down the touching and leering, too. I don’t want someone to take offence and do something that separates us.”

He looked into the other’s eyes. “I don’t want to lose you.”

Hazel eyes softened and James pulled Harry closer and nuzzled into the side of his neck with his nose.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t think of it like that. I wanted to make people realise that you’re mine, but I guess I went a bit too far. I forgot how bloody interfering some of these idiots can be. Forgive me.”

Harry smiled. “Of course I forgive you, but you need to remember that I’ll be with you every step of the way. People are going to realise that I’m yours when they figure out how much I care for you, anyway.”

James pulled back and they locked eyes. The atmosphere felt charged with magic, seeping into every inch of them with how it was urging them to bond. The swirling nature of their inner magic was now a tidal wave, hitting at them from all angles to make them move.

The two of them slowly leant forwards, getting closer inch by inch until there was barely a centimetre between them. Their warm breath was intermingling and the two boys were shaking slightly at the intensity of the situation. It was nothing like their previous attempts at relationships, and they both intuitively knew that things would be better this time.

After a brief pause, emerald on hazel, they closed the gap as their eyes shut of their own accord and their lips finally touched.

Warmth. Calm. Home. The feeling wasn't the cliché fireworks experience, but they immediately heated up as their magic surged throughout their bodies, coiling around their limbs as it flowed. It was like sitting in front of the fire after being in the snow, and they pressed closer unconsciously. Their magic was soothed, a calm lake as opposed to a rushing river. It was like finding a place to belong to. A place of acceptance. A home.

They separated and belatedly opened their eyes, feeling the bond settle between them as they calmed down. The fledgling bond would allow them to sense the other's emotions as it was, and as it deepened they would be able to communicate telepathically no matter the distance between them. Once they were married and fully bound they would be able to locate the other no matter where they were.

It was obvious that the bond was incomplete, but even the barest hint of their bond was incredible to feel. For Harry this feeling of bathing in warmth was addicting, and he was loath to ignore it.

"Wow."

The smirk from James was fast becoming a common sight and for once Harry wanted to be the impulsive pervert.

So when James opened his mouth to reply, Harry surged forward and proceeded to snog him breathless.

*Well then ...*

And if the two boys spent hours making out after hours, there was no one around – or awake – to witness them.

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*"Mudblood."*

*"How dare she ..."*

*"I can't believe she actually thinks she belongs here."*

Ignore, ignore, ignore. This was now Lily's mantra as she walked through the hallowed halls of their school every day. She had known that Slytherin was unusually focused on blood purity, but some of them were completely horrible to be around. She was the target of some rather disgusting slurs, pointedly ignored, and even 'accidentally' pushed around in the dormitory of her own House.

If Sev hadn't been with her she might have just given up and gone home. As it was she had already burst into tears twice already, though she had managed to do it in private because she damn well wasn't going to give those gits the satisfaction of seeing her cry. She still had her pride and no matter how horrible the others were being she wasn't going to give up.

The problem was that Sev was getting some of the same treatment and she was worried how long he would put up with it before he realised how much easier it would be if he just ignored

her too. They were best friends but there was only so much that someone could deal with before they threw in the towel.

She'd taken to hiding in the library the last couple of days; the first week of classes had been easier to deal with because everyone had been so busy, but the weekend gave free reign for the bullies and she didn't want to subject Sev to anymore trouble.

She didn't realise that everyone would basically be racist ...

"Hello again, Lily."

Looking up, she spotted the unfairly cute Henry Peverell stood in front of her. He was wearing a thick green jumper that matched his eyes, and she had to resist the urge to squeal and hug him like a puppy – she didn't think he'd appreciate that. Lily hadn't seen Henry that much during the past week despite sharing most of the same classes. They'd all been focused on their work and she'd always been with Sev while Henry had been with James the prat.

"Hey Henry, what are you doing here?"

He smiled and took a seat opposite her. "I just came to get a book for the Defence essay."

"What?! That's not due for another two weeks!" She was incredulous. That was only set a day ago and they had ages left.

"Yeah, but this was only the first week so the professors won't set a lot of work, but starting next week we'll get a load more."

"Damn. No wonder the older students were laughing at us." She squinted at him. "I thought Gryffindors weren't all that studious?"

The boy smiled. "That's stereotyping, Lily. Bravery and chivalry don't mean that I can't do my work. Not everyone fits the typical image of a House."

She flushed at the pointed look he gave her. *Does he know how they're treating me? God, that's embarrassing.*

He looked genuinely concerned for her, and though she knew he wasn't being mean she kind of wanted to shout at him. It probably wasn't a good idea though, as judging from what some of the older Slytherins said Henry was really important. Something about being from an older 'House', whatever that meant. It was so irritating how so many people said stuff that she didn't get! Magic was supposed to be cool, not confusing!

"Lily, did you know that I'm not supposed to call you by your first name?"

She blinked at him. "What?"

Henry smiled at her wryly. "I know that you've been having a hard time with some of the magically-raised students, and that's because you're not adhering to basic etiquette and social behaviour."



That didn't make any sense! They were still in Britain, how could things be different?!

"The International Statute of Secrecy was established in the late seventeenth century, after which magical people completely separated from non-magicals, meaning that the magical population has developed by itself without any input from non-magical Britain for centuries. It's essentially an entirely different culture and society, similar to a different country.

"You may not agree with some of the beliefs and culture, but it certainly isn't the same as where you're from. The reason why some people are taking offence to your behaviour is because to them, you're snubbing centuries worth of history when you have only just been introduced to magic. It's as if you're saying that you know better despite not understanding the meaning behind how people act.

"Granted, there are some people who believe that a person's blood status equates to worth, but any person with an ounce of common sense will realise that magical power and intelligence is worth a lot more than which family you come from."

She gaped at him. That was insane, it couldn't be possible, it ... made perfect sense. Lily had been good at history at school, and she knew that different countries had different values, but why didn't anyone say anything?!

Henry just sighed at her. Oh, apparently she said that last part out loud.

"I don't know why the teachers don't say this to the students not raised with magic, but I can only assume that for some of them, things are so obvious that they simply forget to mention them. It's like saying please and thank you; you know that you're supposed to, but it's not something you consciously remember to tell people they have to do.

"For others, they simply don't put as much stock into societal etiquette. One thing you should know is that many of the students in the school are members of Houses that are more or less the same as the non-magical peerage. You know, the House of Lords? I myself am an Heir of an old family that supposedly died out centuries ago, hence why people are looking at me like a circus act. Sirius and James are also both Heirs for old families."

"The prat?!"

His lips twitched. "You know, calling him that isn't going to help you either. Even if you don't like someone, it's considered polite to at least be civil and diplomatic. Slytherin is actually the best place to do that as the most political House."

The girl winced. Urgh, having to be nice to the stupid gits just to be polite. She slumped in her chair.

"How is anyone supposed to know all this stuff?"

Henry cocked his head questioningly. "If you'd like, I can lend you a couple of books on the history of magical Britain and social interactions. They're quite dense but they should be pretty helpful in the long run."

Lily snapped her head up to the boy like a bloodhound. “Will you?”

The green-eyed boy smiled at her gently. “I’d be glad to be of assistance, Miss Evans.”

She smirked at him. She was going to learn *everything* and prove them *wrong*.

Unknown to her, Henry was looking at her uneasily as she chuckled darkly like a horror film character.

*Merlin, she's weird. Thank god I didn't inherit that.*

## Chapter End Notes

Hello!

Harry can't help but interfere lol. Though that doesn't mean he won't be a little shit when he wants to, he is the soulmate to James after all XD

Btw, before anyone bashes on me for the cliché soulmate bond, I'm already well aware. I know it's more than a little weird and cheesy, but considering this is a James/Harry time travel and reincarnation fic, it's not as if I'm trying to avoid overdone tropes lol. Also, it might seem overly-sweet and romantic at first, but just think about the individuals in question and all the ways they'd mess around with it. Trust me, I'm really not using it for romance lol.

See ya next time!

# Sometimes the mouth needs a filter

## Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Halloween wasn't a day that many at Hogwarts enjoyed, especially the magically-raised students. Harry hadn't quite realised that things had changed so much by the time he was originally at the school, as the seventies was actually a lot more stringent on magical traditions than the nineties was, and he had to constantly check himself so that he didn't accidentally mortally offend anyone and cause a family feud.

As it was, those from older families were nearly completely united in their distaste for the traditional Samhain celebrations being ignored in favour of gaudy muggle decorations that had no cultural significance for the majority of the castle's occupants. The muggle-born students were actually the minority, as most of Hogwarts' witches and wizards were either half-blood or pure-blood.

Dumbledore hadn't been Headmaster for very many years at this point, and though he was known as the defeater of Grindelwald he hadn't yet developed his monopoly on magical Britain with his actions in the first war with Voldemort, which had actually only just begun in this time period. Old snake-face had just begun recruiting the giants and werewolves, and was just starting to build what would one day become the fanatic Death Eaters. It was definitely odd to realise that Bellatrix would probably never be the raging psychopath she was, as she had apparently been abused by her parents. Harry supposed that psychological damage was pretty damning as evidence for her behaviour not being her fault.

He shifted, feeling awkward with the cheery face of Dumbledore staring out at the sea of young faces, almost expecting awe and veneration from the students. Considering the man was connected to the extensive wards of the school and hadn't done anything about the disgusting Horcrux on the seventh floor, it was nauseating to consider the implications. He was more concerned about his reputation than the safety of the students; there were literally hundreds of untrained witches and wizards who were also curious teenagers in the castle, so leaving something with the ability of possession just lying around was beyond negligent.

The old man could have easily moved the cursed object even if he didn't know how to destroy it, but instead he'd left it alone. He could have been spending his time trying to figure out how to educate his students on the opposing cultures of muggle and magical life, but instead he'd decided it was best to push Halloween to the forefront of everyone's minds because the muggle-borns were 'uncomfortable.'

Harry had no problems with muggle-borns, but as he had gotten older he had realised how unfair it was for them to expect their culture to be respected while magical traditions were ignored as outdated. Reading muggle history books, he was very uncomfortable as it reminded him of a very disturbing mixture of colonialism and racism.

He personally thought there should be obligatory culture courses at the school (both magical and muggle), but he'd have to get that idea approved by the Board of Governors if he wanted it to happen. It wasn't as if the idea had no basis in reality, as ever since he'd lent the etiquette books to Lily there had been an almost fervent drive amongst the first year muggle-borns to learn all about magical culture. Even if they didn't agree with some of the ideas, he had seen a definite increase in those students behaving properly according to older etiquette.

They showed that there was a definite interest in the subject, but he would need an adult who had an established reputation to help him get his ideas put into practice. Maybe he could ask James?

Speaking of his soulmate, the hazel-eyed boy was looking into his plate with deeply furrowed brows as if the piles of food held all the secrets of the universe. Considering James Potter was an unrepentant prankster who delighted in causing mayhem – physical and psychological – it was a little worrying to see him so quiet and contemplative. Harry had a fairly good idea what the problem was, but he didn't want to fuck things up if he was wrong.

He gently bumped shoulders with James and looked at him concernedly as he jumped a mile in the air; James was never surprised that easily. Their eyes met and Harry frowned and cocked his head questioningly.

James pulled a face as he looked to be trying to find the appropriate words, before he sighed and leaned into Harry's side.

“Sorry.”

Harry subtly linked their hands under the table and squeezed gently.

“You don't have anything to apologise for, but I'll admit I'm a little worried that you're so quiet.”

The other boy looked uncomfortable. “This is the day, you know. The day when you were left alone. The day when we were separated,” he murmured, “and the day our family was destroyed.”

“And the day that you were killed.”

James looked over at him with a disturbingly serious look on his face and squeezed his hand tightly.

“You know,” Harry began, “when there were Dementors at the school and I realised how they affected me, they kind of triggered a few memories of when I was younger, but I never got to remember any of the good parts. I never remembered Sirius or Remus, and I never remembered anything from before that Halloween.”

“I never remembered you or Mum except your screams. I even saw Mum die, but the only memory I had of you was hearing your voice get cut off as you were killed.”

Harry stopped with a lump in his throat as he remembered the memory. Now he knew about the problems of his parents' marriage it was even worse. When Lily had heard James go quiet the look of shock on her face had been so strong. In context it was devastating to realise that, even if she'd hated him (which she probably had) the sound of James' death had still been tragic to her. He was the father of her son, and she'd known then and there that things weren't going to go well. The tearful resignation on her face was heart-wrenching, and Harry hated that his only memory of his original parents was their murder.

James inhaled quickly and Harry belatedly realised James could feel Harry's emotional agony through their bond. Halloween had always sucked for him, and even being in the past before any of those events had happened wasn't helping. He could feel James' second-hand pain and guilt, which was completely ridiculous – it wasn't his fault Pettigrew had turned out to be a cowardly traitor.

“Come on, let's go back to the dorm.”

Harry frowned. “James?”

“You don't look so well. I'll help you back to the dorm to sleep.” The hazel-eyed boy sent him a pointed look as he gently helped him up, pausing to turn quickly to Frank and let him know.

Harry smiled gratefully at James and waved off Frank's concern, though thanking him graciously. (Frank was a genuinely nice boy with a cheerful demeanour, and he couldn't help but wonder if Neville would have grown up this happy if things had been different.)

They made their way back to Gryffindor Tower in silence, though plastered to each others' sides and hands gripped tightly. The mutual pain was flickering back and forth across the bond and almost causing the misery to multiply exponentially. It wasn't a pleasant feeling.

They finally found themselves in their dorm room and James was quick to wrap Harry in his arms tightly, holding on in desperation. Being soulmates might have sounded perfectly romantic but the reality was actually terrifying. Experiencing what it was like to have someone for yourself was all well and good until you started to wonder about something bad happening to the other person.

For James, the idea that Harry would suffer even more than he already had in his life made him nauseous. This amazing person next to him was so utterly selfless yet they'd ended up with the short end of the stick too many times to count. He wouldn't let that happen again if he could help it.

Harry wriggled and managed to detach his clingy soulmate before directing them to get ready for bed, after which he dragged the other into his own four-poster. James cocked an eyebrow at him before shrugging and climbing in.

“I'm sorry, Harry. I kept focusing on my own problems instead of thinking about your issues with today, too.”

The green-eyed boy smiled wryly. “You weren't the only one distracted by today, you know. It's a shitty day all round, and it's not surprising it messed us up.”

Harry's gentle smile turned a bit sharp and he grinned across the bed.

“You could always make it up to me.”

The coy look on Harry's face made James inwardly curse at his body's lack of hormones even as he crawled towards the beautiful boy.

“I suppose I could, Mister Peverell. Any requests?”

Hazel eyes widened further and further as soft lips whispered into his ear. *Bloody hell, have I corrupted him?*

---

He had always known his family was a more than a little mad but this was completely ridiculous. That woman was insane, and she must have been crazy powerful to stop his father in his tracks like that. And that didn't even get into her ability to manipulate complete strangers into going for a meal together with just a smile and subtle flattery.

Sirius didn't care what anyone else said, he knew that Dorea Potter nee Black was terrifying.

Apparently she had taken the extra free time from James being at school to mean she was allowed to interfere with her birth family, and had taken to bullying and mothering his father into taking care of himself whenever she felt like it. No matter how much Orion had tried to redirect her she hadn't given up, and Dorea had now taken it upon herself to help his father meet new people and spend time with his son's friends and family.

Which had somehow translated to more-or-less kidnapping several children and their relatives and whisking them away to a quaint restaurant in Diagon Alley not ten minutes after they'd disembarked from the Hogwarts Express.

Aunt Dorea was crazy, a different kind of crazy than his mother had been, but crazy nonetheless. He wondered if that was the norm for his female relatives. He hoped not. Dearly.

The woman had taken one look at him and James stood together and invited them to an early dinner with a sweet smile on her face that had rung warning bells in Sirius' head. Apparently his intuition had come from his father if the suspicious look gracing Orion Black's face had been any indication, but Regulus had just looked confused.

Then James had turned and beamed at the small and cute – and very innocent – Henry, and Dorea had jumped on her son's expanding social circle like a predator scenting fear, inviting the boy and his cousin to join them. For some reason Henry's cousin seemed to satisfy Aunt Dorea. (He wasn't going to say anything for his own sanity.)

He'd decided to ignore the woman and say goodbye to Remus who was with his dad, before Aunt Dorea had recognised Lyall Lupin from the Ministry and talked him into coming along too. The man had looked as bewildered as Sirius felt, and he shivered a little in fear as the

Potter matriarch had smirked in satisfaction at her success, whatever it was she was trying to do.

Which had ended up with Orion Black and his children, the Potter trio, the Lupin father and son, and the Peverell cousins sat around a large table looking awkwardly at the menus provided, trying to make polite conversation with each other. Mostly. Aunt Dorea looked quite happy with herself, at the very least. She was sat with the rest of the adults at one end while the five boys were put together at the other.

“She's up to something.”

He turned to see James smirking at him with his head cradled in his chin, elbow carelessly on the immaculate table. Brown eyes were lidded, and the stupid infuriating grin was dancing across James' lips. His cousin wasn't a bad person per se but he could be a pain in the arse when he wanted to.

“James?”

*Thank Merlin for Henry Peverell.* One simple word and James immediately stopped acting like a prat and turned to the smaller boy with a genuine smile on his face. It was definitely better than the dodgy perverted looks he'd seen months ago. (He ignored the little voice in the back of his head reminding him that they shared a room. He didn't want to think about it.)

“What do you mean she's up to something?”

James hummed. “She's got that look in her eyes when she's planning something to 'help' people. She noticed that all four of us were standing together and friendly, so she's trying to pry about my social life. She probably would have invited Evans and Snape if they hadn't already left. That's goal one.

“Goal two is probably related to Mr Black over there. From the letters she's been sending me, she's trying to get more involved with the family and she's trying to get him out and about. I think she's probably happy to have your cousin here, if you get my meaning.

“Lastly, she mentioned something about creature laws, and considering Mr Lupin works in the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, she probably saw him and decided to recruit him for some of her work.”

Before Henry could reply, Regulus – who'd been repeatedly glancing at Henry since learning his last name – piped up instead, looking a little weirded out.

“Wait a minute, are you saying that Aunt Dorea is trying to set Father up in a relationship with Miss Johnson?”

The Potter heir grinned, absentmindedly tapping his menu as he leaned back in his chair. “I'm not saying that specifically, but I think she's trying to introduce your father to the idea that he's allowed to have a love life once more. Having a young and attractive woman here's probably helping her master plan.”

Regulus frowned a little and Sirius could empathise. Their mother had been insane and manipulative to the extreme; the possibility of Orion remarrying and ending up with another Walburga Black as his wife was unsettling to say the least.

“I suppose she's just trying to help. I mean, Heir Black is still young by wizarding standards. It wouldn't be that unusual for him to remarry and have more children. If he wanted to, that is. His personal life is entirely up to him.”

Henry was polite and insightful as usual, and Sirius still hadn't figured out how he and James got along so well. Henry was calm and quiet, unusually intelligent, and genuinely kind. James was a prankster who mocked people when bored, ignored as much propriety as he could (though Sirius was equally guilty of this sometimes), and was loud and obnoxious.

He supposed they balanced each other out, but he hoped that Henry would be safe from his cousin's advances come puberty. James was already inordinately possessive over Henry, going so far as to lay claim to the nickname 'Harry' rather vehemently. Nobody knew what he'd said to the fourth-year Brown, but after that everyone had known not to call Henry 'Harry'. That name was reserved for James and he made sure every other person in the castle knew it. *Possessive git.*

“At what age is someone considered too old to have children? In the muggle world, people generally stop during their thirties.”

Sirius looked at Remus and smiled. Despite having a wizard as a father he was still clueless when it came to a lot of things. He lived in the muggle world and Lyall Lupin hadn't ever delved too deeply into wizarding culture and etiquette. Not that he thought less of his friend because of it, it just made him want to help.

“My dad's sixty-eight now and Mum's fifty-two. They were fifty-six and forty respectively when I was born, and Mum's still able to easily carry children if she wanted. Dad might be seen as a little too old by a few people but quite a few men in their sixties sire children. Some men even have kids in their seventies.”

James' words jolted Remus. “But they look so young! I thought your dad might have been in his forties or fifties, and your mum looks like she's about thirty-five.” The sandy-haired Ravenclaw looked baffled.

James smirked. “It's a benefit to having magic. Witches and wizards age a lot slower than muggles, so we tend to look a lot younger as adults. Except for some creatures like werewolves as they tend to age quicker because of the stress on the body.

“That's why it's okay to have children later. Of course it's easier to sire a child later in life, but for someone carrying a child your fifties, sometimes sixties if you're lucky, is generally considered to be the cut-off point.”

Sirius was so surprised at the serious answer from his cousin that he almost missed the flinch from Remus at the mention of werewolves, but he still noted it. *What's that about? Does he know a werewolf?*



Had Sirius carried on that train of thought he would have eventually come to the correct conclusion about Remus' condition. As it was his idiot cousin shocked him out of his musing.

“Personally, I think mine and Henry's children will be very cute.”

Henry went red and started choking on his drink, Regulus and Remus had identical expression of shock on their faces, and Sirius whipped his head around and locked eyes with amused hazel ones.

“James!”

The Potter just started laughing loudly and Sirius had to divert attention away from the curious adults.

*One day James, I will murder you.*

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The couple looked across the sitting room to watch their son, albeit in a concerned manner. James was lying face down on a sofa with his face buried in the cushions and he hadn't moved an inch for over an hour. Ever since they'd got back from their dinner in Diagon Alley he'd been moping, and to say that Charlus and Dorea were worried would be an understatement.

James had always been an upbeat and happy child, even if he'd had his moments of channelling his mother's ancestors, and to see him so down was worrying. They didn't really care about his behaviour in terms of etiquette – especially in their own home – but his actions certainly didn't reflect the boy they'd sent off to Hogwarts in September. The adults shared a glance before Dorea cleared her throat.

“James?”

The boy in question lifted his head sluggishly, showing off hair even messier than usual (though it didn't seem possible) and crooked glasses. He blinked lazily before turning his head towards her.

“Mum?”

She wondered how to phrase the question right. Merlin only knew her son was independent and preferred to handle things himself. It was something she knew well from growing up with her birth family.

“Is there anything wrong? You haven't been that happy recently, not since you saw your friends before the break.”

James' face twisted and she felt her stomach clench in worry as he looked to be trying to find the words to speak. She might have been a Potter now, but while there were many things she despised about her birth family she was still a Black, and Blacks didn't make for good enemies. If someone had hurt her son they'd be in for a world of pain.

Eventually the face that so resembled her husband morphed into a grin. A grin that promised chaos and mayhem, with a hint of smug self-assurance that was all Black. *Oh dear, what's he done now?*

A quick look at Charlus revealed a concerned face tinged with resignation, so he too had come to a similar conclusion about James. She loved her little boy dearly, but sometimes she wondered if he was deliberately trying to drive them into an early grave.

“You know when we went to that restaurant?”

Warily, she proceeded. “Yes?”

He smirked. “You didn't know it then, but you met your future son-in-law there.”

“... What.”

She and Charlus had spoken in unison but they couldn't care less about that. Apparently James had already decided on a spouse and they had already met him.

“Yeah, it's Henry,” he said with an innocent smile that didn't inspire much confidence. “I know I'm young but I'm already in love with him, and I'm going to marry him when we're out of school.

“That's the reason I've been miserable, I haven't been able to see his cute face for days now, and he's so adorable, and I kind of miss his hugs. Writing just isn't the same. Though now I think about it, I should probably let him know about our future plans.”

He finished with a thoughtful face before nodding, getting up, and strolling determinedly out the room.

“... What.”

This time it was just Dorea speaking, and she turned just in time to see her husband's red face before he lost the battle with his composure and broke down in hysterics.

She ignored the lovable idiot sitting next to her and thought about the small and beautiful boy who she'd met, and how he seemed to go along with James' every whim. That poor boy would be eaten alive.

She said as much to Charlus and rolled her eyes as he bent double, laughing harder with tears in his eyes. They both knew James was a determined boy and that he usually got what he wanted. Dorea sighed with resignation and shook her head.

*Welcome to the family, Henry.*

Hello again!

Sorry this was a few days late if you were keeping up with my update schedule, but work killed me, enough said. To all the teens in school and unemployed right now, you have no idea how exhausting full-time work is. Words cannot express how much I miss school right now lol.

Also, I'm not sure if people realised a few chapters ago, but Voldemort is NOT going to be a focus of this story. He'll be gone and done for good really simply and without fanfare. If that bothers you then I'm sorry, but this fic is about Harry and James and the insanity of their lives together, not some dramatic war-filled action story. Let's be real here, practically nothing about this fic is serious in any way lol.

Quick question: would people be averse to a time skip at all, or do you guys think I should have at least a few chapters of each year at school? Bear in mind I am literally making the plot up as I go, planning does not exist for this fic :D

Also, I've posted a couple of family trees for this on my deviantart (anime-otaku20), the Potter and Peverell families, so take a look if you're interested.

See ya next time!

# Sometimes words speak louder than actions

## Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

Warning: references to various psychological illnesses/conditions.

This chapter is also VERY serious in comparison to the others.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Harry laid down on the sofa in the sitting room, carefully reclining back slowly so he didn't jolt himself and accidentally lose his lunch on the expensive carpet.

With the memories he'd inherited from Henry, Harry knew that Melissa was almost fanatic every single year in her determination to cook and help out the elves while they put together an extraordinarily-lavish Yule meal for them to enjoy together. And he really wasn't kidding when he said 'lavish'; Harry could barely move right now after having been made to eat two entire platefuls of proper food, and that was before dessert had even been brought out. The woman was mental.

Apparently Henry had been something of a bottomless pit when it came to food, but the problem was that the soul currently occupying this body was that of Harry Potter, an abused and neglected child-turned-adult that still couldn't eat full meals because of psychological issues from childhood that would *not* just do him a favour and fuck off. (Seriously, having a new body was supposed to fix things. Death was an arse.)

Then again, his problems were supposedly psychosomatic. Or that was what his Healers told him, anyway. Not that any of them had done him an ounce of good, seeing as he went decades without being able to improve just the slightest. Though that might have also had to do with having a truly shitty life surrounded by a wife and kids he couldn't get along with.

Toxic. Harry Potter's life was toxic and stress-inducing on the best of days, so much so that any of his vast array of psychological issues were ramped up to awful levels and caused him to lose any ounce of progress that he'd made. Slight Anorexia, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression, mild Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder ... they were just some of the *lovely* names printed in his disgustingly thick file at St Mungo's, a file that was about ten times bigger than anyone else's and a very apt physical metaphor for his crappy life.

Harry took a deep breath and let it out slowly, trying not to focus on how his past was still screwing with his future. Though it was a little hard not to considering how he knew he wouldn't be reacting so badly to things now if he'd only had a normal life beforehand. If he'd been raised in a loving home with parental figures that cared for him as a person rather than an unwanted object, if he'd had adults that spoke to him as a mature person and didn't keep

vital secrets from him, if every single *fucking* person around him didn't constantly push him into making decisions he didn't want to ...

He couldn't trust people.

Even years after knowing someone he hadn't been able to trust people. People lied, people cheated, and people had a nasty tendency to go behind your back and do things you wouldn't want because they thought they knew better. Hermione thought books knew better so she acted her usual arrogant self, Ron assumed he knew what people were thinking despite having no social skills so he made snap judgements about people, Dumbledore 'knew' everything he did was for 'the greater good'. People were arseholes, plain and simple, and even being in a new body and in a different time with his soulmate, Harry hadn't been able to forget that people lied. He'd been waiting for someone to screw him over.

He hadn't expected it to be James

He knew others would think him to be over-reacting, and maybe he was, but James was the only person that he'd ever told about all his problems, physical, emotional and psychological, and despite his twisted personality, Harry had assumed that his soulmate would be able to understand his issues with control and trust. But he hadn't. James might think it funny, but going ahead and telling his parents that he was going to marry Harry after school *hurt*.

Harry thought they'd decided together not to say anything of their relationship until into their teens and he'd been happy with that, but James made a spur-of-the-moment decision to fuck with their plans and just do what he wanted. He didn't even discuss it with Harry, just informed him after the fact with an owl and an expensive bar of chocolate telling him he was sorry.

The chocolate was in the bin.

Sure, there was some shitty saying about how asking for forgiveness was easier than asking for permission, but James *knew* how much Harry despised people controlling his life. Every single thing in the life of Harry James Potter had been controlled to a tee, and living as Henry Peverell was supposed to have given him the chance to have a life where he could live how he wanted. Except he was apparently still under the control of someone else.

The problem was that James had really and truly fucked himself over this time, because their few short months together had actually managed to instil the slightest bit of confidence and self-respect in Harry, and he wasn't going to simply laugh at the idea of James shocking his parents into silence and forget about this. He could of course, but Harry was a human being with his own thoughts and opinions, and he despised being treated as if his own feelings were less than others just because they weren't the 'norm'.

He wasn't going to let himself be a doormat and allow James to brush this shit under the carpet. Harry had more self-respect than that, and James was going to have to actually ask for proper forgiveness first, that is if he even realised he'd been a twat. Judging from his letter he really didn't see the problem.

*“So, I kind of might have told Mum and Dad that I love you and we’re getting married after school. Sorry about that, but it’s totally fine, they seem pretty happy with it actually. Anyway ...”*

That was it. That was all the fucker said about it, and Harry was *not* happy with the git. It was funny – in a twisted way – that people assumed soulmates were some sort of romantic Holy Grail, but all that meant was that you were stuck with them for good if you met them. Oh sure, they really were the perfect other half and you’d be the happiest you could ever with them, but what people seemed to forget was that this consisted of taking two human beings – who the majority of the time did *not* know each other all – and force them to start a romantic relationship no matter what was going on at the time. They could already be in a relationship, personalities had to find a way to blend, and compromises had to be made to ensure the couple got along with one another.

The problem with James was that he really and truly couldn’t understand what Harry was going through. *I suppose that’s also my fault.* James had never properly seen Harry during his worst moments because Harry had gone decades having no support and now found it really fucking hard to open up physically. He might have told James the truth, but the other hadn’t *seen* the reality.

*So ... maybe James isn’t totally at fault here. But he still went and made that decision without me when I asked him not to do stuff like that. He ignored me and that ... that fucking hurts, shitty arsehole.*

Harry rolled over and buried his face into the sofa cushions, inhaling the scent of whatever candles had been lit in the room earlier. *Lavender, maybe?*

“Henry?”

He lifted his head to see Melissa – and it was so weird having an actual blood relative that cared for him – looking at him with a frown. His cousin was such a genuine woman and he almost felt guilty for taking over Henry’s body, but he supposed actually having Henry’s memories meant he was still this woman’s cousin in some way. Or maybe that was his selfish desire to have a family speaking, who knew?

Melissa Johnson was quite tall for a woman at 5’8” - and annoyingly taller than Harry had ever been before – and had the same slightly-curled black locks that Harry now had, but she had dark-brown eyes and a slight caramel tone to her skin from her paternal African-American heritage a few generations back. Harry had no doubt the curvaceous woman would be inundated with romantic gestures now she was going out in public once more; Melissa was gorgeous to a blind man.

She cocked her head to the side. “Are you okay? You haven’t been looking like yourself, is something wrong?”

*Yeah, I’m not really the same cousin I was before, I have a shitty soulmate who likes doing whatever he wants, and though I really don’t want to admit it, part of this goddamn mess is probably my own bloody fault.* Not that he was going to say that to Melissa, she didn’t

deserve to be the focus of his awful temper when she had nothing to do with his foul mood.  
*Although ...*

Harry looked her in the eye. "Can I ask you something?"

Melissa blinked and sat down in the chair across from him with a determined look on her face. "You can ask me anything, you know that."

"If ... say if you have a friend – like a really close friend – and the two of you decide not to do anything without each other – like make decisions on important things – but then your friend does do something, how do you even trust them again? But also ... what if you knew that they didn't even really know why it upset you, like, they didn't understand why doing something like that would make you hurt?"

Harry knew full well he was rambling like a child but he couldn't really help himself. He just wanted to get things sorted without his temper or James' stubborn nature get in the way. Others might see Harry as the more passive one of the two, but he only needed to remember how awful he'd been in fifth year to know he had a tendency to lash out vindictively when he was angry. He might've been a rather apathetic man before he was reborn, but his fiery temper was still there and popped up when someone really and truly pissed him off.

"I think," his cousin began slowly, "that you and this friend need to have a proper conversation about what the idea of trust means to the pair of you. Personally – and this isn't because I'm your cousin, either – I think the other person is more in the wrong than you. I can see fault in both parties, but this friend knew that you trusted them not to do something and did so anyway. Even if they didn't know exactly why you didn't want them to, that doesn't excuse the fact that they broke your trust."

Melissa sighed and smiled wryly. "But what do I know? I'm just an outsider." The woman leaned over and gently ran her fingers through his hair, and Harry felt his eyes slide shut as he soaked up the comfort. "I'd recommend writing a letter so you can get your points across properly. A face-to-face conversation might give a better indication of your mood and the general emotions involved, but people have a tendency to say and do things in the heat of the moment that they don't really mean. Taking your time with a letter should help you to think things through and figure out exactly what you want to tell this friend."

There was a beat of silence. "Or you could just tell me who upset you and I can make their life a living hell."

Harry snorted before he started laughing, burying his face into the cushions below him to muffle his hysterical cackles. As he carried on laughing in the quiet room, joined by the infectious giggles of his older cousin, Harry could almost feel the tension start to bleed from his shoulders. Things weren't solved by any stretch of the imagination but he was sure things would get there eventually.

He wasn't going to lose his soulmate because of a lack of communication.

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Harry looked out his window and sighed for what was probably the hundredth time in the past hour. He knew full well that the owl to James was going to take a while to get back with a reply, but he still couldn't sit still and act like nothing was wrong.

*Fuck it. I'll just think about something else for now.* He turned back to the contents of his desk and pulled out a sheet of parchment that was already covered in scribbles, and he forcefully tore his mind away from his soulmate to think about one of the other many issues of this time period.

Harry knew that despite all the shit that had happened in his life he still had something of a 'saving people thing' as Hermione had once deemed it. He also knew that despite having complicated feelings towards a certain few individuals he still wanted to help them escape their own shitty situations.

The main issue he was thinking about was Severus Snape. He knew his most-hated professor had grown up in an abusive household after his pure-blood mother had run away and married a drunken, violent muggle. Eileen Prince had been disinherited for her actions, though he wasn't sure if those actions carried over to her son. Disinheriting someone was messy business and there were different ways it could happen; who knew what had happened with Snape's mother.

The House of Prince was actually very diminished from what it had once been, and other than Snape there hadn't been any other child born in close to three decades. Lord Prince might not be acknowledging his daughter, but his grandson was still a member of the family despite his muggle father. Snape was probably the only opportunity for them to actually survive into the next generation; he certainly couldn't ever remember hearing anything about the Prince family as Harry Potter.

The problem was his personal feelings: Harry *hated* the Severus Snape of his time. The man might have saved his life numerous times but that didn't excuse everything he'd done to Harry. Bullied him, mocked him, physically hurt him, ripped his mental defences apart ... He could go on and on about how Severus Snape was a bastard, and he still couldn't believe that Ginny had wanted to name their son after that arsehole. (Thankfully that argument had been one that he'd actually won, thank fuck for that. 'Albus Severus'? If he ever needed evidence the woman was touched in the head, that suggestion would be more than enough.)

Snape hadn't been a nice man, and no matter what anyone said about his role in the war he hadn't been a good man. If Harry hadn't been the son of Lily Evans the bastard wouldn't have done jack shit to help anyone. If Neville had been the one chosen to fight, Snape would have fucked off and left the poor sod without any help whatsoever. He'd been a bully that terrorised innocent children instead of teaching them. He'd used children as proxies for the abuse he couldn't direct at their dead or absent parents that he hated. He'd been a wanker, plain and simple.

The problem was that the Severus Snape he currently knew was a child.

As a child that had been abused himself he couldn't in good conscience sit back and let it carry on, even if the person in question was the child version of someone he hated with every fibre of his being. He couldn't judge the Severus Snape of this time period by the actions his



older self had carried out, even if Harry genuinely struggled to separate them from one another. A child was a child though, and no child deserved to live in such horrible conditions.

Hence why he was temporarily embracing his Slytherin self.

He knew there wasn't exactly anything he could do to help Snape by himself despite his future knowledge, even if James were to help him. Short of permanently 'removing' Tobias Snape from the house he didn't really have the ability to change the Snape family, and he didn't exactly want to become a murderer at the age of eleven. The only other option would be for Snape to live with someone else, which is where Harry's idea spawned from.

The only other family he could think of was the Prince family but Harry wasn't sure how they would react to looking after a half-blood child whose father was a muggle. The Princes weren't the wealthiest or most prestigious but they were still old blood. The majority of their members were pure-bloods, with the few half-bloods still having two magical parents. Blood purity was still a valid concern for the House of Prince and Harry had been worried they would simply ignore the situation.

So Harry had decided to more-or-less blackmail them.

Harry knew he was being an arsehole but he supposed hanging around James so much would have rubbed off on him eventually, and considering he was actually trying to help someone he couldn't bring himself to feel too bad about his actions. He'd composed a brief but damning letter that sounded vaguely accusing to Lord Prince, mentioning how sad it was that the House of Prince had been so lax in monitoring their family that a member of their venerated House had managed to grow up in squalor while being abused, his own grandson even.

It sounded so poncey and snobbish, but the kicker was a flat and to-the-point warning that this information would be shared with the Daily Prophet if they didn't remove the child from his house and help him. Not that Harry would be so callous as to splash Snape's childhood across the front page of the newspaper, but hopefully it would be enough of an incentive for Lord Prince to get his arse in gear and do something to help his grandson.

James would probably – once they got over this current mess – moan about him helping Snape, but months ago even he'd begrudgingly agreed that no child should be treated like that. James was still furious over Harry's treatment and Harry hoped his hot-headed soulmate wouldn't do something that would land him in Azkaban before he even hit his teens. No matter how he thought this through, this was different from James nonchalantly confessing he loved Harry to his parents. Some people thought spontaneity kept things interesting, but Harry honestly wanted to throttle the twat at the moment.

Unless things got sorted quickly Harry was going to start sleeping in his own bed at Hogwarts. *See how the git likes that!* Yeah, he supposed it would upset him a little too, but it wasn't as if he could do something like withhold sex; their pre-puberty bodies weren't really cooperative in that regard.

Honestly, just because he was well on his way to being in love with the tosser didn't mean James Potter didn't make him want to slam his own head against a wall more often than not.

Or James' head. He was certainly leaning towards the latter at this moment in time.

Harry sighed and thought about his soulmate. He hoped things were going okay with him; he might be angry and annoyed at him right now but he didn't want anything to happen to the idiot. What he was doing wasn't exactly simple, after all.

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James had never been more grateful for his ability to effortlessly spout bullshit than the moment he was stood face-to-face with his Slytherin Black mother trying to boldly lie to her face without her noticing.

He supposed it was lucky that he wasn't truly lying but rather twisting the truth to his needs, especially because the woman that had birthed him had the uncanny ability to sniff out a lie a mile away. It was bloody weird if you asked James, but he had enough common sense not to say anything like that where she could hear. His father might be an easy-going Gryffindor but he had enough sense to impart that very useful knowledge to his son.

This wasn't exactly a situation that many people ever wanted to be in, but having powerful and proactive parents certainly helped to avoid figuring out a complex plan that could quickly go to shit. James had always known he could go to his parents for information about anything he wanted, even if that included something others might deem too 'dark' or scandalous.

Which meant he could use his parents to get rid of the Horcrux and Voldemort.

He and Harry had spoken at length about trying to figure how to get rid of the Dark Tossler, but knowing how and who can destroy him and arranging for it to happen were two entirely different things.

(Well, they'd spoken before he had well and truly fucked things up by practically shattering the already-fragile trust of his soulmate and essentially spitting in his face after the other had asked him not to do something like that. *Way to fucking go James, it wasn't as if the bloke who you're meant to be with completely bared his soul for you and hoped you wouldn't fuck him over like so many others. Oh wait, he did, and you still screwed him over by ignoring the one fucking thing he asked of you.* Quite frankly, if he didn't have to do the Voldemort shit right now, he'd be begging Harry via letter to have the floo password to Mors Hall so he could get on his hands and knees and beg for forgiveness. Though even that wasn't really enough; Harry deserved so much more than that.)

Unfortunately the Horcrux and Voldemort *were* still a problem, and trying to make up for his shitty actions was going to have to wait. Neither he nor Harry could just waltz into the bank with a Horcrux because the goblins would notice what it was – or at least realise how vile the thing was – and would probably try and kill them without giving them a chance to speak. Also, one of them writing to the bank wouldn't exactly work either. How could they explain how two eleven-year-old children knew what a Horcrux was? Not all goblins were trustworthy and would keep quiet, and that wasn't the sort of recognition they wanted. Despite he and Harry both being Heirs, the Potter and Peverell families were currently under the control of Charlus and Melissa respectively, and the goblins overseeing their accounts would inform their guardians on principle.

Telling a guardian was a different matter entirely.

Despite heading a light family, Charlus Potter wasn't exactly a supporter of Dumbledore, and his mother vocally despised the Headmaster because of his prejudiced views on dark magic. They weren't the sort of people who would encourage their son to go the old man with any of his problems at school, instead preferring him to write them and get their opinions.

James had written home at the beginning of November to let his parents know he'd 'found' an old artefact that felt really bad even for dark magic and asked them what to do with it. As expected, his reply had said to bring it home over the Yule break so they could take it to Gringotts for examination. His father had made an actual appointment with the bank who were aware they were bringing something questionable in to the building; the goblins couldn't go mad and kill them seeing as they'd warned them in advance, and soon enough the Dark Tosser would spontaneously die without anyone realising.

*Take that, Dumblefuck.*

But first he had to just slightly twist his words around so his parents weren't looking at him suspiciously for having had a *Horcrux* in his possession.

“Son, exactly how did you find a piece of someone's *soul*?”

Charlus Potter looked grim-faced, his mum looked faintly nauseous, and the goblin across the desk was all but foaming at the mouth as he glared at James. He resisted the urge to snort and roll his eyes; *he* wasn't the one who'd thought it a good idea to shred his soul into pieces because he was an arrogant psycho.

“There's a hidden room on the seventh floor, Harry and I found it when we were exploring. We've been trying to find as many secret passages and whatnot as we can. We found out if you walk past the tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy three times while thinking of what you need, the room appears as whatever you ask for.

“We asked one of the house-elves and they told us there was a room where they throw junk away and where things get hidden. We decided to look around and we realised there are loads of things in the room. I found some cupboard that looked like a Vanishing Cabinet before I found that thing sitting on top,” he explained, nodding to the cursed diadem on the desk.

“Harry ended up grabbing me because I'd started to put it on without realising. When I felt okay again we realised the thing felt really wrong, so we decided to leave and I wrote to you. Then I put it in the box you sent me to bring it home.”

*There, simple and to the point.* He actually *had* been slightly ensnared by the Horcrux, so he wasn't exactly lying. The only real lie in his explanation was that he and Harry had discovered the room by themselves, and there wasn't really any way to prove him wrong.

His father cleared his throat and turned to the goblin. “So, what happens now?”

“Nothing for you. The goblin nation will now cleanse the object of its taint and destroy the person responsible for tearing themselves into several pieces and violating the most sacred

laws of magic. Disgusting is what they are,” muttered the goblin sharply.

“Excuse me?” his mother interrupted with alarm on her face. “Did you just say 'several'?”

The goblin (*what was his name again?*) looked the woman in the eye. “Indeed. I can tell from the feeling this object emits that this individual has done this more than once.”

Amidst the feelings of disgust and bewilderment of said person's complete and total idiocy at shredding themselves to pieces, the Potter trio were ushered from the bank with haste by the goblins, and the small family were soon back in Diagon Alley sans Horcrux.

“James.”

He looked up to see serious hazel eyes locked onto his own. “Dad?”

“I'm sure you understand and this warning is unnecessary, but I want to make sure you remember not to mention what you heard to anyone else. That information is too dangerous to spread around.”

James nodded and made sure to keep the serious expression on his face. He didn't think his parents would appreciate him cackling madly in the middle of such an important conversation.

After a moment the family of three were strolling down the alley looking just as carefree as always. Nobody around them had any idea they'd just delivered something so vile to the bank, and certainly nobody had any idea they'd just expedited the end of the war before it could truly begin, including his parents. This was *definitely* something he'd be keeping quiet on for the rest of his life; his family didn't need to know that the nearly two-dozen members of the House of Potter would have been reduced to just him in the space of nine years.

James smirked to himself, imagining what old Snake Face was going to do when he suddenly started to die without any warning or idea of what was going on. It was a shame he wouldn't be able to see it with his own eyes. Nobody got away with hurting Harry. His mind flashed back to the pain-filled letter he'd received the day before and grimaced. *That includes me.* He'd hurt his own soulmate and it was up to him to do something about it, even if he had to grovel like a dog; it wasn't as if he didn't deserve it. He turned and looked up at his mother.

“Hey, Mum. Do you think you could help me with something?”

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Harry looked around the grounds of Potter Manor, trying to figure out where his errant soulmate was and what the fuck he was even doing out here to begin with. Getting a letter practically begging for him to come over was one thing, but coming through the floo to see Lady Dorea Potter smirking at him with an amused glint in her eyes was just bizarre. Her words weren't exactly much help, either.

*“Just head out back and I'm sure you'll figure out the trail.”*

*What bloody trail?* He hoped she wasn't talking about that oversized hedge-maze fifty feet away, because he really couldn't be arsed with trying to puzzle his way through to the middle or other side or wherever the fuck he was supposed to go. He thought James wanted to talk to him, not ... *this*.

Suddenly he heard a soft pop like elf Apparition and he turned towards the imposing maze, spotting a splash of colour by the opening that stood out from the lush green. He made his way over to the structure and looked at the object on the floor before bending down and picking it up. It was a flower. Well, more like a cluster of small flowers that all sprouted from the stem underneath. The deep purple colour had the slightest tinge of blue, and Harry took a moment to admire the plant despite his confusion. He really wasn't sure what the hell it was doing there. *Unless ...*

Harry could feel his pulse speed up and swallowed reflexively at the seemingly-innocuous flowers in his grasp. He might have been rather blasé concerning etiquette and typical pure-blood knowledge, but that didn't mean he was unaware of it. Years ago, he'd educated himself on all manner of topics out of sheer boredom and floriography had been one of them. He scoured through his knowledge of flowers and their meanings before he came to the right one, causing his heart to skip a beat.

*Purple hyacinths. Please forgive me.*

This was ... James Potter wasn't someone who was invested in traditions and expressions of emotion, so the very fact that he'd put so much thought into this made Harry smile despite himself. On the one hand he wanted to hold onto his anger and scorn the gesture, but the other – and larger – part of himself missed James. He wasn't going to brush the disagreement under the carpet and forgive the other immediately, because the two of them really *did* need to sit down and have a proper discussion concerning their relationship, but Harry took the hyacinths as a sign that things could be fixed without too much hassle.

Out the corner of his eye Harry saw another colour, paler this time, further into the maze, stuck in the hedge at the end of the first pathway. In a bit of a daze, he drifted towards the new flower still clutching the purple hyacinths until he saw the small white flower in the hedge. He pulled it out.

*Star of Bethlehem. Atonement, reconciliation.*

*Jesus Christ, he really is going all out, isn't he?* Harry took a deep breath and let it out shakily, adding the new flower to the others, almost as if it was the start of a small bouquet. As the idea sprung to mind he lifted his head and surveyed the maze, and as he thought, down the left pathway in the fork sat another piece of flora placed in the hedge, leading further into the maze.

The pattern continued as he followed the flowers and plants, each of them leading him into what he thought was the centre of the maze as he picked up more things for his makeshift bouquet.

*Bluebells, humility and constancy ...* James understood what he'd done wrong ...

*... filbert for reconciliation and flowering almonds for hope ... he wants to fix this ...*

*... calendula for considering something sacred ...* Harry felt his heart thud at what his soulmate might consider sacred at this time ...

*... allium, unity, humility and patience ... again recognising his faults, though acknowledging patience is something we need ...*

*... satin-flowers for sincerity ...* James wasn't messing with him, this was real ...

*... celandine, future joy ...* he swallowed at the definitive desire for a future together ...

*... lungwort meaning 'thou art my life' ...* Harry didn't think *anyone* had ever cherished him quite like this ...

He turned a corner and came to the centre of the maze, the large circular clearing clearly marked by the beautiful gazebo sat in the middle. The structure was made of white wood, pristine-looking despite the fact it was probably years old, surrounded by a low fence of swirling wrought-iron and covered by curling ivy. The plant had grown up all the wooden pillars around the gazebo and even around the edge of the roof, but inside was what made Harry's chest tight.

James was sat on a burgundy blanket in the gazebo, surrounded by boxes and plates of food and drink, every single one of them something that Harry preferred above all others. Aside from the impromptu picnic, his soulmate was holding up a single stem as he sat cross-legged, several sky-blue flowers blooming from it and all but smacking Harry over the face with emotions.

*Forget-me-nots, for faithfulness and true love.*

Harry drew in a breath and let it out slowly trying to control himself, though considering how shaky it was he wasn't exactly in complete control of himself. This was ... everything about this was just making him choke up, trying to come to terms with the truths he was being shown here.

He and James were soulmates, yes, but that didn't mean that James *had* to be so romantic towards him. Their relationship was practically a forgone conclusion at this point considering the bond couldn't be broken in any way – not that Harry had wanted to, no matter how upset he'd been – so nothing had to really be done except negotiate the future of their relationship. Nothing about being soulmates meant that you had to carry out romantic gestures or even apologise for upsetting the other party. Once soulmates met they were going to be together, end of discussion, and there was no obligation to try and ease any upset caused.

James had done this of his own volition.

That thought went a long way to soothing his feelings of betrayal, and even though the issue was nowhere near resolved, Harry sent a soft smile towards James and wandered over to the gazebo, stepping inside the wooden hideout and settling down on the blanket across from the other boy. He leaned over and plucked the forget-me-nots from James, belatedly noticing the

thin white ribbon around the stem and grinning, spending a few moments using the ribbon to tie all his newly-acquired flowers together. Not all the colours and shapes of the plants went together aesthetically, but his knowledge of the meanings behind them was more than enough to make up for the jumbled physicality.

A hand appeared in his vision and told hold of his left one, gripping it gently and raising it before a soft kiss was pressed to his left ring finger.

“I’m sorry.”

Harry looked up to see his soulmate fidgeting where he sat with an expression of indecision on his face. Eventually he sighed and dropped their hands to the floor, though he kept hold of Harry’s hand and threaded their fingers together.

“I’m an asshole, Harry. I’ve always been an asshole, and frankly by this point I don’t know how to be anything but. I was spoiled and adored by my parents, the professors let me get away with murder for some reason, and there was no shortage of people fawning over me growing up. I wasn’t punished for anything I did, and everything just fanned the flames of my growing ego until I ended up a self-entitled prick that didn’t have a single serious thought about life. I never cared about hurting people because to me, in the grand scheme of things, they didn’t matter unless they were my parents.

“Except for you. You’re the most important person to me, regardless of the soulmate thing, because you actually know what a twat I am and for some bloody reason you accepted me. You never asked me to change, you didn’t try and control me, and I honestly can’t figure out why you’d even be receptive to me to begin with. I wasn’t going to question it, though. You wanting me was bloody brilliant.”

James clenched his eyes shut, shoulders tensing slightly. “I took advantage of that. I saw the fact that we were soulmates and therefore bound together anyway as an excuse that I had no boundaries and could do what I wanted. I mean, my parents were open-minded and they were going to find out eventually, so why not just tell them now and get it over with? I didn’t have a proper motivation, I just thought it’d be funny and you’d see the funny side of it.

“I broke your trust,” he bit out, leaning forward so his forehead was leaning on their clasped hands. “You asked me not to say anything without discussing it and I did it anyway. I can’t explain how ... how fucking *shitty* I am, and I’m sorry. I’m so, *so* sorry for doing that. I just ... I wanted to show you off, but I did something you didn’t want, and even if I don’t quite get your problems I should have known you wouldn’t ask me something like that without reason. You’re – you’re fucking amazing, you know? I know I don’t deserve you – never will in a million years – but I don’t want to lose you because of my own shitty actions. I *can’t*.

“I’m sorry.”

Harry listened to the words of his soulmate – the soulmate who was a hell of a lot more self-aware than Harry had given him credit for – and couldn’t help but appreciate the candid words. James knew he was a git, knew he’d fucked up, and he understood it was the simple act of going behind Harry’s back that was the issue. He knew exactly what he’d done to upset

Harry and felt remorse for his actions. Perhaps a bit more than simple remorse if the feeling of tears on the back of Harry's hand was anything to go by.

He didn't want to hold this against James by not accepting his heartfelt apology. His soulmate had fucked up good and proper but was at least mature enough to figure out how and where he'd screwed up and understand that was something he needed to work on. Honestly, for someone that had gone from a spoilt teenager to dying at just twenty-one, James was remarkably lacking in rose-coloured glasses concerning his personality.

The two of them were both fucked up in their own ways, and things weren't going to be smooth sailing all the way, but Harry wasn't going to sit back and let their relationship fall apart when he truly cared for James.

"I don't like people controlling my life."

Harry's words made James twitch, and though he didn't lift his head Harry knew he was listening.

"My entire life has been fucked up by people trying to control me. Trelawney's prophecy made Dumbledore want to control me, so much so that he ensured I grew up ignorant of everything I needed to know. The Dursleys controlled everything I could do or eat or say, hell, even what I could think. The adults around me all seemed to think they could control what information was given to me, as if I had no clue myself what was appropriate to know about myself.

"My friends," he began slowly with a frown, "they all wanted to control what 'Harry Potter' should be. Sure, they might have acted like they cared about me, but the only real importance I had to them was in relation to how I made them look. I was the famous friend who had to be less intelligent to make Hermione feel better about herself. I was the celebrity who hung out with Ron to make himself seem more important. I was the 'hero' that saved Ginny, the perfect target for her fairy tale happily-ever-after that would make everyone jealous of her.

"Nobody gave a shit about me as a person."

He sighed and squeezed James' hand. "You were the first person to look at me as a person that you wanted and you were interested in personally. Even if it was just the soulmate angle at first, you latched onto me as a person and asked me questions, got to know me and took an interest without any of my baggage influencing you. To you, I wasn't the miraculous survivor of the Killing Curse, or the defeater of Voldemort, or even the Head of two prestigious Houses, I was just Harry and I was ecstatic to have you treat me that way.

"That's why it fucking hurt when you told your parents," Harry explained softly. "You were really and truly the first person to treat me as my own human being – even Sirius and Remus saw me as James' son – and then you went behind my back like that. Yeah, I can imagine it was kind of funny for you, but you were the person I trusted not to screw me over by taking away my control. I've been screwed over so many times as Harry Potter that I decided Henry Peverell was going to live how he wanted without anyone making decisions for him."



Harry blew air out his mouth and grimaced. "I suppose then there's my problems. I've ... I haven't exactly hidden them from you, but handling things myself has just become so ingrained in my life over the past few decades that it's hard to let people in. When I have flashbacks or nightmares I know to hunker down somewhere and be quiet so I don't disturb anyone, I don't draw attention to my eating habits and I clean only when I'm alone so people don't realise how ... messed up I am. I don't think my mental state is all that attractive, to be honest," he finished with a sharp and bitter laugh.

"Don't say that."

Harry looked across to see James sat up and hazel eyes boring intensely into his, his soulmate's other hand now cupping his cheek and rubbing gently with his thumb. Harry swallowed at the look directed his way and willed himself not to cry. He might be in the body of a child but he was a grown adult; he had better control of himself than this.

"There's nothing – I mean *nothing* – wrong with you. You had a horrendous childhood, spent your teens being hunted by a crazy madman, fought a war at seventeen, and got forced into a marriage without your self-centred bitch of a wife lifting a single finger to help sort out your problems which she would have noticed had she not been such a selfish cow!

"Do you have *any* idea how strong you are to have come out the other side of that a kind and genuine person?" James murmured. "I'm bloody honoured to be able to say that you're my soulmate, and I know damn well I don't deserve you in the slightest. This mess has just proven that," he sorted self-depreciatingly.

"James –"

"I'm a wanker, I know that, and I'm going to spend as long as it takes to get you to forgive me. I'm going to read every single thing I can on your problems, I'm going to make sure I talk to you about everything when I get an idea, and I'm never going to try and control you. I know I fucked up, but I need you to know that me spilling the beans had *nothing* to do with wanting to control you. I might be a bastard, but that's one thing I've never wanted nor tried to do."

Harry leaned into the hand on his cheek and turned his head, pressing a small kiss to James' thumb before facing him head on again. "I know this situation isn't nearly as resolved as I'd like it to be but I should probably start by saying I do forgive you, or at least I'm working towards it. It's a work in progress but I want to get there. I probably won't be forgetting things any time soon, but I don't want to lie to you and just sweep things under the carpet or I'll end up silently resenting you or something, and that won't do either of us any good."

James slumped and a small smile broke through on his face, though the expression was tinged with bitterness directed inwards. "Thank you. Honestly, I have no idea where I'd be without you."

Harry thought about making a joke or something to lighten the tension, but in the wake of the recent confessions it seemed in poor taste to cheapen the fragile resolutions. He wanted something to cement their reconciliation, but the only thing he could think of was another confession that practically gave him heart palpitations from sheer nerves.

He supposed it was something that would be revealed eventually, and if said now it had the potential to expedite the removal of their current awkwardness and get their relationship back on track. He was mature enough to recognise that any declaration wasn't going to make them forget this first argument or get in the way of their future discussions, so now it was just a case of finding his annoyingly-elusive Gryffindor courage and determining whether or not he had the guts to come clean.

*Come on Harry, you can do this. You were put in the House of the brave twice now, that has to count for something ...*

Harry took a deep breath and let it out slowly, lifting his free hand to lay it over the one James still had on his face, his other gripping James tightly – probably *too* tightly – and trembling a little. Not the best impression he could give, but at least James seemed to recognise Harry was serious right now.

“I don't want us to drag out fixing things because I miss us sending letters and messing around and whatnot. Long story short, I care about you and I miss you.

“I ... I love you, James.”

James seemed to freeze before his eyes, hands stilling and breathing ceasing entirely, the only indication of life in the frantic pulse Harry could feel in his soulmate's wrist. Harry was tempted to start hoping and praying for the ground to swallow him whole or if he could just run away, straight through the hedges instead of around if need be, but he knew that them not talking things through properly was the reason for their problems to begin with.

His thoughts were cut off by a pair of lips slamming forcefully and possessively onto his, arms slipping around his waist to drag him into James' lap as kisses were pressed with fervour to his lips. A familiar tongue found its way to his lips and teased the seam before slipping inside Harry's willing mouth, sliding over every inch it could to taste him, feel him as their ragged breath mingled inside their mouths.

James' hands slid down Harry's sides and found their way under his winter coat and shirt, fingers teasing the thin waist before dipping his fingers just slightly down the back of Harry's trousers and pulling Harry's smaller body closer into his lap. His lips were just as greedy, practically drowning Harry's mouth as he snogged him breathless, carrying on until neither of them could go another second without fresh air.

“Do you have *any* idea what you do to me?” James gasped, eyes bright with emotion. “I swear you do this on purpose. Jesus Christ Harry, of *course* I love you, too. I don't care that you're my soulmate, or that you're the only other person in this time who knows the future, you're the only one who's tried to help me be a better person without trying to change me. You're kind, caring, generous to people – even evil gits like Snivellus – strong in person and physically and you always see the best in people.

“I could sit here all day and still be nowhere near done explaining why you're so fucking great, but the simple truth is you are, and I don't think I can ever quite explain how lucky I feel to have fallen in love with you.”

Harry could feel tears in his eyes, but instead of paying attention to them he just beamed at James, trying to convey just how much those words meant to him. Their relationship wasn't perfect by any stretch of the imagination, but if anything having a massive disagreement and not falling apart made it more substantial, more *real*. They were a proper couple and Harry was ecstatic.

This time he was the one that started the over-enthusiastic kiss, and even though nothing physical was happening for them he felt giddy with elation.

They were happy together, and in the end that was kind of the point.

## Chapter End Notes

Hey guys!

So ... did this chapter completely throw off the tone of the story? I was originally going to make it lighthearted and funny, but I just kept writing and writing (as seen by the word count lol) and this is how it turned out. On the one hand this is a funny fic, but on the other I didn't want to make fun of something that is genuinely a serious issue, not only in fiction. People might have thought Harry to be over-reacting, but I hope I got across his reasons for how he felt and why he reacted that way. Hopefully.

Sorry if I got any of the flower meanings wrong, I was consulting a floriography site as I wrote the chapter, so if anything's wrong it's entirely their fault lol. But seriously, this isn't something I've ever been taught so there might be mistakes.

I'm not sure how many of you following this story follow my other works, but for those of you who aren't I've been experiencing a disturbing lack of motivation combined with long work hours and a stupidly-strict update schedule I set myself, so my enjoyment of writing has taken a rather sharp dive recently. I might have to have longer between updates just to get everything out properly without killing myself, and it's only because I REALLY don't want to go on a hiatus that I'm doing things this way. It won't be much longer, but I'm afraid real life and my health are going to have to come first.

Sorry for these stupidly-long notes but I don't want to keep you guys in the dark. I hope you liked the chapter and I'll see you next time.

Happy reading!

# Growing up or growing down?

## Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*Something's different.*

Sirius stared and stared at the objects of his focus, but no matter how long he sat there and looked, studied them and pondered the ins and outs of the situation, he just couldn't put his finger on exactly what had happened to change things so irrevocably yet simultaneously so subtly. It was ... *weird*. And just plain bizarre, if he was being perfectly honest.

Before the Yule break, James and Henry had been attached at the hip as they had been since even before the start of term when they met on the train, yet there'd always been this high-strung energy around them and their interactions. James was hyper and more than a little perverted (to Sirius' never-ending stress; he still had a migraine thinking about his cousin's lecherous actions) and he was always prowling around like he needed to defend Henry and would do so viciously without any provocation.

On the other hand, Henry had been both shy yet sure of himself, almost walking on eggshells around James wondering how he'd be received despite the casual nonchalance he aimed at everyone else. Henry Peverell had seemed desperate for James' attention but also unsure if the attention he received was genuine, yet now both he and Sirius' cousin seemed to have undergone some sort of life-altering change and he couldn't figure out what the hell was going on with them.

*Merlin, why the hell are they are so ... calm?*

And they *were*, sitting there so calmly and quietly as they ignored their surroundings, which was *really* freaking him out. James had massively toned down the possessive behaviour and now seemed content with his place at Henry's side, while the Peverell appeared to be silently happy and practically glowed whenever James was around. Which was pretty much all the bloody time considering Sirius couldn't remember a single instance when he'd seen them apart, but he was getting off track.

He couldn't understand how his classmates were so different all of a sudden. Well, not so much Henry because he was already fairly reserved and put-together on any given day, but seeing James quietly sitting next to Henry with his nose buried in a book and no sign of a conflict or prank or any other disruption on the horizon was stressing him out. James didn't do quiet, he did practical jokes and sharp verbal barbs and *oh bloody hell, he's managed to find a wand. Dad, do something NOW!*

(He told himself he'd forget that incident, and Magic be *damned* he was going make sure his brain never remembered that even if he had to learn how to Obliviate himself.)

The point was, Sirius was freaking out because James *had* to be planning something. Sure, it was kind of weirdly sweet that he was being so courteous and gentle towards Henry without slipping in a plethora of panic-inducing innuendos that made Sirius want to induce amnesia in any way possible, but it wasn't normal to see the other boy so caring and kind and *what are you up to?!*

"Sirius?"

He turned to see a slightly bewildered Remus blinking down at him from his place standing next to Sirius. The other boy was holding an oversized leather-bound book (one that Sirius vaguely recognised as the one they needed for their Potions essay), studying Sirius slumped over his breakfast with a faint look of worry in his green eyes.

"Remus," he nodded wearily. "He's planning something, no doubt about it."

His fellow Ravenclaw blinked confusedly and cocked his head. "Who's planning something?"

"James!" Sirius hissed. "Look at him! You might not know him as well as I do, but you can't deny him sitting over there reading a book with what seems to be actual interest while apparently not causing mayhem is normal! Something's changed, and it's freaking me out!"

"... Sirius, are you sure you don't need a Calming Draught?"

The Black slumped into the table face-first, paying no heed to the scrambled eggs now in the ends of his hair. "Why does he always do this? It's like every year at the Black reunion where all the cousins come over; not one year has the git not traumatised one person or another. He's always messing around and creating panic and mischief, but I thought I'd be safe here at school.

"Why am I not safe here?!" he wailed into the table.

Sirius Black knew something was different with his cousin and the unusually-quiet Gryffindor his cousin had decided to target in various and unknown means. (And a very, *very* large part of him was infinitely grateful he didn't know exactly how James was attempting to get close to his Housemate; he could do without the mental trauma from imagining *that*.) The issue was that he had no bloody clue what was happening with his deranged cousin – and now he thought about it, it was a little sad that that description could apply to a lot of his relatives – or what this could mean for him.

He was much closer to his family without Walburga's poisonous influence and knew he was going to be Lord Black one day. He was going to be the Head of House Black, and as such it was going to be up to him to keep an eye on his entire family, whether they carried the Black name or not.

The boy sat up and nodded determinedly to himself, completely unaware of his best friend's wary and worried demeanour. He was a Black, the son of Heir Black, and he wasn't going to let things get out of control.

Sirius grinned. "I'm going to find out what he's up to!"

Remus Lupin just stared at his friend who had a maniacal grin on his face and sighed heavily, resisting the urge to ram the book he was holding against his own face and knock himself out. Or do the same to Sirius, he wasn't fussy. Their Potions essay wasn't getting done today, he just knew it. He was going to have to follow Sirius around the castle and make sure his Housemate didn't do anything stupid, or at least make sure he didn't get *caught* doing anything stupid. Remus wasn't sure he'd be able to actually stop the other boy from doing something completely mental to begin with.

He knew being friends with a Black was going to be insane.

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"James?"

"Hmm?"

"I've got a question."

"What's up?"

"Do you have any idea why Sirius and Remus have been following us around non-stop for the past two weeks?"

His hazel-eyed soulmate lifted his head and grinned at Harry, a wicked look glinting in his eyes as he seemed to recall something.

"Better than that, my darling other half. I don't have just an idea, I know exactly why."

James shifted on his bed and leaned back against the headboard with his arms crossed behind his head and his ankles crossed, smirking lazily at Harry. "Poor Padfoot and Moony don't hold the same brilliant knowledge my mind possesses of the secret passageways, and it's shockingly easier to spy on them now than when they were older; I'd forgotten how cute and simple they were," he muttered bemusedly before shaking his head. "Anyway, I followed them and it turns out that Sirius is basically freaking out because I've apparently 'calmed down' and I haven't pranked anyone. He seems to be under the impression that this is the quiet before the storm, so to speak. I am 'obviously' planning something big, and as always you're the innocent bystander that's been dragged into this dastardly plot by yours truly."

"... What."

Harry couldn't figure out what the fuck was going on, and James' roaring laughter wasn't helping matters any. He had no doubt James was right about the motive behind Sirius' recent stalking – he had no doubt poor Remus had been dragged along for the ride against his will –

but that didn't exactly help him make sense of things. What the bloody fuck was going through Sirius' mind to come to that conclusion?

He said as much to James and rolled his eyes at the taller boy's sniggering. "Jesus Christ, what the fuck did you do to the bloke? Have you traumatised him or something?"

"Something like that," James admitted with a wry grin.

"Do I even want to know?"

James patted the spot next to him and Harry pushed his book aside before crawling up next to the other, laying down with his head on James' chest. He snuggled closer at the feeling of James' arm working itself to wrap around his waist and hold him securely. It was a simple thing but Harry smiled all the same, feeling almost giddy at how much more secure their relationship was since the argument over the break. He wondered if that development was what had attracted the two of them a stalker in the form of a twelve-year-old Sirius Black.

"Sirius?" Harry asked, almost dreading the answer while also anticipating the awful humour he was sure would follow. (Yes, he was twisted, but he'd given up caring at this point.)

"Well, every year there's a reunion at Black Manor for all the members of the Black family, including the various cousins with Black blood. Well, most of them. The Weasleys don't go because Cedrella was disinherited, but the rest of them turn up for the day. It's literally the only time everyone gets together because most of the family hate each other. Arcturus and Pollux Black hate each other and tend to try and duel to the death whenever they're in the same room as each other, Alphard winds up his cousins by trying to shag their spouses – with more than a few successes, by the way – Cygnus attempts to marry his daughters off like cattle which ensures he's hated by every single woman of the family, and of course there's my mother who makes no secret of how much she despises nearly every single member of the family and repeatedly makes mention of how much she enjoys spending time with her disowned, Squib brother."

There was silence in the room as Harry tried to process that insanity. *Fucking hell, no wonder Sirius ran in the opposite direction without looking back. I would've too, and James didn't even mention the train wreck of a witch that was Walburga Black. If anything, Sirius was pretty well-adjusted for growing up raised by the crazy fuckers.*

Harry nodded slowly to himself. "Okay, the reunion is insane, I get that, but where does Sirius and his wariness towards you come in?"

"All the kids tend to get pushed together at the reunion, mostly to build alliances and hopefully find a spouse in those who aren't closely related to you," James explained with a grin. "Spouses aside, Sirius was almost constantly with me considering we were the same age, and well ... I've always liked playing pranks on people, and he actually used to be pretty quiet and shy as a kid, you wouldn't believe it, so ..."

"So you tormented the fuck out of him every single year you were there," Harry deadpanned. "Let me guess, you thought because you didn't see him that often, you'd have to go all out, too."

James beamed at him. "I knew there was a reason we were meant to be together!"

Harry snorted. "You're an idiot." He closed his eyes for a second, enjoying the quiet before a thought came to mind and he looked at James, frowning in thought. "If Sirius was so wary of you when he was a kid, why did he become such good friends with you and turn into a prankster himself?"

James hummed. "Walburga, if I had to guess. Seeing as last time she didn't die, Sirius never got the chance to get out from under her thumb and build a decent relationship with Orion. He was constantly tortured by that insane hag so he constantly rebelled against her. Even last time he made sure to be loud and happy, even when avoiding me. I think it was his childish version of getting one over on her. Then of course he ended up in Gryffindor and decided to go all out in saying 'fuck you' to his family and ended up my friend."

"But this time he's proud to be a Black, so the idea of you causing havoc is enough to give him heart palpitations so he's decided to follow you and discover whatever nefarious plan you have cooked up," Harry grinned, laughing at the hilarious irony of *Sirius Black* trying to stop a prankster. Things were bloody weird in this world.

Harry yelped as he was rolled over and found himself on his back and covered with a warm body as amused hazel eyes gazed down at him with warmth.

"You know, you make it sound as if I plan to do such horrible things all the time," James pouted.

"You do plan to do such horrible things all the time, or are you forgetting a certain rat?"

"That's different, he got me killed."

Before Harry could say something to question his soulmate's sanity – as he often did, seeing as the guy was a nutter on a good day – he felt teeth sink into his neck and gasped, jolting underneath James' body and grabbing his upper arms tightly.

"What are you doing?!" he hissed, worrying about the lack of silencing spells around the bed.

James lifted his head and grinned at him salaciously. "You don't think I didn't silence the bed as soon as we got here? And as to what I'm doing, I was trying to leave a rather lovely bite mark on the side of your neck. You know, a love bite? Hickey? A cute little mark that shows just who you belong to?"

Harry raised a brow. "I thought we already discussed being so possessive."

"Oh, it's not about letting other people see. It's because I know *you* like seeing the marks when you look in the mirror. I have to say, it's nice to see my work appreciated so much," the other boy purred while running his fingers up and down the sides of Harry's waist.

Harry blinked before smirking up at James. "I suppose I do appreciate them, but personally I'd rather have a few marks where nobody else can see them. You know, in private places."

Hazel eyes darkened. "Any preference?"



The green-eyed boy concentrated his magic and silently vanished his trousers, rather smug at the look of desire on his soulmate's face. He wiggled further up the bed a little before lifting a very flexible leg and wrapping it over James' shoulder and around the back of his neck, pulling and bringing James face-to-face with Harry's inner thigh, just inches from his crotch.

"Here would be nice."

At the first touch of a wet tongue Harry shivered and sighed, not for the first time wishing for a more powerful reaction.

Puberty couldn't come quick enough.

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*I wonder if it's possible to suffer from mental sexual frustration?*

James was, to put it plainly, horny. But thanks to their weird time travel-slash-dimension hopping, he was trapped in a prepubescent body that had absolutely no hormones for which he could act on said horniness. Just because his imagination was working at full speed to provide all sorts of lovely and extraordinarily filthy images of what he and his soulmate could be doing in the comfort of their beds didn't mean that his body was at all capable of carrying out those delightful sexual fantasies. He was frustrated without being able to do jack shit about it. He couldn't even have a proper wank, for fuck's sake!

He sighed, slumping over his Transfiguration essay in a way that would have ignited his mother's inner Black temper and earned a slap round the head with a book. (Dorea might have been downright docile in comparison to most of her relatives, but James was more than aware the crazy woman was a Black through and through. Not that he was stupid enough to say something like that in her vicinity, there was a reason his dad was respectfully wary of seeing his wife with a wand in hand.)

*It's not fair, I want Harry here!* His absolutely beautiful – and gorgeous, stunning, handsome, alluring, enticing, any description of that nature which made Harry turn a rather fetching shade of red when James described him as such – other half was unfortunately elsewhere right now, more than likely attempting to bond with Padfoot and Moony despite Padfoot's temporary insanity-fuelled stalking and trying and divert the Ravenclaws' attention elsewhere. Harry really was such a good person. Or he would have been if James hadn't heard the green-eyed boy muttering under his breath about hexing Sirius to make him talk in rhyme and or turn him into a girl with Gryffindor red hair.

James had almost shed a proud tear then and there.

The first year lifted his head and looked around the library, eyes settling on one of his peers as he tried not to grimace or curl his lip in disgust. *Snivellus*. He didn't care that it was probably childish to hold a grudge against a child version of someone you hated, but to be honest James didn't give a rat's arse about what he was 'supposed' to do right now. Snape was a snarky and vicious git, and just because he'd had a shitty home life didn't give him the right to become a nasty little twat. Harry hadn't become a vile little shit, and his childhood was a hundred times worse than that greasy git.

He himself might have been a bastard when younger – he wasn't *that* naïve, thank you very much – but he'd never tried to justify it by playing the victim. He was a prat because he got away with it, plain and simple. James wasn't proud of it, far from it when seeing things from Harry's perspective, but he wasn't going to lie and claim innocence or try and explain things away. To be quite frank, James had only targeted the Slytherin because it served to rile up both Snape and Evans, and their righteous anger was fucking hilarious to witness. If Snape hadn't retaliated or Evans started lecturing and nagging him, he would have gotten bored pretty quickly and left them for another target. But they didn't, so the old James Potter got his shits and giggles from messing with them in any way possible.

This James Potter funnily enough felt even more of an urge to fuck with the Slytherin across the room, but that had more to do with his newfound knowledge of just how badly he'd treated Harry during his life. For all his faults and vices, the one thing James could proudly say was that he only targeted people based on their own actions, not because they shared blood with someone. Some might have been shocked to know that James hadn't pranked every single person in a green tie no matter what. Regulus had been one example. His younger cousin hadn't ever done something to earn his ire, and even if he'd been a pureblood supremacist on some level he'd never lowered himself to target half-bloods or muggle-borns just to make himself feel superior. Regulus and he had never been close per se, but they'd definitely had an unspoken understanding pertaining to their actions; James pranked the fuck out of people that targeted either him or others for no reason, and Regulus only mocked and scorned those who were ignorant or biased concerning him or his family.

Neither of them were exactly noble, but they had standards, at least.

Severus Snape had no such standards and grew to be a man in his thirties that bullied orphaned children just because they were the offspring of people he hated. Harry especially had been screwed being the child of James Potter and Lily Evans; the son of the man Snivellus hated and the woman he loved and craved. Not that that excused the slimy bastard, seeing as Harry was *eleven* when that shit started. In no way, shape or form did that piece of shit have any moral high ground, and it galled James that the entire school had just sat back and let it happen just because they'd stupidly accepted it was the norm and that Albus Dumbledore was infallible. (Which he certainly was *not*, but if James started a mental soliloquy on that topic he'd be here all day and probably end up talking himself into trying to kill the manipulative old fucker, which wouldn't be the best course of action because Harry would be *pissed* at him, then Harry would *pout*, and James would feel inexplicably *guilty* then worse because his soulmate would probably refuse to sleep next to him, which meant *no*. Harry was *waaay* too important to ignore after that fuck-up over Yule.)

He couldn't do jack shit against the bastard, especially because Harry's hilariously blunt blackmail had worked with the House of Prince and the git sat thirty feet away was now named Severus Prince after having been adopted by his none-too-happy grandfather and instated as his family's heir. James scoffed under his breath. *What a load of crap. Snape or Prince, it doesn't matter what his name is, he's still a conniving fucker who'll kick anyone down the stairs to get what he wants.*

As far as James was concerned, being named Heir Prince would do nothing for Snivellus' attitude. He didn't care if the other boy was being abused, it didn't excuse being a selfish and

possessive wanker, and already he'd seen a smug gleam in the black eyes at being further up on the social totem pole, so to speak. If he had to go to balls and shit and socialise with the cretin, he might just embrace his Black heritage and partake in some good old-fashioned murder. *I wonder what Harry might say about that?*

“Sev!”

The high-pitched voice made James cringe and he watched as Evans ran over to her childhood friend with a grin, sitting down and getting straight into a rant about something. The other Slytherin simply gazed at the girl he was both besotted with and possessive of with a look of rapture on his face and James felt the urge to puke. *God, they're gross. I pity the idea of their future children.* He thought that over for a second before he shuddered in revulsion. *Fuck, that really is disgusting. I'm going back to the tower, I can't sit here with them for any longer or I might do something that'll piss off Harry.*

James quickly and quietly gathered his things, making sure to place the library book in his bag with care lest the librarian appear out of thin air and try and kill him for hurting a precious book. He certainly didn't want to catch the attention of the annoying redhead he'd had the misfortune of marrying or her greasy friend he'd had the misfortune of not murdering. He had far more important things to do – for him, at least – to spend time attempting to socialise like an eleven-year-old with people he'd once dreamed of being blown up by their precious potions. (Hey, he was still a prick and that wasn't going to change any time soon.)

He thankfully got out of the library and began the usual route back to Gryffindor Tower, making use of an obscure passageway behind a dull tapestry one corridor away from the library which magically came out around the corner of the Fat Lady's portrait. It was a hell of a lot quicker than using the death-trap staircases, and the quicker he got back to the dorm, the quicker he could use Harry as a teddy bear.

Not two minutes later he was making his way into the common room and he swept his eyes over the room, absentmindedly noting the exits and places to hide thanks to his brutal Auror training under old Mad-Eye. Harry wasn't there, but Frank was in the corner, meaning if he got upstairs on time he could drag Harry into his bed with nobody the wiser. (Though to be honest he had a feeling that Frank knew a lot more about his relationship with Harry than he was letting on, but thankfully his classmate seemed content to play ignorant and not breathe a word of the two boys sleeping together every night. Frank was cool like that.)

James quickly made his way across the room – taking just a moment to remember the *delightful* sex-a-thon with his beloved in a replica of this very room – and up the staircase, stopping outside the room for the first years and opening the door. He went inside and froze.

*Fuck me, I need some hormones and now. It's like I'm being punished for something.*

Harry – sweet and gorgeous and way too tempting despite only being eleven Harry – was stood on a grey mat on the floor, wearing casual black tracksuit bottoms and a plain white tee, both items of clothing clinging to Harry's body with sweat and making James internally praise the ingenuity of the muggle fashion industry. But what was even better – or worse, depending on the perspective he used – was the fact that Harry had his back to James with

feet several feet apart, and the smaller boy was bent double at the waist with his hands on the mat by his feet, perky arse on display for all to see and right in James' line of sight. Not that he was staring or anything, it was called *admiring*.

(That's what he told himself, anyway. He knew both words were practically synonymous with each other by this point.)

He let out a strangled sound, once more cursing the lack of sensations in his groin, and caught Harry's attention, the smaller boy standing up straight and spinning around to face him with a smile.

"James! Are you okay?"

"... Are you trying to kill me by bending over like that?"

Harry blinked a few times before smirking, turning around fully with his hands on his hips. "I think the real question is whether or not you were spying on me, *Heir Potter*. Should I be concerned for my chastity?"

James grinned lewdly. "I think we both know what's going to happen to your chastity when things get up and running again," he said with a vague gesture towards his pelvic region. "What are you doing, anyway?"

"Yoga."

He arched a brow. "Yoga?"

Harry tilted his head and smiled coyly, practically sauntering over to James in a way that made him *itch* to do something indecent. The green-eyed imp stopped right in front of him before standing on his tip toes, winding his arms around the back of James' neck and pulling his head down so Harry could whisper in his ear.

"You know, yoga is rather useful in helping the body improve its flexibility. What effect do you think me being able to contort into different positions with practised ease will have on our sex life when things start up again?"

James could feel the blood rush in his ears as his mind flew through scenario after scenario, each one more tempting than the last, all of which included his sex kitten of a soulmate in an array of positions to give them both the best experience possible. *Maybe I should get in on this. If Harry says it improves flexibility ...* James trailed off, mentally delving into some of the more adventurous sex positions he remembered seeing, imagining both he and Harry fucking while bent in places people didn't usually try to bend.

*Fuck, fuck, fuck, why did he have to say that?!*

The hazel-eyed boy spun Harry around and pinned him against the post of the closest bed, thoroughly exploring the inside of his scorching mouth with his tongue as one of James' hands made its way down Harry's tracksuit bottoms and boxers, before settling on the smooth skin of his arse and squeezing tightly.

The sound of Harry's moaning was both ego-boosting and a little despairing as he body refused to respond how he wanted, and James eventually pulled back breathlessly with a small grin at the sight of the pink flush on Harry's pale skin.

"How about you show me the ropes? You know, practice makes perfect and all."

Green eyes glinted with wicked amusement and James smirked back at his soulmate.

When puberty came their way, things were going to be *fantastic*.

## Chapter End Notes

Hello again!

James is still a pervert and pretty much proud of it lol, and Harry is still the 'innocent' one to the ignorant masses. They have absolutely no idea XD

Concerning updates and questions about when I'm going to be updating, I've mentioned this before but I'm still getting questions so here it is again. I CANNOT update every three weeks like I originally intended. I set that schedule when I had less stories and was unemployed, and to give you an idea of my work schedule, this week I had several days when I had to leave at 9:30 and I wouldn't get back until 22:00. Bearing in mind that doesn't include things like eating breakfast, showering, and doing laundry. When exactly am I supposed to write during those days? I can't, plain and simple.

I'm not moaning or making excuses, or even getting mad about people asking, I'm just telling you that I can go an entire week without having any time to write, and I'm trying to regularly rotate which stories I update so none get left behind. Sorry guys, but irregularity is going to be the new norm.

Anyway, I hope you like the chapter and I'll see you next time.

Bye! :D

# Prior planning prevents nothing

## Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Have you ever wondered what it'd be like to drop out of school early, get married and have kids? Like, fifteen maybe?”

Harry slowly lifted his head and stared at James with a derisive expression that wasn't the most reassuring to him. “Have you ever wondered what it'd be like to go home and tell your mother you were dropping out of school to get married and have kids at fifteen? Without her approval, maybe?” came the dry response.

James winced at the mental image of his loving – yet extraordinarily terrifying – mother in said hypothetical conversation. He briefly thought about telling her he accidentally got Harry pregnant and tensed, practically feeling the sweat beading on the back of his neck and the thundering heart palpitations. That was going to haunt his nightmares for years.

*Note to self: brush up on contraceptive spells, they may just save your life.*

He pouted at his very cute – but very deadly – soulmate and sighed exaggeratedly. “Fine ... No early graduation and happily ever after. Though I don't really see the problem; I mean, old snake face is forever gone from this magical world –”

“Talk a bit louder so Dumbledore can hear, why don't you.”

“– and we are in fact in a loving and functional relationship –”

“We're midgets who live in a boarding school. What part of that is a functional relationship?”

“– so really and truly there's no reason to hang around here any longer than necessary!”

Harry just levelled a flat look at him. “Except to maybe make sure the crazy fuckers in the Department of Mysteries don't find out we're from an alternate future and dissect us for their own amusement and/or benefit,” he deadpanned, looking at James as if he were an idiot or perhaps suffering from some sort of injury to the head that caused untold trauma, resulting in James spouting crap that was unhelpful at best and disastrous at worst.

If he weren't the subject of such cutting visual derision, he'd be so proud of Harry's demeaning gaze.

James thought over the sarcastic words and conceded that maybe, *possibly*, there was just the most *infinitesimal* sliver of a chance that Harry was right. Just a little! James wasn't *that* stupid, he'd graduated with eleven OWLs and six NEWTs and went on to become an Auror training under the esteemed Alastor Moody.

And accidentally got bloody Evans knocked up and had to marry her before anyone noticed.

He winced internally. Okay, Harry had a point about his logic.

The hazel-eyed boy huffed and flopped back on his bed, bouncing the mattress springs so much his Charms book fell off and hit the floor with a thud. And he hadn't marked the page he was working from.

“Fuck.”

Harry snorted. “I told you to be careful. And you should pick that up and put it away if you're going to stop reading it.”

James thought about being a prick for the fun of it but then remembered he was supposed to be trying to be a good soulmate and not aggravate Harry's conditions. The OCD especially got to his other half when he saw things out of place, and having books strewn across the floor was the very definition of 'out of place'. So no, he wouldn't be a twat and leave it there. *Although ...*

He mentally perked up and rolled over, peering over the edge of the bed to stare at the faded brown tome. Once you knew how your magic reacted internally and could recognise the feeling of it when in use, you could theoretically learn to replicate it without a wand, but the wild unrestrained magic was a lot harder to control without something to focus it.

Harder, *not* impossible.

James grunted and pulled an arm out from underneath his torso – that really wasn't comfortable – and gestured weakly at the book, waving his arm trying to get the bloody thing to come to him or lift off the ground. Hell, even a little twitch would be brilliant right now, but *noooo ... Shitty thing can't just cooperate, can it?* He huffed and glared at the book, violently pulling his arm back towards himself.

“*Accio*, damn it!”

For a second James was basking in the success of the stubborn object flying off the ground, all without a wand to help him.

The next second he was cursing his stupidity as the hard cover smacked him dead in the face.

“BOLLOCKS!”

James jumped violently and grabbed his nose, eyes watering at the stinging and throbbing emanating from the middle of his face. There was also the fact the book had oh-so-lovingly decided to tip and smack one of its edges over his lips, whacking them rather painfully into his teeth. *Fuck, I hate the taste the blood.* And to round it all off, his neck was aching like shit

seeing as the bludger posing as a book had magically bent his head back further than it should have moved according to logic.

*Something tells me that wasn't my best idea.*

A choking sound floated over from the other bed and James slowly turned his head, blinking through tear-filled eyes to see Harry hunched over on his bed, a random book held up in front of his face with shoulders shaking in a rather suspicious manner. *Wanker.*

“Don't laugh, you prick!” *Ow, apparently talking loudly's a no-go.* “That hurt!”

A wheezing sound was the only response he got, the smaller boy making strangled noises as he struggled to hold in what was obviously hysterical laughter. His – very, very traitorous – soulmate seemed to find his pain amusing for some reason, and James felt very much offended right now. Just because the pain was fading, didn't mean Harry wasn't an arse.

James gingerly poked his nose and winced. “Bloody hell, I'm going to look like Rudolph.”

At those words, Harry finally let his control slip and he snorted, book dropping onto the bed as his fingers spasmed uncontrollably. James opened his mouth to bitch at the vindictive little shit on the next bed over – even if he could grudgingly admit he'd be doing the same if their positions were reversed – and paused, eyes roving over the picture before him.

Harry's face was painted red, the attractive flush crawling across the bridge of his nose and the tops of his cheeks, emphasising the pale peach tone of his skin. The slight curls of his inky hair were bouncing lightly from the force of his laughter, his whole body racked with tremours from his evil humour. Though the most captivating part was definitely his eyes. James' soulmate was gazing at him from under his thick lashes with slight crinkles at the corners of his eyes, the green hue he loved practically glowing with life. Harry's eyes were sparkling with mirth, glinting in the sunlight filtering in through the windows, and James couldn't tear his eyes away from the sight.

Harry was beautiful.

And James was *so* fucked.

He was screwed, plain and simple. Harry was perfect, there was no other explanation for why this man-turned-boy captivated him so much. And yeah, maybe he sounded like some lovestruck sap from one of those dodgy romance novels the other Padfoot had loved reading when nobody else was around to catch him in the act – James was *so* going to use that against him this time around – but he could honestly say he didn't give a shit right now. *I mean, excuse me? Have you seen Harry?* He was *gorgeous*, and James was going to content himself with rubbing his superior love life in the face of every fucker that annoyed him from here on out. Because *nobody* was as lucky as he was, and he wasn't going to let anyone forget it.

That didn't mean he wasn't screwed, though. Those eyes were *dangerous*.

James grinned. “I feel very victimised right now, I'll have you know.” At the continued laughing – which was stupidly cute but also kind of annoying; why wasn't Harry paying



attention to him? – the taller boy smirked and slowly sat up, making his way off the bed without Harry noticing his movements. He crept closer to the other bed and tiptoed around the edge before stopping with a mischievous grin.

“Revenge is mine.”

As Harry whipped his head around with a look of bewilderment on his cute face, James let loose with a battle cry and dived on the smaller form, pinning him to the soft mattress with his heavier frame. Harry yelped in surprise before the sound dissolved into giggles, helpless in the face of James' determined fingers dancing across his sensitive sides and ribs.

“Ha – don't! J-James, stop you bastard! That's – haha – that's – JAMES!”

James grinned as he tickled Harry to death, loving the pure joy on Harry's face as opposed to that blank or dark look he got whenever he focused on something he remembered from his shitty past. Now he was lit up, red-faced and smiling broadly even as he shrieked and tried to squirm away from the painless torture. It made him feel ridiculously light and he stopped his movements, simply gazing down at Harry's breathless face with a soft smile. He didn't care what people said, as long as he was the only one who got to see his soulmate like this, anyone else could go fuck themselves.

He flopped forward on the bed before shifting sideways and laying directly on Harry's chest, hazel orbs locked with emerald.

“That's a rather bewitching shade of red, Love.”

Harry blushed even more and scowled, the irritated glint in his eyes only amusing James even more despite the hint of danger. Other people might think Harry to be some innocent and submissive angel, but he was more than aware the shorter man-turned-boy was a snarky bitch and was more than willing to argue back if he thought James – or anyone else – was being a twat and needed a reality check. Which James honestly loved, because he couldn't fathom having to be in a relationship with someone so passive or meek. A couple was supposed to be passionate and full of life, not one person running the show while the other sat back and did nothing. That sounded so *boring*.

“One, you're a prat and need to shut the hell up, and two, I told you not to call me that, you brain-dead Neanderthal.”

James wiggled his eyebrows and leered at Harry. “I love it when you talk dirty to me.”

Harry just gawked up at him in disgust and wrinkled his nose. “Fucking hell, you're incorrigible,” he muttered.

“I don't know what 'corrigible' is, but I'm pretty sure I've never been in it.”

The green-eyed boy looked at him with pain in his eyes before groaning and leaning his head back, eyes tight shut as he silently but fervently mouthed random words to himself. Which was funny, but James was a little distracted by the possibilities that could be offered by those rosy, plump lips when they were got a bit older.

... So he got distracted easily, sue him.

James shifted slightly and bumped noses with Harry, wordlessly trying to get his attention. “What’re you thinking about?” he questioned in an obnoxious sing-song tone that worked wonders for getting people to listen to him. Or making them unable to ignore him, anyway.

“I’m praying to the gods to give me a break by giving my soulmate some maturity and common sense.”

“That’s just cruel,” he sniffed, grinning as pale lids opened again and Harry’s green orbs zeroed in on him, very much questioning his mental state without their owner uttering a single word on the topic. (Which, if you asked James, was just another reason why Harry was fucking awesome.) “Though I’ll admit, I think it’s kind of awesome how advanced your vocabulary is.”

He leaned forward an inch and winked. “It makes me wonder even more about what you can do with that mouth.”

James lowered his head even more, anticipating a nice snogging session to make up for Harry’s enforced studying session – damn his new and improved work ethic, though it was fucking adorable seeing him beam in pride at his marks – before pausing at the sound of rapid footsteps outside the door. He only had a split second to realise the mystery person was coming to their door in particular before he found himself spinning in mid-air, vision blurring then slamming into the floor on his back.

*What the hell?!*

The boy coughed heavily, desperately trying to pull in some precious air for his lungs which seemed to have given up with no care for his continued existence. *What the fuck was that? How did I ...?* He racked his brain, trying to figure out how the bloody hell he went from about to indulge himself in his delectable other half to making a home on the hard dormitory floor. It was almost as if ...

His eyes widened rapidly in shock. *Little shit!*

The door swung open wide, a head of chestnut waves poking inside and looking around. Cinnamon-brown eyes swept across the room, the owner starting to speak before he even found them.

“James? Henry? Do you guys want to – James? Are you okay down there?”

Frank was staring at him with a crease between his brows, a genuinely concerned expression on his usually-calm face that wasn’t doing much to assuage James’ vague humiliation and petty anger. Though in all fairness he wasn’t going to get pissed off at Frank, especially because he knew *damn* well the reason why he was in this current position had nothing to do with his perpetually-polite room-mate. No, it wasn’t Frank.

It was *Harry*, and Harry had kicked him off the bed.

Apparently, the idea of being caught snogging by their room-mate – who more than likely knew their relationship was the furthest thing from platonic – was enough to jolt Harry into action, and the smaller boy's version of 'action' was to ram his feet into James' abdomen and send him flying through the air and onto the floor. Which he was fairly certain of due to the emerging pain in his stomach. *For a small guy, Harry can bloody kick. Can't wait to see how his legs develop.*

“I'm fine,” he wheezed. “Never been better.” James coughed again and tried not to move. Pain aside, he was thoroughly impressed at his other half's reflexes. *Merlin, I sound like a masochist.*

“Er ... if you're sure,” Frank murmured with an uncertain frown.

There was a beat of silence before Harry broke down in giggles, rolling over and burying his face in his pillow to muffle the high-pitched peals. Not that that was working, but James supposed it was at least an effort. That had to be worth something.

James craned his neck to look from his sadistic but adorable soulmate to his comically-confused room-mate and led his head drop back onto the floor, glaring up at the ceiling – and no, he wasn't pouting like Harry liked to accuse him of, he was a very menacing and terrifying man, a fact that was emphasised by his very masculine features, of course – as he plotted revenge. After all, just because they were together didn't mean they'd never go after the other.

Harry deserved it, after all.

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Looking from his pouting soulmate to his other Housemates and back again, Harry fought the grin threatening to take over his face and looked back down at his notes.

James was obviously moping and planning some sort of revenge against him – it wasn't that hard to figure out – even though they were supposed to be working as a group to apparently help each other with their work. Though seeing as James had in fact already graduated from school, first-year magic was the furthest thing from challenging he could get. Hence why he liked to ignore his work and spend every possible minute he could molesting Harry. Which Harry wasn't really complaining about if he was being truthful, but he was getting off track.

James was plotting.

He didn't know what sort of crap he'd have to go through for annoying James – though he knew it wouldn't be humiliating or anything – but he knew he'd suffer in some way. And maybe he deserved it for kicking James, but the other guy really needed to be a little more self-aware and cautious of when and where he tried to stick his tongue down Harry's throat. Frank could have just waltzed in and seen them! *I mean, I know he's got shit self-control, but this is ridiculous. I thought we already talked about keeping this quiet. James is such a prat.*

“What do you think, Henry?”

He looked up from his book into the wide chocolate eyes of one Mary Macdonald, a girl Harry had only previously heard of from Snape's memories where the poor girl was assaulted by the Death Eater Mulciber. From what James had told him, the prick wanted to 'have some fun' with a girl, and seeing as Mary was a muggle-born, it didn't matter if her life was ruined. Luckily enough she wasn't raped because she managed to get away, but it was disgustingly close enough. (And if one day Harry accidentally blasted Mulciber into the wall during duelling practice, well, accidents *do* happen.)

Mary was a mixed-race muggle-born with a Black father and a White mother, with warm bronze skin and frizzy black hair that fell to halfway down her back. There were a few freckles dusted across the bridge of her nose, and overall she reminded Harry of a much more laid-back Hermione with darker skin.

Harry mentally skimmed over the previous conversation. *What was she going on about? Something about Potions? Hmm ... oh, right.*

He smiled at her gently. "I think it's a good idea. Professor Slughorn's quite open-minded, so I don't think he'd mind supervising us practising. He'd probably quite like to see more people excited for his subject." *And quite excited for some of you to stop blowing things up.*

The sad thing was, that wasn't a joke. Among the pitifully-few Gryffindor first years, just seven this time – *thanks Grindelwald, I'm sure you didn't totally screw over our community by massacring people left, right and centre, and it's not as if you provided such motivating inspiration to Tom Riddle or anything; God, our world sucks* – there were literally three who could count as good at Potions. And two of them were he and James, and seeing as they were mentally grown men who each had a bloody NEWT in Potions, it *really* didn't count. (*No James, that doesn't count. At all. Moron.*)

The lovely and sweet – but suspiciously *too* sweet – Alice Brown, the future Mrs Longbottom, tended to score higher than average in Potions, though still within the usual parameters of what eleven-year-olds could achieve. The small girl with a round face, dark blonde hair and blue eyes was rather cheerful when it came to all her work and did at least satisfactory in her classes, so Harry knew damn well future Neville's hopelessness didn't come from her.

Then again, it wasn't too hard to figure out where it came from when he once had to dive under his desk to avoid the explosion from the desk in front of him. He still didn't know how it happened, and neither did James, which was *so* fucking worrying considering James had grown up being tutored by his Potions Master uncle, Fleamont Potter. Even first time around, James had been something of a genius when it came to brewing. Which Harry thought had gone a long way towards his soulmate's over-inflated ego, but that was just a theory. Probably a very likely theory, but James tended to pout when he brought it up, so he didn't mention it. (Often.)

So no, Neville's ineptitude when magically mixing ingredients together didn't come from Alice, it came from Frank. The steady and just all-round nice guy Frank Longbottom couldn't make a potion to save his life. It didn't always explode, it just never worked how it should. If it ever did, it was a fluke, nothing more, nothing less. So Harry was very much in favour of the lions forming a little extra-curricular Potions study group (read: survival squad),

especially because Frank wasn't the only walking disaster when it came to being in the vicinity of a cauldron.

The other Gryffindors were a couple of pure-blood girls from smaller families and apparently friends of Lily in the other timeline, Dorcas Meadowes and Marlene McKinnon. Dorcas had narrow dark eyes and black hair from her Chinese grandparent, while Marlene boasted shoulder-length ebony curls and blue-grey eyes. Both girls were also frankly shite when it came to Potions, and Harry could feel his blood pressure rising whenever their class descended to the dungeons. He shared the lesson with Housemates who had a penchant for explosions – though it was a little nostalgic for Harry; he almost expected to hear Seamus effing and blinding in the background whenever it happened – or the Slytherins, the majority of whom grew up to be the scum of the earth and weren't exactly sunshine and rainbows now, either. *Fan-fucking-tastic, in other words.*

“Great!” Mary beamed at him before turning to the other girls. “Come on guys! It'll be fun! Besides, don't you want to get better? We're kind of terrible.”

Harry winced internally. Mary might be a kind girl, but she was an unfortunate combination of tactless and oblivious. Even now she wasn't quite getting the murderous looks directed at her from two of her female room-mates. Alice just had an exasperated look on her face and Frank was sheepishly running his fingers through his hair. Of course, James just had one of those stupid amused (arsehole) grins on his face that Harry wanted to punch off his face. Or kiss. (He was getting a bit worried over what that said about his mind; it couldn't be anything good.)

“Yeah, you might have a point,” Frank conceded with a wry grin, also completely missing the attempts of Dorcas and Marlene to set him alight with the power of their eyes. A second later he brightened up, looking around at the group with a happy grin – *Look James, this is how you do it without looking like an arrogant prick!* – and nodded rapidly. “We should definitely do it! Just imagine, we could do Gryffindor proud by having all of us get really good at Potions.”

*Yeah, good luck with that.* Harry was torn between commending Frank for his good-natured optimism or ramming his head against the wall behind him and calling it a day. The strained expression on his soulmate's face wasn't helping much, and when all the girls turned to Frank as one, Harry took the opportunity to poke James' waist in his most sensitive spot.

James jumped a mile and let out a high-pitched yelp that made Harry choke on a snort. He bit his lip to stifle the cackles that threatened to erupt and breathed in slowly through his nose, begging his body to cooperate and calm down. Which was pretty damn difficult to do considering what just happened. *Fucking hell, I can't wait for James to start puberty, his voice is going to be hilarious.*

The hazel-eyed boy glared at him as if he could read his thoughts – which he couldn't; their bond wasn't that developed yet, but Harry honestly couldn't wait to annoy the fuck out of James when it got that far – before waving everyone else off with a bland smile. He turned back to Harry with another irritated look and Harry grinned. *Not so nice when it's you, huh?* (Harry was resolutely ignoring the earlier kicking of James off the bed. That wasn't *violence*, that was *self-preservation*. James really needed to learn the difference.)

Harry smirked back quickly before focusing on the other Gryffindors, cocking his head slightly in thought. Getting them all together to improve their brewing was actually a good idea as much as he wanted to laugh hysterically. It would make everything safer for everyone around them when they attempted to make something, and it would actually be a nice thing to do for the others if they wanted to get into Potions later, or something that needed the knowledge. *And now I think about it, how the ever-loving fuck did Frank manage to get into the Auror programme when he magically turns every single cauldron into a mutated disaster just by touching it?*

His eyes slid to James to see a weary but resigned expression on his face. The taller boy studied him for a few seconds before he nodded to himself, looking far too knowing for a supposed child of eleven. James' eyes flickered from Harry to the others and back again, sighing reluctantly before clearing his throat and getting everyone's attention.

“I can probably ask my uncle to send me some notes and tips to help us. He's been tutoring me in Potions since I can remember. Besides, I hear he's pretty good at brewing,” he finished with a lazy grin.

Harry snorted and shook his head. That was awful. Alice seemed to find it funny though, the blonde girl giggling lightly at James' idiocy. The magically-raised girls were rolling their eyes while Frank had a broad grin stretched across his face. Everyone seemed to get the shitty joke except Mary, the poor girl looking utterly bewildered by the conversation.

“Do you know 'Sleekeasy's'?” Harry asked her. At the slow nod, he carried on. “It was created by Fleamont Potter, James' uncle. He's a famous Potioneer with his own company, and he's so good he even brews for hospitals and personal Healers.” Harry looked at James briefly with exasperation before meeting Mary's eyes once more. “So yes, his uncle would definitely be able to help us.”

Brown eyes widened at his explanation. “Oh ... I didn't know that. I use 'Sleekeasy's' every day for my hair, it's a miracle worker!”

As everyone else started discussing getting real Potions help from someone as renowned as Fleamont Potter – which was admittedly something Harry was looking forward; the man was a genius, after all – he leaned closer to James so his mouth was next to the other boy's ear.

“So, any particular reason you've decided to be nice and help everyone? I didn't think it was your sort of thing.”

“Not really,” came the muttered agreement, “but I would genuinely love to avoid the dangers of potentially being blown up every time we set foot in the dungeons.” James paused for a second before hazel eyes locked onto his, his lips twisted into a truly evil smirk with a wicked glint in his eyes. “Besides, the more people that are better at Potions, the less chance Snivellus will have to make himself seem better. Maybe someone else'll even get a Mastery before him, steal the recognition of being the youngest from under his feet!”

Harry leaned back and watched James chuckle darkly to himself, apparently making plans to ruin Snape's future prestige and frowned to himself. *Fucking hell, he might bitch about the woman he married, but they're way too similar to one another. It's a bloody miracle I ended*

*up as sane as I did.* He took a moment to imagine his life if James and Lily had survived in their other life and shuddered at the thought.

*Thank fuck that didn't happen.*

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“Well, the annual shitstorm at Black Manor aside –”

“You mean the family reunion? I suppose it *is* an apt description.”

“– it's been a while since all the Potters got together. I think we should invite everyone over for a week once James gets back. It'll be nice to get everyone together again. We should probably go ahead and invite Henry as well, what with our son's very strong assertions –”

“You mean worryingly adult future plans, but go ahead.”

“– concerning the progression of their relationship, and it might be best for Miss Johnson to come along, I hear she and Orion have been hitting it off rather well –”

“Please stop interfering in the love life of a man as temperamental as Orion Black, he's only just forgiven us for the trauma James inflicted on Sirius.”

“– and of course, the most delightful thing about this endeavour will be just how much it pisses off my birth family.”

Charlus looked at his wife with a beseeching yet resigned expression. “Dorea, I'm begging you, please stop trying to cause a blood feud between our Houses.”

“Oh please, that'll never happen!” the woman waved him off. “I know far too much about Arcturus' sordid past for him to ever fathom doing that.”

*So you're essentially blackmailing your cousin into compliance.*

Charlus was very much in love with his wife, but sometimes he wondered what it said about himself that he willingly subjected himself to instances such as this.

“Are you sure you want to continue poking the metaphorical dragon's nest like this?”

The woman turned to him with a wicked smirk on her face that didn't do much for his stress levels. “I have no idea what you're talking about, Husband. I simply wish to see the family once more.”

She spun towards the door and made her way over, pausing at the entrance and looking back over her shoulder, silver eyes glinting with mischief often seen on their son.

“After all, I'm not the only Black to marry a Potter. Is it so wrong for me to want to reconnect?”

With those words, Lady Dorea Potter waltzed out the room humming some classical piece to herself and leaving her husband wondering when his hair would eventually screw him over

and end up grey. *Knowing my luck, I'll check a mirror later and realise it's already started.*

Charlus look skywards and sighed heavily, knowing full well his conniving wife would go ahead with what she wanted, regardless of how much the Blacks would be pissed off at Dorea embracing life as a Potter and ignoring her birth family like a bad case of Dragon Pox. She was going to cheerfully charge ahead and fuck with the Blacks because she still held a grudge over her brother being disinherited – which Charlus agreed with, because Marius was a great bloke and didn't deserve how his family had treated him like crap – thereby connecting with the family she genuinely liked and pissing off the rest.

He closed his eyes and tried not to groan in pain, realising he'd have to start organising some sort of event for Potter Manor that would undoubtedly descend into untold chaos. His family might not be as prone to violence and/or death as Dorea's, but that didn't mean the House of Potter wasn't full of opinionated and stubborn people who'd take any opportunity to start heated discussions that would invariably end in angry silences and awkward tensions, poisoning the atmosphere for anyone else around them. And *he* was Lord Potter and therefore in charge of smoothing things over.

*Life is so much fun.*

Charlus sighed once more and made his way out the parlour, turning down the hall towards his office and ruminating as he walked. *Obviously Aunt Laurel's out of the country right now, but they can probably come easily enough. Flea and Mia obviously, then it's just Uncle David's side. Hmm ...* His cousins from that side of the family weren't all that bothered about being part of a high-profile family; they all seemed pretty content to have jobs that they enjoyed personally even if they weren't prestigious or anything. They'd probably be quite happy to get together, even if Cordelia would definitely bring her husband's family along for the fun of it. Which Dorea would be smugly ecstatic over, of course.

Seriously, why did Marius' son have to marry Charlus' cousin? Didn't they know they were giving Rhea more ammunition to be evil? More chances to do something horrendous to the Blacks? More of an opportunity to make a rather blunt and vicious statement to the family she gleefully ran from when she was younger?

*Then again, Charlus thought with a wry grin, what does that say about the twat who went and married the crazy witch?*

He looked at a photo on his desk of him, Dorea and James and smiled, taking note of the identical smirks on his wife and son's faces, twin expressions promising untold anarchy if they were pissed off. Charlus also knew those promises would be carried out with fervour if provoked. He pitied anyone who got on their wrong side and thought about his wife's plan.

*This reunion is going to be hell.*



Hey guys!

Sorry again that this is late, but unfortunately real life is kind of a thing. (And so is 'How to Get Away With Murder'. It sucked me right in. And so did this two-part documentary series about the last princesses of the Russian royal family, because why not? Seriously, I have the attention span of a goldfish lol)

I tried to explore the other Gryffindors a bit using some the characters that were shown in canon, but I have no idea if they were actually the same age as the Marauders. But now they are because I say so XD

As for extended members of the Potter family, I actually have a Potter family tree up on my deviantart account. My username over there is anime-otaku20, so check it out if you're interested.

By the way, as I have mentioned previously multiple times, I barely plan any of this story, I more or less write it as I go along. Does anyone have any suggestions for how I go about Pettigrew? I'm not saying I'll definitely go with anybody's suggestion, but I really have no clue how to deal with him, and ignoring him completely seems a little pointless. Bear in mind though, he hasn't actually done anything bad yet, so killing him is a little too evil, even for me.

Anyway, I hope you liked the chapter, and I'll see you next time.

Happy reading!

# Long live family (for better or worse)

## Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

Warning: brief, semi-explicit sex scene (probably not what you're expecting)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

James calmly strolled through the elaborate hallway of Black Manor with his parents, looking around at the surrounding décor as he did. He'd always admired the Black taste; opulent, but not too overbearing. (Unlike a certain family of irritating blonde bimbos that he knew.)

His mother looked far too cheerful for what would inevitably be a weekend filled with hatred, rivalries, as well as metaphorical *and* literal backstabbing. Then again, she had been born into this absurd insanity, and blood did tend to run true even if you wanted to deny it. They were *both* proof of that, no matter how much Dorea liked to pretend otherwise.

On the other hand, Charlus was walking along next to his wife with his head held high, shoulders back and proud, like the serious and resolute Lord of a House that people knew him as. Of course, it would have been more a more inspiring sight if his expression didn't look as if he were resignedly walking to his imminent death. The Black gatherings weren't *that* bad; nobody had died at one for over a decade! Even before his birth. So it was fine. Totally okay. Absolutely *nothing* wrong with the idea of this particular family reunion.

(He could *not* hear Harry's snide comments about his lack of common sense in the back of his head as if he were the devil on his shoulder. No, he could *not*.)

The party of three rounded the corner at the end of the corridor and immediately stopped short at the sight of Charis Crouch nee Black silently glaring ice at her son Bartemius. Said idiot – James wasn't going to forget the bastard sending Padfoot to Azkaban without a trial for a *long* time; *wanker* – was physically cringing away from the imposing, silver-eyed demon that took the form of his shorter mother, looking as if he was regretting every single one of his life choices to date. (James was sure there were plenty to choose from.)

Before either party could say anything to each other – or escape in a certain case – an explosion echoed from the floor above them, and the walls *shook*. The women proved yet again they were Blacks through and through, not even blinking at the fact that a centuries-old ancestral magical home apparently wasn't enough of a shield to stand up to whatever chaotic mayhem was taking place upstairs.

James' father and Barty had both physically braced themselves, gazing around warily as if the manor was about to collapse around them at any given moment. Charlus in particular also looked resigned, muttering under his breath what was his preferred and well-rehearsed rant

about his wife's family, and how it was a miracle that any of them even managed to function on a daily basis considering their ridiculous reactive anger, and how he himself should really get checked by a Healer because the way he kept on agreeing to attend this yearly disaster without an argument said nothing good about his head, *especially* because he was sure that he possessed a logical mind with a healthy dose of common sense, so why the bloody hell was he here again despite shouting an emphatic 'NO!' after the last one?

(James had heard it enough times now that he could probably recite it word for word. It was *incredibly* entertaining.)

As the two groups began to greet each other once more, taking the lack of shuddering walls as a signal of sorts (for now), they were interrupted once more, this time by an unearthly shriek of rage echoing from a few hallways to their left, followed by the unmistakable sound of spellfire flying through the air and exploding against something, either the furniture or some ornament if he had to guess from what he could hear.

“ALPHARD, GET YOUR ARSE BACK HERE, YOU WHORE!!!”

Pounding footsteps alerted them to someone coming closer, and James watched in glee as his sleazy cousin sprinted past them, all the while dodging hexes and curses of varying lethality from the enraged witch pursuing him with an admirable single-minded focus. Granted, that focus was more than likely Lucretia planning her younger cousin's upcoming torture and eventual demise, but it was still fucking hilarious to witness.

Charlus sighed and muttered, “Bloody hell, I need a drink.”

James just snorted and cackled at his father, beyond amused at his tone.

*I knew this was going to be fun. I'll have to send Harry some memories later.*

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*I wish Remus were here.*

His first true friend from Hogwarts would have been a nice counter to all the madness going on around him, the other boy being remarkably grounded and logical despite going from growing up in purely muggle villages to living in a centuries-old castle practically steeped in magic.

Sirius had a feeling that not even this current insanity would phase Remus. The brunette would probably just turn to Sirius and give him a *look*, that stern expression remaining for a few seconds before Remus rolled his eyes and started muttering under his breath about something like a lack of composure and an inability to keep calm. (While it was somewhat offensive to listen to, the young Black wouldn't deny how entertaining it was to witness.)

Having someone else around – someone who wasn't inclined to vast amounts of violence and murderous plotting – would have been a nice cure for his frazzled nerves. Being essentially trapped for an extended period of time in a place with your (rather disturbed) family was disquieting for more reasons than one, and he just wanted some peace and quiet.

Sirius sighed and leaned back from his spot on the bench in the gardens, gazing up into the clear summer sky as the sound of vicious duelling echoed around in the background. From what he could hear – and from what usually happened at his family gatherings, as it had for years – his two Black grandfathers, Arcturus and Pollux, were once more attempting to kill each other with increasingly dangerous and interesting spells, regardless of the collateral damage they were incurring. (He'd be more fascinated if he weren't so concerned about developing a heart condition at the age of twelve just from being in close proximity to his fucked-up family.)

While Sirius was admittedly intrigued at the sound of some of the voiced incantations he could hear amidst their creative insults – his grandfathers knew a *lot* of magic, after all – he was more exasperated at how their ridiculous rivalry seemed to have carried on for decades now, all because they just couldn't get along with one another. Nobody seemed to know just *why* they weren't able to move on from their issues and become amicable with one another, just that their decades-old squabble hadn't been dealt with at all since it started, nor did there seem to be a helpful solution on the horizon to fix things.

Then again, he had his own ideas as to why his parents' fathers repeatedly made a sport of trying to murder each other continuously when in each other's presence, even after all this time. (Said ideas said nothing good about the apparent maturity of the two men.) He paused in his thoughts and cocked his head to the side absently. *Oh, that sounds like a wall. I wonder if it's still standing.* Sirius listened for a further minute before the sounds of explosions quietened down to normal. Well, the *Black* version of normal, anyway. His shook off the concern for Black Manor's architectural stability as his thoughts drifted back to the marriage he was born from, musing on the rather worrying circumstances of his parents' relationship.

Orion and Walburga's marriage might have physically been carried out because of that vile poison, but the two of them had already been betrothed to each other from a young age. Arcturus had told Sirius that the contract was one that allowed either party to cancel the arrangement upon reaching their majority if they didn't want the marriage, hence why Arcturus hadn't been able to fully protest to his father. (Something which would have been a futile attempt from what Sirius knew of his late great-grandfather's personality.) The betrothal had gone ahead as 'planned' from Orion's infancy, though nearly everyone in the family had expected things to change from the very moment that Orion hit seventeen. Of course, Orion had defied expectations and carried on with the arrangement, stunning pretty much everyone around them who knew what he was truly like. (Now they all knew *why*.)

After Pollux had graduated from Hogwarts, Walburga had already been five (which *still* made Sirius feel slightly disturbed after adding things up), and Sirius' father had been a year old. It didn't take a genius to realise the previous Lord Black had seen the opportunity for what it was, and after listening to Pollux's 'advice', the man betrothed the two young children of the House of Black to one another.

Despite appearances, Pollux had apparently never wanted to wrest control of the Blacks from Arcturus; he'd just wanted to save his cousin the hassle of dealing with other families when it came to possible betrothals. Not to mention the chance to keep the line of succession within the House of Black had probably been far too tempting to pass up for any adult Black at the time. (Self-preservation *was* a rather strong personality trait in their family, after all.)

However, the then-Heir Black probably saw the arrangement in a suspicious light, and considered it a betrayal from his own blood. Pollux using his cunning and political acuity to subtly influence the previous Lord Black, ensuring that both his daughter and Arcturus' son wouldn't be at the mercy of other families was truly a move worthy of any Black. However, Arcturus hadn't *quite* seen things the same way, and Pollux had been offended at the accusations he'd received, and from there on out, the two men had forever been at each other's throats with no hint of reprieve.

(Personally, Sirius thought they'd just jumped on the first chance possible to let out their stress without anyone questioning them on their motives. Couple of hot-headed bastards they were.)

The ... *revelations* of Walburga's actions might have strained things between them a bit further, but there *was* that time that Sirius *definitely did not see* the two men completely drunk out of their skulls and using Walburga's possessions as targets for borderline illegal spells while bitching all about her causing problems for the two of them. It absolutely *never* happened, just like that time he *didn't see* one of his male – and very married – cousins sneaking out of Uncle Alphard's room, neck covered in a plethora of suspicious-looking bruises.

(There was a lot that he'd never, *ever* seen in Black Manor, and that would be his story forevermore.)

He sighed and again thought back to his brunette friend from school. The other boy was a lot more relaxed and calmer than Sirius was generally used to, the only other person like that being Reg. (His brother was much happier recently, and it wasn't hard to equate the personality shift with very the day of Walburga's funeral, with the irrefutable proof that the woman who'd tormented them for their entire lives was gone.)

His younger brother had been following him like an obedient duckling since he'd gotten off the train in London, constantly asking him questions about Hogwarts and what it was like to learn from such respected professors. Not that he'd say it to Regulus' face for fear of embarrassing him, but Sirius thought it was adorable how excited he was at the moment.

With how Walburga had often and so thoroughly scorned Sirius, Regulus had never been so open about associating with his older brother, yet now with the complete absence of a possible reprimand, the two brothers had never been so close. Sirius had written Reg so much this past year that he'd had to order extra stationery twice already! (Not that he hadn't loved every minute of it; it had given him quite a few ideas for Reg's birthday, at least.)

He'd couldn't wait for his brother to go to Hogwarts, too. True, Narcissa was already there and would be for another year before she graduated, but his female cousins had always been trapped in their own bubble, dealing with their own issues and whatnot. The age gap certainly didn't help matters, especially with Bellatrix.

Sirius stood up and resolved to write Remus later, explaining about their family reunion and their ancestral manor. He knew his friend loved learning about magical culture and history, so he'd probably find it fascinating. (Sirius would just make sure to leave out any and all parts of crazy duels, attempted murder and the ongoing verbal jabs that peppered every single

conversation happening at any given time. He might like his family, but he wasn't *oblivious* to their actions, thank you very much.)

“Sirius!”

He turned to see his brother waving at him with a smile on his face, the smaller boy being followed by two of their cousins. Barty Crouch Jr. and Caspar Harper were both Sirius and Regulus' third cousins, the grandsons of their aunt Charis. (Technically, the woman was their first cousin once removed, but that was way too long to say every single time. Also, she wasn't far off sixty; calling someone that age his cousin felt a little weird.)

Barty was the same age as Reg, which meant they'd both be joining him at Hogwarts in a few months. Barty had the same facial features at the Blacks, but his dark-brown hair and blue eyes came from his father's family. He was pretty laid back, as far as Sirius could tell, although he was very enthusiastic when it came to reading, and he could already speak three languages fluently. (He'd be more jealous if he weren't so impressed at the sheer talent and skill that took.)

Sirius was hoping that Barty and Reg ended up in the same House together so they had some companionship from the beginning. It was difficult being away from your whole family without being able to see them face-to-face, and he'd been grateful for Remus' instant friendship in that regard. (And James' presence, because his menace of a cousin was actually rather grounding in some strange way, making him feel like things were still normal in some respects. Not that he'd *ever* be admitting that to the pain in the arse any time soon, if at all, because the prat had an ego the size of Britain, and if James got any cockier, then Merlin only knew what he'd tried to do to poor Henry.

Sirius did *not* need possible/probable molestation and sexual harassment on his conscience. His mind was pained enough as it was.)

His other cousin next to Reg was Caspar, the blonde-haired and blue-eyed Heir to the House of Harper. Caspar was two years younger than Sirius, and he felt bad for his younger cousin seeing as, come September, he wouldn't have anyone else his age around. Not from the Black side, at least. His other first cousins with Black blood were the seven-year-old twins Alexandra and Charis Crouch, and Sirius wasn't too sure the two girls would be able to provide enough entertainment for the quiet boy who was already quite a fan of Quidditch. (Maybe his Crouch cousins would be enough company, regardless of the family's reputation in recent years.)

Sirius waved the three over, sending his brother a small grin which was returned, albeit in a subtler manner than his. Regulus had always been calmer and more reserved than he was, a fact that had seemed even more obvious ever since Walburga's death, as Sirius had been allowed to spend more time with Reg without retribution. (Another thing that made their father furious, though the man *never* allowed himself to take out his anger on his sons, even unintentionally. Orion was a good father.)

He'd learned more of Regulus' true personality in the past year than he had in all their childhood together. (Which was pretty sad to think about, but whenever Sirius got too lost in

analysing that situation, all he had to do was remember the time when he'd convinced Regulus to help him slip Uncle Alphard a potion to change his hair to red and gold.

He'd never been a prouder brother.)

"What's going on?" he asked, noticing the hint of nervousness surrounding all three boys.

"It's not really anything to worry about. I mean, it happens every year," Regulus explained with a slight frown, "but this time Grandfather Arcturus and Grandfather Pollux are being very ... *violent* with their duel. The manor's been shaking a lot, and there's a lot of shouting and screaming going on between the spells. I'm pretty sure I heard something about our ... mother and Uncle Cygnus, as well."

*Well, considering that crazy woman was poisoning her own husband, and our uncle was abusing his own children, I'd hazard a guess that Arcturus is none too pleased with Pollux right about now.*

Not that he said that out loud; he didn't want to make his brother and cousins even more worried than they already were, and then there was the fact that there was nothing any of them could do about it. The oldest one among them was Sirius, and he wasn't even thirteen yet! He wasn't exactly in a position to affect the actions of the Lord Black or Pollux Black in any way, shape or form. (Though truthfully, even he himself had some worries about how his grandfather Pollux had managed to miss the actions of his daughter and youngest son, but he wasn't so stupid that he'd mention it to anyone. Or even *think* it in the elder Black's vicinity.)

Finding someone else to do something on the other hand ... His great-aunt Cassiopeia might be able to do something, but then again, the crazy witch might just take the opportunity to try and murder both men for the hell of it. Or just humiliate them for her own entertainment. Or both. (Cassiopeia Black was a ... *unique* witch. There *really* wasn't anyone like her.)

*Aunt Lucretia's not going to help, not with how things are now, and Uncle Alphard's probably doing something he shouldn't (again), so that won't work.* His aunts Charis and Callidora would just plain refuse, Sirius knew, because the women were still rather passive-aggressive over their sister's disownment. But *quietly*, because they weren't stupid enough to question the actions of a former Lord Black, even if Arcturus was a lot fairer in comparison. *That leaves ...*

"Hello, Sirius! Long time, no see!"

That loud and slightly mocking voice was enough to give him an instant headache; the feeling of a tight band squeezing his head like a vice was already there, and Sirius closed his eyes before he did something like whimper from mental anguish. Or just straight-up cry. He took a deep breath and exhaled silently, opening his eyes and fixing a small smile to his face. He ignored the curious – and worried, in the case of his brother – expressions in front of him, and prayed with all his being that the newcomer would just behave for once in his bloody life.

Sirius slowly turned around, keeping a mask of cool politeness on his face. Said mask would one day become his best friend after he became Lord Black, so it was best to practice using

and perfecting it while he had the chance to do so, *especially* as he had the worst feeling his family would eventually make it so his mask would be as necessary to continued life as air.

“Hello, James.”

Seeing those hazel eyes glinting wickedly, that cocky grin that was begging to be punched, Sirius just stared blankly, knowing his prayer was going to go unanswered.

*Maybe I should've pushed him off the Astronomy Tower while I had the chance.*

---

James was admittedly finding a lot of amusement in the bloodthirsty atmosphere of Black Manor, but that didn't mean he was paying much attention to the blatant attempts of murder going on around him.

The Black ancestral home was entertaining, yeah, but Harry wasn't even there for him to hug to death! Or kiss. Or drag off to some dark corner so that James could look at his gorgeous body and touch so he could see if he could kickstart puberty so that James could have his wicked way with his bloody gorgeous soulmate. Oh, he *really* couldn't wait for things to progress ...

He blinked back into awareness and looked sideways at his father. Charlus was sporting a distinctly disturbed expression on his face as he gazed at his preteen son, hazel eyes boring into his as he visibly wrestled with himself over whatever was on James' face. The man sighed and cleared his throat.

“What were you thinking about just now?”

“Harry,” he answered with a grin.

“Of course you were,” Charlus replied flatly. The older turned back to the massive dining table and reached forward for his glass of wine, grabbing it and downing the drink in one, not missing even a single drop of liquid. When he finished, he looked deeply into the empty glass, and when one of the attentive elves refilled the drink without prompting, Charlus started draining that glass, too.

James snickered under his breath. He couldn't *wait* to give his dad some grandkids. And a few headaches.

He looked around the table and catalogued the family he could see; Lord Arcturus Black was sat at the head of the table, of course, with Orion, Sirius and Regulus on his right, and Melania, Lucretia and Ignatius on his left. At the opposite end were the youngest children of the gathering with their respective parents, proving that, surprisingly, the Blacks *did* have some common sense when it came to the safety of children. (‘Some’ being the operative word in that sentence.)

Two-year-old Bianca Longbottom, Callidora's only grandchild, was with her fathers Ferdinand and Joel, as well as Phoebe and Meliana Crouch with their daughters Alexandra and Charis. The two small families were more than content to sit as far as way as possible



from Lord Black and any violent shenanigans that may occur. That wasn't to say they were placid or anything, and James had to hide a grin behind his glass as Phoebe blatantly snubbed her sister-in-law Henriette, a subtle yet disgusted sneer on her face, and instead struck up a conversation with her sister concerning blood rituals that had been outlawed decades ago.

There was a reason he'd always found Aunt Phoebe and Aunt Elladora so awesome.

The rest of Callidora's family were also present, with her husband Harfang next to her, looking as if he was emulating Charlus in drinking his stress away with a bland smile on his face. (Though that smile could be that he no longer had any fucking clue what was going on because he was completely and utterly wanked. It was a distinct possibility.)

Their daughter Portia had also made an appearance, the dark-haired witch happily sat next to her fiancée, an architect from Canada by the name of Cynthia. The couple were sat next to Portia's parents, not a care in the world despite having spent the last ten or so hours being surrounded by duels to the death and verbal wars designed to spark physical ones. (James hadn't seen that level of nonchalance since Harry casually mentioned how Salazar Slytherin must be rolling in his grave considering 'bullying' wasn't synonymous with 'cunning', all while lackadaisically flicking through a book as he sat next to some seventh-year Slytherins. Ballsy, but *brilliant*.)

Charis and Caspar Crouch were intermittently bickering with each other, as well hissing insults at Cassiopeia. The forever-single witch had a mocking smirk on her face, though her silver eyes were slowly filling with rage the longer she argued with her cousin and her husband. Cassiopeia was well-known to be antagonising to nearly everyone around her, and the eldest Crouches at the gathering weren't free from her snide provocations, either.

As per usual for the pain in the arse that Barty Sr. was, the twat was quietly lecturing his son with a stern expression, clearly doing everything in his infinite stupidity to ignore every single part of being a decent parent. His son was slightly squirming in his seat, face down and blushing in humiliation at being spoken to like that in public. Barty the Arsehole might have been speaking quietly, but it didn't take a genius to figure out what was going on over there.

Caspar was being subtly restrained by his father Emmett, though the elder Harper was mirroring his son rather perfectly with their identical expressions of appalled scorn. *Maybe I should leave some 'helpful' notes around for them to find. I'm sure they'd love the chance to get one over on that tosser. Besides, as long as it doesn't end in murder, I'm sure Harry won't mind. He might even give me a kiss as a reward.*

James briefly lost himself in thought once more, this time focused on those soft, plump lips that were responsible for a great deal of his dreams, awake or asleep. Harry's lips were *gorgeous*, a deep pink that bordered on red so much that it looked like they'd been thoroughly bitten at any time of day. The way those lips gently curved whenever Harry saw James was enough to make his heart swell, though whenever Harry was annoyed and pouted at him, it was enough to make James wish another part of his anatomy would hurry the fuck up and swell, too.

Those lips were *dangerous*, in all the worst – and best – of ways.

He heard a quiet snort of laughter and looked across the table, taking in the sight of a cousin he never truly believed he'd pity in any way. Bellatrix looked infinitely better than she ever had in any of his memories, and James could admit he felt for the witch and her family situation. He liked to think he would have done something for her in their past life if he discovered the truth, but he knew himself well enough to admit he'd been pretty self-centred, not much getting past the selfish bubble he's been wrapped in. Well, he guessed he was still self-centred in this timeline, but this time around he had a lovely little soulmate to keep him in line with threats of bodily harm. And a ban on sex when they were finally able. (Funnily enough, those threats were more than enough to get him to behave. Harry sounded *hot* when he was domineering.)

Bellatrix cocked her head to the side, hooded eyes lacking the infamous glint of insanity. "Do I even want to know?"

He smirked back at her. "I'm just planning ahead for the future."

Andromeda turned from Narcissa to study him, her blonde sister narrowing her ice-blue eyes at the same time. Andi might have been the smartest of the three – no offense to the others – but Cissa was *scarily* intuitive. And the most dangerous of the three. I mean, come *on*. The woman managed to retain most of her freedom despite her shitty marriage, survived two separate wars thanks to her sly intelligence, and somehow kept her decent reputation despite having a family consisting of Lucius and Draco Malfoy.

(He supposed there was a reason his mother had always loved Narcissa Black.)

"Dare I even ask which poor person you've targeted?" Andi questioned snidely.

James smirked evilly. "How about you tell me who *you've* targeted first, *Cousin*?"

Simultaneously, the three sisters froze in their spots, Andromeda paling rapidly and looking at James with fear in her silver eyes. Bellatrix was gripping her knife tightly in a way that meant nothing good for his continued survival – at least Harry would avenge him. *Probably. Hopefully* – and Narcissa's eyes were boring into his with an intensity that would have made a lesser man cower in fear and piss himself. (James had once dared to turn his darling cousin's hair Gryffindor red once, therefore he was an old hand at the blonde's infamous fury.)

"James –"

Bellatrix interrupted Andi with an enraged hiss. "If you think for one moment that I'm going to let you threaten my sister –"

James snorted, waving his hand airily and generally ignoring the tense atmosphere. "If *you* think for one moment that I'm trying to threaten your sister, then you haven't been paying attention, have you?" he asked rhetorically, rolling his eyes in an exaggerated manner. "If you must know, I fully support the entire ... *situation*. I'm not going to judge, especially because it's infinitely more palatable than a certain other agreement we've all experienced." James finished speaking while sending a pointed look over to Orion, and grinned a little as Andi relaxed slightly, her lips twitching up into a reluctant smile.

He wasn't exactly taking the piss, either. He was fully supporting his cousin's decision to marry Ted Tonks – a ceremony which was taking place in a mere month if things were the same here – but he just wished that Andi would be a bit smarter about the whole thing. Running away from her entire family and eloping hadn't done her any favours last time, hence why she'd been summarily booted from the House of Black and shunned for the rest of her life. If she'd sucked up her pride and gone to see Arcturus, there was every chance she might not have been kicked out. The Lord Black was a traditionalist, true, but he wasn't *stupid*. While he certainly acknowledged blood first and foremost, he was also startlingly aware of magical power itself, and was at the very least willing to acknowledge those deserved it as long as their behaviour was appropriate and warranted his respect. Essentially, there were certain ways that Andromeda could have remained a Black if she'd tried.

Ways James was going to employ by throwing his tyrant of a mother at the situation.

*People who have no respect for women are fucking idiots*, he thought, watching his mother smirk knowingly at her brother Pollux. The woman laughed lightly at the sour expression she elicited from Alphard, the younger man seemingly not appreciating the topic of conversation if his current face was anything to go by.

*Yeah*, he nodded to himself, *she'll make shit happen*.

He instinctively ducked as Lucretia screamed and tried to castrate Alphard, ranting about how he'd tried to seduce Ignatius earlier in the day.

*Oh, that's what that was about*.

James refocused on the situation once he saw Dorea fling a hex at someone a bit too forcefully after they accidentally hit her.

Well, his mother would help when she wasn't busy carrying out a wide-scale murder spree, anyway.

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("Hey, Mum. If I wanted to help a cousin of ours with something that might get them disinherited from the House of Black, how would I go about it?")

"Is it anything they deserve to be disinherited for?"

"Unless you think falling for someone 'lesser' than them counts, then no."

"I see. Well, I can't do anything without information. So, the sooner you tell me what's going on, the sooner I can convince Arcturus of his own stupidity."

"Great! Thanks, Mum."

"No problem, Darling. Now, where's my black book? I've been waiting for this a *long* time ...")

The man sneezed and looked around bewilderedly, wondering where on earth that came from. It didn't help when he felt a decidedly dreadful chill crawl up his spine, sliding over him ever

so slowly, almost as if making sure that he wouldn't forget the sensation any time soon.

Arcturus Black didn't know what was happening at this particular moment in time, or when something explosive would – no doubt – come to his door, but if there was one thing he knew from all his years in The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black, it was this:

His family were going to cause massive amounts of trouble and *soon*, and he wouldn't escape the resulting horror unharmed. He could *feel* it in his bones.

*Bunch of idiots I'm related to. Why can't they just be for once?*

---

James spread his arms, a stupidly wide grin on his face. "Welcome to Potter Manor!"

Harry just raised a brow. "You do realise I've been here before, right?" he replied dryly.

"Am I not allowed to be welcoming to my future husband anymore?" James pouted, the childish expression at odds with the wicked promise in hazel eyes.

Harry felt himself flush and cursed his pale complexion; he shouldn't give this moron any more of a reason to inflate his ego any further. *Stupid perverted wanker.*

He cleared his throat, mentally pushing down the blush. "Please don't say that so loud. I understand that your parents are aware of your ... plans for the future, but Melissa hasn't been told anything yet."

James sobered, a distinctly guilty look overcoming him that made Harry soften a little. He wasn't trying to make his soulmate feel guilty or anything, he just wanted the two of them on the same page for their relationship. He wasn't going to keep bringing up James' mistakes over and over again, he knew all too well how that put a strain on any relationship. (His brief fling with Cho at fifteen had been a common complaint of Ginny's, even though the self-absorbed redhead hadn't even been anywhere near Harry's radar yet at the time. *Stupid woman.* He probably would have had a more fulfilling marriage with the murderous sixteen-year-old Tom Riddle from the diary, even if the sociopathic twat hadn't been more than half a bloody ghost.)

"James," Harry murmured quietly, taking the other boy's hand and squeezing it gently, "I'm not trying to make you feel guilty here. Constantly being bitter and petty by mentioning it won't do either of us any good, you know? But that doesn't mean that ignoring it would be any better. We need to acknowledge our disagreements or we'll just end up with a fuck-ton of resentment for each other," he explained with a grim smile. "I wasn't talking about the argument to get back at you, you know? I forgive you. I've already told you this. I'm not in the habit of lying to you, especially about things like this."

Harry watched James stood still in front of him, brown eyes gazing at him with endless gratitude that made Harry want to roll his eyes. *What a stupidly sappy man I've ended up with.*

The smaller boy quickly glanced around, making sure the two of them were alone before turning back to James with a sly smirk. At the inquisitive look he got, Harry stepped closer and reached up, pulling James' head down so he could press their lips together hard. Harry plastered his body to his soulmate's, licking into the inviting mouth and swallowing the eager groan he caused. (It might have made him the *slightest* bit smug. Just a bit.)

James pushed back and directed Harry to the wall, trapping his smaller body there as he continued to ravage Harry's mouth. The green-eyed boy was quite happy to surrender control of the kiss; seeing James look so wrecked and passionate was enough for Harry to wish he could just drop to his hands and knees for James to fuck him endlessly.

He could wish, at least. Puberty *had* to be close. He'd die from sexual frustration otherwise.

"James! Where are you?"

Harry pulled back with a gasp, eyes wide and panicked as he blinked through the lust. Accepting Dorea Potter may be, but seeing her preteen son snogged breathless with his hands down Harry's trousers in the middle of the parlour would *not* go over well with the intimidating witch. For either of them. And that didn't even get into anyone else that might be with her.

Evidently James thought the same, judging from his fearful expression as he turned towards the door. The taller boy quickly shoved his hand into his own pocket, reaching down further than what the dimensions of his clothes should logically allow. After a few seconds he pulled out a shimmering fabric that Harry immediately recognised, and he couldn't help but silently giggle as James hastily covered the two of them with the ancient Invisibility Cloak.

It was just in time too, as the fabric settled at the same time the Lady Potter stalked into the room, gazing around with a frown on her face.

"Where's he gone now?" she muttered to herself. "He'd better not be molesting Henry. I don't want to have to explain to Melissa why her cousin's lost his virtue at eleven."

Harry had to bite his tongue to stop himself from laughing out loud, but even that couldn't stop his shoulders from shaking, and he leaned forward to bury his face into James' shoulder to try and calm himself. Not that it was working that well. Dorea knew her son *way* too much.

The woman shook her head and walked back out, quietly listing places her not-so-errant son could possibly be. Harry listened to the sounds of her footsteps, the sharp taps slowly dimming as the woman got further from the room, and he took a deep breath before lifting his face and meeting James' eyes head-on. Said soulmate was looking more than a little indignant right about now, and Harry just grinned at him. It was almost cute how offended he looked.

"I can't believe my own mother just said that," James complained with a small pout (which he'd no doubt deny later on).

“I can’t believe you don’t realise just how aware your mother really is,” Harry retorted with a smirk.

James just huffed and held Harry closer, bending down to nose at Harry’s hair. It was quite nice. Intimate. But certainly more chaste than what they were doing not two minutes ago. “I wish we could just stay here and not deal with anyone else for the rest of the day.”

Harry hummed softly, fingers drawing random patterns into James’ chest. “I thought you wanted to see some of your cousins again?”

The other boy groaned exaggeratedly. “Why do you have to make so much sense?”

“One of us has to.”

James pulled back, a mock affronted look on his face. “Oi. I resemble that comment.”

Harry snorted before he started chuckling softly. James had such a shitty sense of humour.

“Whatever. Are you ready to meet my cousins? You know, the cousins you never got to meet before?”

Harry raised a brow in question. “You do realise if I had met them before, if they’d survived, I would have been your *son*?”

James leered at him, the expression looking *far* too lewd for the average twelve-year-old. “If that’d happened, the two of us would have been *very* kinky, wouldn’t we?”

He flushed deeply, ignoring the squirming feeling in his stomach at the idea of the two of them in a truly taboo relationship. He shouldn’t find that as ... *intriguing* as he did.

“Shut up, James.”

The taller boy just smirked lazily, hazel eyes deliberately trailing over his body, stopping very obviously on his lips that were still swollen and tingling from their enthusiastic snogging. The wicked expression on James’ face just grew.

“You say that, but you were the one who was begging me to fuck you while calling me ‘Daddy’.”

Harry averted his eyes, clearing his throat and swallowing reflexively over and over again as he remembered the – *very* – memorable sex marathon they’d had before being dumped in this world. A marathon lasting an entire twenty-four fucking hours. Many hours they’d spent indulging in filthy, raunchy debauchery of all types, in as many different positions with as many different kinks thrown in with the limited time they’d had.

He could feel his face burning, the pale skin no doubt paying some sort of sick homage to Gryffindor red at this particular moment in time, which *especially* didn’t help upon remembering just *where* they’d shagged each other raw. Harry was torn between horrific embarrassment and preening at the memory of how he’d reduced James to begging himself, as opposed to Harry being forced into the role of some stereotypical, submissive bed partner.

It was gratifying to know what sort of power he held over James. Knowing how the aforementioned power tended to reward them both in the most pleasurable way possible was even better.

(He was kind of worried what all of this said about his mind.)

“Okay. Right. Well, I do believe we need to find your mother before she does something to someone else out of frustration. Or before she realises what sort of son she actually birthed.”

James wiggled his eyebrows at Harry’s obviously mortified expression. “Don’t worry, *Darling*. I won’t let anyone know just how much filth you’ve got roaming around in that pretty little head of yours. That’s between us, and I quite like knowing that nobody else is going to get the opportunity to experience that *glorious* treasure trove of wonders.”

Harry pressed a hand against his burning face. “Please stop talking. I’m begging you.”

His soulmate just snickered to himself and pressed a chaste kiss to the crown of his head before gently wrapping an arm around Harry’s waist. “Now, while I would love to stand here all day and gaze at the emerald-eyed beauty before me –”

“I think you need to get your eyes tested again.”

“– I do believe my mother might be a *little* displeased with such a turn of events –”

“I sincerely hope you’re underestimating your mother on purpose, even you can’t be *that* dense.”

“– so, let’s go find some more Potters to meet and possibly annoy!”

Harry just sent a flat look at the idiot next to him and shook his head, turning so James couldn’t see the small smile he sported.

*Why am I even in love with this moron?*

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Harry looked around the room at the assorted people and pondered the pros and cons of some sort of Necromancy ritual for his own catharsis.

It wasn’t that he necessarily wanted to revive anyone for good – and considering his time travel-slash-dimension displacement, he wasn’t exactly sure which versions of people he’d even bring back – it was more that the idea of calling back a certain Dark Lord’s spirit, just to torture it and vent his own anger and frustrations, was a *very* appealing idea at this particular moment in time.

Some might wonder why he was now only just considering this, especially in light of everything else Voldemort had done, but Harry was somebody who understood things far more with visual aids and actions than just by reading about things.

Case in point, Harry – either in his past life or this one – was much more adept at practical classwork than he was at theory. Physically using his magic and manipulating it outside of

himself, observing how it affected the environment around him, feeling how his magic literally moved throughout his body, these were all concepts that Harry grasped a lot quicker than reading a book concerning how to use magic. He needed to *see* more than he needed to read in order to understand.

This also worked with things like history, personal or otherwise. Sirius was an example of this, as Harry hadn't fully grasped the implications of Walburga Black being dead until he'd seen the younger version of his godfather act in a way he never had before. Reading about current events in the newspaper would never have as strong an impact on him that seeing the repercussions of those events in person.

The gathering at Potter Manor was unfortunately one of these examples.

In his past life, after finally graduating school and researching the House of Potter out of boredom – and a desire to avoid the harpy he'd married for some reason – he'd discovered that the family had been a lot bigger in the past than he'd initially assumed from his ignorance. (Then again, nobody had apparently seen fit to remember any other members of the auspicious family, other than the couple that had publicly allied themselves to Albus Dumbledore. Yet more evidence that the light faction was *not* the epitome of all that was good in magic.)

Aside from his grandparents that had died from Dragon Pox, his entire family had been ravaged by war in the four decades before his birth. Obviously, there were other deaths before that with different causes, but Harry's original family tree showed nine relatives (spouses included) that had been killed in the war with Grindelwald, while the deaths of the remaining sixteen lay firmly at the feet of an insane Voldemort. Even worse was that a few of those sixteen had been younger than a year old. (And he was *definitely* not bitter that he didn't get to see the bastard die in person for his atrocities this time around. Not at *all*.)

While knowing that those people had died was horrible, Harry hadn't had any memories or anything, even any portraits to give him deeper knowledge of these people. It hadn't torn him apart because there hadn't been a true personal connection beyond the fact that they'd shared his name and blood.

But this was *nauseating*.

Harry was sat in the enlarged conservatory of Potter Manor, surrounded by a *ridiculous* number of people from the Potter family, and many of the people here had in fact already been killed by this point in his previous life. (It seemed that Death had miraculously rewarded them with this fact, though Harry thought it more likely that those deaths weren't even a blip on the eternal entity's radar. He seemed too apathetic to care about something as mundane as a 'reward'.)

Aside from James and his parents, his uncle Fleamont and his wife Euphemia were in attendance, the two Potioneers taking a break from their usual work to socialise. (For once, according to James.) They were accompanied by their son Victor, who was sitting next to his husband Nicholas Malfoy – *what the fuck?* – while happily bouncing their one-year-old son Matthew on his lap.



James' retired great-aunt and uncle, Laurel and Logan Jenkins, had decided to come to England for the reunion, though both were looking forward to resuming their retirement in Canada in a few days. (Not that they looked their hundred-ish years, but he supposed anyone would like a break after that long.) Their daughter Heather had also crossed the pond for the event, but the woman in her mid-fifties reminded Harry an awful lot of an older, female James. Mischievous brown eyes, a wicked smirk, this woman was clearly the opposite of her parents, and looking like a Marauder right before a prank if Harry was reading her right.

(He couldn't tell if he was more worried or anticipatory. Which was worrying in and of itself, to be honest.)

The other retired couple, two former Beauxbatons professors, were sat across the room on a small sofa together as they happily chatted to others. These were James' other great-aunt and uncle, David and Stephanie Potter, and the two of them now lived in France, apparently having loved the country so much after teaching that they decided it was the perfect place to retire.

Their son and his wife, Daniel and Titania, were sat across from them as the four discussed what sounded like elective differences between Beauxbatons and Hogwarts. (Harry honestly wanted to snort; Dumbledore might preach they were the premium institution of magic in Europe, but one only had to ask those on the continent how the ancient castle and its teachings were viewed to realise it was a load of bullshit. Hogwarts was *not* the best magic school around, not by a *long* shot.)

Daniel and Titania had three adult children who were also in attendance. Oberon had been joined by his wife Caroline and their two daughters, the five-year-old twins Belinda and Rosalind; the two girls were utterly adorable, and Harry couldn't stop the grin on his face from appearing as the two ran around with their father, play-acting that they were knights come to slay the dragon – Oberon himself.

The father of two also had a sister, one Cordelia Black nee Potter, which Harry thought was *very* interesting. Cordelia was married to the oldest son of disinherited Squib Marius Black, a man named Jason Black. The couple had two children themselves, three-year-old Menodora Black, and new-born Izar. What made everything even more bizarre in Harry's opinion was just how much the two children had inherited the Black Family magic. They were both Blacks through and through despite their grandfather being kicked out the family, not to mention not being pure-bloods. *Then again*, he thought, *you clearly don't need to be 'pure' to inherit certain gifts.*

The two children were also Metamorphmagi, a fact that seemed to make Dorea incredibly smug on her brother's behalf. (It was kind of petty, but Harry couldn't exactly bring himself to disagree, either.) Menodora currently sported the deep-red hair of her mother, with the customary silver eyes of the Blacks, while baby Izar was – unfortunately – completely at the mercy of his untrained abilities, and now had a head of pus-yellow hair and neon green eyes. (If he didn't think the parents would hex him dead, he might have let loose with the hysterics he could feel threatening to erupt.)

Lastly for the Potters was Cordelia's younger brother Caliban, a rather quiet man that apparently bred Crups for a living. Harry was impressed; they might be some of the simplest

magical pets to own, but successfully breeding any animal to be bought as a pet was an arduous task that deserved recognition. Also, he really wanted a dog. *Maybe if I ask Melissa nicely ...*

His cousin had also been asked to this family gathering, Dorea using the excuse that the Peverells were the ancestors of the House of Potter, so as distant kin, he and Melissa both deserved invitations. Which he would have believed if it weren't for the way that Dorea's eyes lit up with wicked glee whenever they spotted him and James together – *bloody hell, this woman is going to be my mother-in-law; what am I getting into?* – or how he kept hearing the name 'Orion Black' whenever the woman spoke to Harry's cousin.

In this particular case, he'd decided that ignorance was bliss.

There were of course a few others here not of Potter blood or name, but Harry wasn't shocked – and nor was James – to see Marius Black himself here. He knew the man was close to his younger sister (his older one was another – horrific – story altogether according to his soulmate), and them being bound through both the Black and Potter families had done nothing but make their bond stronger. Marius' muggle wife Gilian was also enjoying the reunion, the woman entirely accepting of her lack of magic, as well as her children possessing something she didn't. (And if he was quietly resentful of his past muggle guardian being so hateful when people like this woman existed, then that was between him, his mind and James.)

Marius' second son was sat next to his parents, the man apparently having been out of the country for so many years that he'd only met his young nephew and niece just once. Hector Black was a Magizoologist, and the man was finally taking a break from his work with the famous Newt Scamander – *lucky bastard* – to visit his family, and finally meet his sister-in-law's family. Hector had met Cordelia before, but the travelling wizard hadn't even met her parents or siblings before, which was probably yet another reason that Dorea looked so smug.

For some reason, James' first cousin Alphard Black was also in the Potter ancestral manor, the man having cheerfully tagged along with Marius' family. (The fact that Alphard apparently had the balls to openly interact with his disinherited uncle without any obvious fear for the Blacks' reaction was bloody hilarious to Harry. He could see where other Sirius got his worse habits from; between Alphard and James, Sirius had had no hope.)

According to a gleeful James, Alphard had tried to seduce Lucretia Prewett's husband at the Black reunion – even though the woman herself was pregnant – so was currently avoiding his own family lest his hormonal cousin track him down and attempt to murder him for his outrageous libido. Or so James had said verbatim. (Either his other half was being ridiculous for the sake of it, or murderous Blacks were just as eloquent while plotting vengeance as they were in their everyday lives.)

He and James were currently sat on the floor playing Wizard's chess, and Harry was just the slightest bit smug that he was winning for the third time in a row. Ron might have been a twat of the highest order, but he was a genius when it came to chess, and he'd taught Harry numerous strategies for the game that were incredibly useful when it came to continuously thrashing his soulmate.

“I swear you’re cheating,” James muttered with a frown on his face as he stared at the board.

“Nope, you just suck,” chirped Harry with a bright smile, lips twitching further at the half-hearted glare he got in return. Winding up his soulmate was *so* much fun.

James sighed heavily. “Yeah, yeah, laugh it up. I’m not great at chess, so what?”

“I wasn’t taking the piss or anything, you know? If I was going to mock you, there are plenty of other topics I could have chosen from,” Harry said dryly, smirking at James’ indignant squawk. “On another note,” he carried on quietly, “I was wondering if you saw it too.” He finished with a discreet flick of his eyes to one of the sofas in the corner where a couple of men were sitting and quietly talking.

Hazel eyes discreetly – *holy shit, the idiot actually understands subtlety; it’s a miracle* – swept across the room, hovering over the corner before refocusing on Harry, a lazy smirk on James’ face as their eyes met again.

“Well, well, well ... I wonder if this’ll end up with another union between the Houses of Black and Potter.”

Harry’s lips pulled up into a small smile, having thought the same exact thing not even a minute ago. Huddled together and conversing enthusiastically, wild gestures and all, were Hector Black and Caliban Potter. While some might consider them an odd pairing, Harry thought the fact that they both worked with animals was enough to have them talking all night. The two men hadn’t taken their eyes off of each other for well over an hour, which Harry knew because he’d been keeping half an eye on the clock for his own amusement.

If he was reading things right – which he might not be, because being romantically oblivious with people other than James was unfortunately just a part of who he was – then the two men were looking to follow in the footsteps of some of their family members via instigating a relationship that the vast majority of the magical community would be utterly confounded by. Dorea and Charlus had experienced this more, what with James’ father being Heir Potter – and therefore more well-known – when they got married, but Cordelia and Jason had also gotten their fair share of confusion, especially with Marius’ current position in the House of Black. The Potters not punishing Cordelia was also a point of confusion for many magicals in Britain; the idea that the House of Potter cared more about love than status was a bizarre one for many.

The green-eyed boy grinned at James. “Don’t you think it’s a bit odd that they’re both your cousins in different ways, but they might end up together?”

James shrugged, a wry expression on his face. “Welcome to magical Britain. Besides, nothing’ll ever be as bad as Walburga and Orion. Or the Gaunts.”

Harry shuddered lightly. “We’ve just eaten, don’t make me puke.”

A loud laugh was the only thing he got in response and Harry rolled his eyes, shaking his head as he watched James fall onto his back and clutch his stomach as he cackled hysterically. *Moron.*

“Dare I even ask?”

Harry looked up to see Charlus Potter peering down at him. It was bizarre, he thought, looking at this man. This man was what James was going to look like when he was older, seeing as his soulmate was the spitting image of his father. (Harry ignored the small voice in the back of his head that pointed out that Charlus was a very attractive man, so he would no doubt continue to appreciate James physically several decades into the future. He wasn't a pervert or anything, he was just ... using his eyes.)

He smiled at the man. “He’s just laughing at something he said again, Mr Potter.”

Charlus just huffed and rolled his eyes, a gentle look in the hazel orbs. “Henry, how many times must I tell you, it’s perfectly okay for you to call me Charlus? Besides, I think we both know we’ll end up closer in the future,” he added with a pointed look at a still-laughing James.

Harry felt his face flush a deep red and he ducked his head, but not before missing the fond expression on the man’s face. It was ... odd, knowing that this man had once been the grandfather that had died before he was even born, but was now going to become his father-in-law in the future. He supposed the best part of his situation was how Charlus was very obviously accepting of Harry as James’ future partner – in his eyes – instead of trying to drive him away. (According to James, the only thing his father was concerned about was James himself, a fact that made his soulmate rather smug in some fucked-up way. But it was James, so Harry wasn’t going to question it. James Potter was kind of a twat, whether he loved him or not.)

He felt a warm hand on his head and peeked up from beneath his lashes, not wanting to disappoint a man who would be his family in the future, and was already a man that he respected. Charlus was looking down at him with a warm smile which widened when their eyes met, his hand softly ruffling Harry’s waves.

“Seeing as my son’s now been accosted by his mother, would you like to explore the manor? I’m sure I can be as good a tour guide as James.”

Harry’s eyes widened and he nodded quickly, practically beaming at Charlus. It was a little sad that after so many years of life that he still craved some sort of parental care, and while he had Henry’s memories of interacting with his parents’ portraits, it just wasn’t the same. The last time he’d truly had someone care for him in such a way was Andromeda after the war, and before that it was Sirius. Both times hadn’t lasted long because of tragic deaths, so Harry had become accustomed to not having a parent’s love.

Seeing Charlus look at him in almost the same way as he did his own son, Harry thought it was no wonder that teenage Sirius had run to this man when Walburga became too much. It was touching to know that, despite Charlus not knowing much about him, he was still willing to care about Harry as his own person, not the Heir to a long-forgotten House from centuries ago.

Harry stood up and took a deep breath before peering up at the Lord Potter. “Thanks for this ... Charlus.”

The man smiled softly and squeezed his shoulder. “No problem, Son.”

He blushed again, but he wouldn’t deny the form of address made him feel like he could cast a corporeal Patronus on the first try.

*Son. That sounds amazing.*

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“Do you want some hot chocolate?”

Harry blinked tiredly from his place in James’ bed – which he was pretty sure his mum knew about, if the wicked smirk she’d sent him after telling him about the guest room was any indication – and yawned, his hand coming up to cover his gaping mouth and muffle the sound. If anything, it just made Harry more adorable. James kind of wanted to squish him like a stuffed bear.

“Sure. Are you going to call the elves or ...?”

James shook his head and grinned. “Naw, no point. I know how to make it, and it’s a nice night out, anyway. We can go and sit by the back door, if you want?”

“That sounds great,” Harry said with a small smile, green eyes soft with affection.

Even aside from missing sex, James couldn’t get enough of Harry’s love for him. He didn’t know if it was a soulmate thing, or if it was just because Harry was fucking brilliant, but either way, he felt like he was constantly floating on cloud nine just being around the other man (even if he was physically a boy).

He climbed out the soft bed and grabbed their dressing gowns, silently casting a couple of warming charms seeing as the night was quite cool at the moment. The grateful smile he got in return was certainly worth it.

The two of them walked hand-in-hand, quietly chuckling about the earlier gathering, and how Oberon, Cordelia and Caliban had ended up taking a not-so-consensual swim in the pond outside after offending Heather. The older woman hadn’t taken any questioning of her work that well, and instead of talking things out like a rational adult, had immediately thrown the three siblings towards the water with no absolutely regret.

That had, of course, offended David and Stephanie, the couple not appreciating the treatment of their grandchildren at *all*, even if the three of them had technically started the argument themselves. The couple had then ended up in a blazing row with Laural and Logan, questioning how they’d raised a woman so opinionated and carefree despite her age, which had *not* endeared them to anyone else in the room.

His mother had particularly taken offense to what she deemed “fucking useless and sexist ideals, and for fuck’s sake Stephanie, your father wanted to lick the boots of Gellert-fucking-Grindelwald despite being half a fucking century older, and you escaped him against his wishes and married a fucking Potter, so don’t you dare talk to me about being a fucking ‘proper’ woman, you absolute, moronic, fucking *dipshit*.”

Needless to say, things had devolved from there.

Aunt Euphie had taken Dorea's side, even while subtly chiding his mother on her language, Uncle Fleamont had more or less dragged his son and son-in-law to grab all the underage children and escape elsewhere, and Daniel and Titania had casually ignored the mess their children had started by cheerfully calling for an entire case of firewhiskey from the elves, and started to drink their way into oblivion with no hesitation or caution whatsoever.

Alphard had sat in the corner, flicking through a book and casually shooting sarcastic remarks at everyone within earshot, which thankfully ended when Marius' wife had started musing out loud what the hormonal Lucretia Prewett would do if she discovered that the man who'd tried to seduce her husband was currently sitting in a manor that had had its wards lowered at the moment, and therefore there was nothing to prevent anyone else from entering if they so wished.

(For a muggle that had no defence against angry witches and wizards, Gilian Black had some fucking *balls*. James thought it was hysterical to witness.)

Marius himself had simply sighed and wondered what it said that the Potters were just as bad as his birth family, which had offended *everyone*, and the man had ended up making a hasty retreat to find Fleamont and care for the children, or something along those lines. But everybody else knew he was just trying to save his own skin. Which James honestly couldn't blame him for. His uncle had *quite* the talent for pissing people off while using the least amount of effort possible.

Of course, James had made it look like he was leaving, before doubling back with the Invisibility Cloak and watching the entire spectacle with glee. It wasn't every day he got to bear witness to the evidence that *both* sides of his family were indeed full of nutters, and it was *glorious* to witness in all its insanity. It was a shame that Harry hadn't been there to see it, but seeing as he'd been bonding with Charlus instead, James couldn't exactly complain.

(He didn't think he could fully explain just how excited he was seeing his father start to treat Harry like a second son. His soulmate deserved a parent's love, and there really was no other option available to him at this time. Melissa – who'd funnily enough sat back with Daniel and Titania during the screaming match, drinking and giggling away without a care in the world; *what a cool woman* – wasn't a parent to Harry, and portraits were only magical memories, so they weren't going to fill the emotional void in his other half.

Knowing that his own parents were already coming around to having a future son-in-law, someone that was essentially going to be another child to them, was gratifying to witness. He still wasn't happy in any way knowing that he'd broken Harry's trust before, but he was immensely thankful that he'd been right about their reactions. He wasn't smug – could *never* be after his stupid fuck-up – but he was relieved. Immensely so.)

James squeezed Harry's hand tighter, grinning at the light in those bright-green eyes as he regaled him with the crazy antics of the House of Potter. He probably had a *very* silly smile on his face right now, but in the face of Harry's good mood, he couldn't care less about his appearance.

A high-pitched, feminine giggle floated down the corridor from in front of them and the two boys stopped, looking at each other before peering into the low lights ahead of them. James pulled Harry closer as they tiptoed forwards, knowing that the wards had been raised again before everyone went to bed. Nobody else could get in, but that didn't mean things were perfectly safe. The taller boy inwardly cursed himself for forgetting his wand and cloak, and a quick glance at Harry showed he was in the same situation. *We need some holsters; can't be walking around without a weapon.*

Despite his quickened pulse, James wasn't actually that scared considering the mystery woman laughed again, sounding much too carefree to be up to no good in the dead of night. The two soulmates started to lean around the corner before they heard a thump, and the tinkling laughter broke off into a low moan, the owner of the voice sounding *very* pleased with themselves.

Neither of them were strangers to that particular sound, even more so when the breathy moans were joined by a deeper voice, the owner groaning and panting along with the first person. The fact that the two voices were accompanied by a rhythmic thumping left absolutely *nothing* to the imagination, and Harry and James looked at each other with wide eyes, silently questioning how the fuck this was their lives.

"At least I know those voices don't belong to my parents," he whispered almost silently, thanking every single god he could think of that he hadn't run into *that* scenario. He probably would have begged Harry to obliviate him if they had.

Harry bit his lip and silently giggled. He flicked his eyes back to the corner before looking back at James, cocking his head to the side in question.

To look, or not to look?

Now, James was a curious bloke, and he knew full well that Harry was, too. That wasn't the issue. The issue was whether they wanted to see two people – who they definitely knew, if they were in the building at this particular moment in time – shagging each other's brains out in the hallways of Potter Manor. He met Harry's eyes and saw the undisguised curiosity, not to mention the wicked amusement, and realised the truth:

They were both a little screwed in the head.

As one they nodded at each other, before pressing closer to the wall and edging closer to the corner. They could see some light coming from the lamps, so identifying the exhibitionists wouldn't be a problem, they'd just have to make sure they were quick and left before anyone saw *them*.

James pressed against Harry's back, his chin on top of his head, and the two of them moved as one to peek around the corner.

*Fucking hell, they've got some stamina.*

The hazel-eyed boy was in bizarre awe of the fact that Alphard-bloody-Black was holding up his aunt-slash-cousin Heather, the woman completely off the floor as he slammed into her

repeatedly, her legs wrapped around his waist and her fingers digging into his shoulders. Neither of them seemed to have any awareness of their surroundings, their eyes locked onto each other as they fucked relentlessly against the wall of the wide, and very open, corridor on the second floor,

The two of them were still fully dressed except for where needed, and James almost wanted to shake his head in exasperation. He'd *never* do anything like this out in the open, because he'd probably try and kill anyone if they happened to see his beloved Harry naked. Or if they saw his face during sex. Seeing those emerald eyes filled with lust, pupils blown wide and focused just on him, or the expression of rapture on Harry's face, those were *his*. Nobody, *nobody*, would get to see his soulmate like that.

James quietly pulled Harry away from present-day porn in his house and took the long way to the kitchen, quickly grabbing the promised hot chocolates, but instead leading the two of them back to James' room. He didn't want to know if any of his other relatives were balls-deep in each other outside their bedrooms. Aside from the mental trauma, he'd be even more pissed off that he couldn't do the same with Harry. (When they were old enough, neither of them would be leaving their bed for a *week*, and that was a promise.)

When the two were sat next to each other in bed once more, James turned to the other and smiled bemusedly. "Well, that certainly wasn't a couple I was expecting."

Harry snorted. "I can see why they go so well together, but I didn't think they'd be so cavalier as to start fucking without being behind a closed door."

James just laughed at Harry's exasperated expression. The two of them had lived for decades by this point – including James' time in the afterlife – and coming across a couple shagging by accident wasn't nearly enough to scandalise them into mortification. It was annoying, but more of a 'can't you do that somewhere else, you're in my bloody way' kind of situation, rather than any revulsion or horror.

"Honestly, I'm kind of impressed that a woman of nearly sixty still seems to be as horny as a teenager," Harry mused to himself.

"The wonders of magic," James replied with a sly grin. He took Harry's empty mug and put it on the bedside table next to his own, before gently pushing the smaller boy back until he was laying down. James slowly crawled on top and leaned over, their noses less than a centimetre apart. He smirked at the visible interest in those green orbs. *Lucky, lucky me.*

"You know what that means, right? After we start shagging again, we're going to be like that randy couple for fucking *decades*. I can guarantee, Love, that *my* sex drive is going to go nowhere. What about you?"

Pale fingers came up to run through his hair, gently scratching his scalp as green eyes darkened even further. "Let's just say if you keep this up, our bed's probably going to have to be replaced *very* often."

"Hmm, man after my heart."



“I do try.”

James smiled. “You don’t even need to, I’m already here.”

Harry snorted, but James could see his expression soften as a blush painted itself across those gorgeous cheeks. “You’re such a sap.”

He leaned down and nuzzled Harry’s neck. “Only for you.”

There was no verbal response, but Harry’s arm’s tightened around his neck and pulled him down next to him, the smaller boy manoeuvring himself so he was curled up in James’ arm, Harry’s head on his chest.

The silence of the bedroom was a welcome one, the quiet allowing him to listen to Harry’s soft breathing, the near-silent hums as James slowly stroked up and down the smaller back. He felt content.

Harry suddenly said “Huh” and James made a questioning noise in his throat.

“What do you think Dorea’s going to do when she finds out her nephew fucked her husband’s cousin not even two days after trying to seduce a pregnant woman’s husband?”

He paused as he considered that scenario. How his temperamental mother might react, and what she might do, and how Alphard and Heather might behave in response.

*Yeah, how about no.*

“Can I come and stay at Mors Hall?”

His traitorous soulmate just started giggling into his chest, and James huffed into inky waves.

Things were going to interesting when things came to light, that was for sure.

*Oh well, at least I’ve got Harry.*

He smiled down at his soulmate, the smaller body still shaking somewhat from his laughter.

They could deal with anything together.

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**A/N:** Also, here's a quick list of all the various Potters and some physical characteristics. I haven't gone into too much detail, so feel free to use your imagination :)

- Charlus Potter – Lord Potter (politician); messy black hair/hazel eyes
- Dorea Potter nee Black - Lady Potter (socialite/estate manager); curly black hair/silver eyes
- Fleamont Potter – Potioneer; messy black hair/pale green eyes

- Euphemia Potter nee Longbottom – Potioneer/Potions writer; curly blonde hair/brown eyes
- Victor Potter – Potioneer; messy blonde hair/green eyes
- Nicholas Potter nee Malfoy – works in family apothecary; straight blonde hair/silver eyes
- Matthew Potter – messy black hair/silver eyes
- Laurel Jenkins nee Potter – former tutor (retired to Canada); straight black hair/blue-grey eyes
- Logan Jenkins – former tutor (retired to Canada); straight brown hair/brown eyes
- Heather Jenkins – travel writer; straight brown hair/brown eyes
- David Potter – former Beauxbatons Professor (retired to France); messy black hair/hazel eyes
- Stephanie Potter nee Davis – former Beauxbatons Professor (retired to France); curly red hair/blue eyes
- Daniel Potter – Herbologist; messy red hair/hazel eyes
- Titania Potter nee Rushden – Herbologist; wavy black hair/blue eyes
- Oberon Potter – Herbologist; wavy black hair/blue eyes
- Caroline Potter nee Bell – Stay at home mother/Healer; curly black hair/grey eyes
- Belinda Potter – curly black hair/blue eyes
- Rosalind Potter – curly black hair/blue eyes
- Cordelia Black nee Potter – tutor; messy red hair/hazel eyes
- Jason Black – Lawyer; wavy black hair/silver eyes
- Menodora Black – wavy black hair/silver eyes (Metamorphmagus)
- Izar Black – wavy black hair/silver eyes (Metamorphmagus)
- Caliban Potter – Crup breeder – wavy black hair/hazel eyes
- Hector Black – Magizoologist; curly black hair/silver eyes

Hey guys!

Yeah, yeah, it's been a while, I know, but unfortunately I suffer from this condition called 'full-time employment', and funnily enough, it's kind of a pain to manage. Fellow sufferers, you have my deepest sympathies!

Okay, moving on from my slight insanity - stress is no laughing matter - I should say I didn't go too much into the individual family reunions because this chapter was already quite a bit more than the planned 4000-ish words lol, and I really wanted to get this out. I am sorry for taking so long, but things happen sometimes.

On another note, as I'm pretty sure that the monumental list of OCs I introduced will go right over some peoples' heads, I've updated my deviantart account with loads of family trees for this fic. After the standard deviantart . com (without spaces) you need to add /anime-otaku20/gallery/66992487/A-Life-of-Insanity-Take-Two for all family trees related to this story. Hopefully that helps a bit.

Thanks for reading guys, and see you next time!

(Btw, you guys are all amazing, thanks for being so cool about everything. I read all your reviews, and even if I can't reply to some of them, I appreciate each and every one of them.)

Adios! :D

# Things change, and things remain

## Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Huh,” said Harry bemusedly, “and here I thought baby booms usually followed a war, not just because everyone's too horny to use contraceptives.”

James just cackled and grabbed onto Harry, rolling them both over on the bed so that Harry was lying on top of James. The Potter Heir carried on laughing hysterically despite Harry rolling his eyes at his soulmate – it was probably encouraging the crazy twat, to be honest – as he grinned up at the smaller boy.

“Just think, in a few years we can add to the numbers.”

Harry gazed down with a flat expression on his face. “Seeing as we're *twelve*, it's going to be a bit bloody longer than 'a few' years.”

The hazel-eyed boy pouted playfully as he hugged Harry tighter. “And here I thought you loved me.”

*I'm not even going to dignify that with a response*, thought Harry, the boy simply raising a thin brown in derision in place of verbally cutting into his partner. *Again*.

James smirked back before the expression morphed into genuine amusement. “I have to agree though, it's bloody mental how many cousins I'm going to get by this time next year. I mean, I knew Aunt Lucretia was expecting, and Tonks is pretty unforgettable, even as a kid,” he added as Harry snickered in agreement. Those baby pictures from Andi *were* rather hard to forget. “It's the others that are giving me a headache. Not the Weasleys, 'cause even now I can't remember exactly how many gingers there were at the end, but the Blacks ...”

Harry hummed quietly, the innocent sound at odds with the wicked expression on his face. “I'm not sure why you sound so put out, you have that batshit crazy blood running through your veins, too.”

The other boy spluttered, the offended look on his face making Harry laugh out loud without inhibition. It was nice, just having time like this to themselves, even if James was a complete and utter headcase. (A headcase that Harry loved to wind up, but that was neither here nor there.) Having the day off to sit back and relax with one another was rather calming, especially as the two of them were already ahead in their school work.

Their day had been rather relaxing, what with the two of them spending the morning at Quidditch practice – neither of them could really fathom giving up something that had been a staple of theirs for years at Hogwarts – before having a stupidly romantic picnic by the lake because James was a sappy bastard who had too many elves on his side. (Though Harry had discretely stolen the flowers that his soulmate had given him to preserve later, which was entirely his own fucking business, and no, he didn't give a crap if people thought him to be too 'feminine', it was private, thank you very fucking much.

... So he might have some anger issues, sue him.)

The two soulmates were currently ensconced in their dorm on James' bed, playing Exploding Snap – or they had been – and musing over the current rush of pregnancies that had spontaneously appeared in the Potter and Black families. As James had said, Lucretia Prewett was set to give birth in the new year, and had been in the previous timeline, as had Andromeda – after eloping and getting disinherited, that it.

(Funnily enough, his devious little shit of a soulmate had prevented that this time by getting Dorea – the origin of James' sly quirks, Harry was sure – to essentially blackmail Lord Arcturus Black into approving of the match, and allowing the unusual couple to live together in happily wedded bliss.

Harry was honestly curious what sort of dirt his future mother-in-law had on Lord Black, but he had the feeling he was better off living in ignorance. Call it intuition.)

Either way, while there might be a couple of pregnancies playing out the same way as they had in their previous timeline, there were still a few surprises that were giving magical Britain a collective headache at the complete and utter absurdity of everything. Odd – and incredibly quick – marriages, productive honeymoons, really fucking weird couples ...

He'd thought it was obvious that Potters and Black made troublesome combinations.

Like he and James had predicted all those months ago – though the chemistry had seemed almost tangible by the end of the reunion – James' cousin Caliban had very much hit it off with Hector Black, so much so that the two animal enthusiasts had entered a betrothal agreement not a month after being introduced to one another. And then got married three weeks after that.

Marius Black was apparently rather entertained that his daughter-in-law's younger brother had become his own son-in-law, for no other reason than it pissed off Arcturus that he had to deal with the House of Potter even more as a result, which meant dealing with *Dorea* even more. Sirius' paternal grandfather had 'miraculously' reinstated Marius as a Black just after Andromeda's wedding, as well as a slightly bewildered Cedrella Weasley who had no bloody clue as to how her new family of ginger blood traitors was even welcome in the vicinity of the House of Black (-hearted pricks with flags of pure-blood supremacy shoved so far up their own arses that you can see the symbols of hypocrisy whenever they opened their mouths). Or so his soulmate said with a devil-like smirk on his face.

Say what you will about the woman's language, but she was hilariously accurate.

So yes, there was another Potter-Black marriage that had raised a few eyebrows – and probably the blood pressure of Lord Black – but even more surprising was that the couple were already expecting their first child together after only two and a half months of marriage. Caliban was two months gone at the moment, so he'd be giving birth in late Spring to another child of The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black.

Interestingly, Hector's brother Jason himself was about to become a father once more, even though he and Cordelia had originally only ever had two children together. Harry had eventually learned that Marius' family had fled from Britain before the First War properly started, using Gringotts to assist them with crafting new identities and finding new homes overseas, before promptly hiding themselves from the House of Black in every way possible, magically or otherwise.

Marius' lack of magic aside, he was so obviously a Black it wasn't funny.

The House of Black was still – and always would be, Harry was sure – composed of individuals who were determined to get their way in every single endeavour of theirs, and would do whatever it took to achieve their goals, regardless of any judgement sent their way. That, or they'd just roll with the punches of life in a strangely nonchalant manner of haughty apathy, appearing so utterly unconcerned about the consequences of life and removed from reality.

(Harry had seen it more than enough with James' reaction to his relationship with Harry. Just because the reincarnated Peverell was happy to be with his soulmate, didn't mean that he hadn't been utterly bewildered at the circumstances and progression of their relationship. That James *hadn't* been was because of the genetic self-entitlement of the Blacks, it had to be. And yeah, Harry might have originally been the grandson of Dorea Potter nee Black, but nurture was just as important as nature, therefore he was relieved of the burden that came with sharing blood with the crazy fuckers responsible for more than half of magical Britain's political catastrophes.

Which translates very nicely to, 'Fuck you, James, you have no room when it comes to talking about sanity, you utter dickhead.')

James just pouted and leaned back into his pillow. "You're so mean to me, Harry. What did I ever do to deserve this?"

Harry just sent him a flat look, trying to keep his composure in the face of his soulmate's offended visage. Which was more than a little difficult considering that James currently had an expression of prickly haughtiness on his childlike face, the slightly rounded cheeks a stark reminder of his status as a literal *child*. It was cute, he supposed, seeing James still try and project an aura of a fully-grown adult man when his voice hadn't even changed yet, but Harry would let him be for now. He couldn't be arsed to deal with the mortal offence his other half would no doubt feel if Harry insulted his pre-teen fragile masculinity.

"I do so apologise for the slight against your blood. Please find it in your merciful heart to forgive me."

"That would sound much more impressive if you actually had some emotion in your voice."

“I don’t know what you’re talking about. Can't you hear the sincerity straight from my soul?”

James gave him a flat look in response. “Unless ‘sincerity’ suddenly became synonymous with ‘apathy’ without me realising, I think you’ll find I’m in the right here, Darling.”

Harry just stared back with blank eyes for a few moments before he felt his lips twitching minutely, the muscles in his cheeks betraying him massively. He gave up and grinned broadly at James, laughing loudly as his soulmate joined him immediately, the two boys creasing up raucously as they lay in each other’s arms. Harry felt giddy from happiness.

It was rather strange, he thought, that he’d never really been able to relax in the dorms before. Even as Hogwarts had become his true home, there was always the undercurrent of fear, that perhaps this fantastical world was going to turn out to be a dream, that he was going to blink and wake up in the cupboard under the stairs, Petunia’s shrill voice streaming in through the crack of the door as she hissed at him to make breakfast without burning the bacon. That didn’t even get into the yearly dangers that followed him and plagued him at every moment, even while in his own dormitory, ensuring he didn’t feel relaxation for a single moment.

Yet now, the mere presence of the irritating sod who was his partner in every way possible worked so that he could literally *feel* the stress evaporate from his shoulders, the tension dissipating every time that he caught wicked hazel eyes with his own. Harry didn’t know if it was a soulmate thing, or if it was just a James thing, but what he did know was that there was very little he wouldn’t do to keep hold of this wondrous feeling. Call him selfish, or greedy, or whatever the bloody hell people could think of to insult him, Harry honestly couldn’t give a toss when he finally knew what it was to be happy. After years upon years of a shitty existence, he was quite content to focus on himself and his own happiness for once.

Then again, happiness didn’t remove the possibility of his soulmate being a pain in the arse.

“Let me guess? Alphard?” Harry asked with a wicked smirk.

“He eloped with my bloody aunt!” James exclaimed exasperatedly. “Shagging her in the dead of night in someone else’s home was bad enough, but getting her pregnant and having a self-imposed shotgun wedding to cover it up really took it a step further!”

Harry simply bent forward once more, burying his face into James’ chest to muffle his snickers. Which didn’t work that well seeing as his soulmate could still feel him laughing, but oh well. The situation was too funny to ignore, and James knew it too, no matter how much he whined.

The midnight tryst he and his other half had stumbled upon had turned into a whirlwind romance of sorts, the two carefree magicals having accidentally conceived a child over the summer before eloping to avoid the stigma of having a baby out of wedlock. Well, that or avoid the combined wrath of the Potter and Black families. Harry had a feeling it was the latter. *Bloody hell, I wonder what their kid'll be like.*

“I thought you’d be happy to have another cousin. A cousin twice over, in fact.”

James snorted above his head. "Having a cousin isn't the problem, having a cousin born from *Alphard and Heather* is the issue. I mean, I'm well aware that I'm a monumental pain in the arse, but the idea of that offspring is more than a little worrying."

Harry raised his head and grinned at amused hazel eyes. "At least you're taking it better than Sirius."

The taller boy started chuckling lightly at the thought of his cousin. "Well, in poor Padfoot's defence, he also has to deal with his darling father now having a love life again after his hag of a mother."

Harry hummed quietly, the placid sound at odds with the sly expression on his young face. "I'm not sure, but I think Orion might actually be scared of me now."

"I still can't believe you gave *Orion Black* the shovel talk," James sniggered. "You've got balls of steel, Love."

Harry gave the other boy a half-hearted glare in response to the cheesy pet name, knowing it was a lost cause at this point. There was also the fact that James now sounded entirely genuine when he used them, not even a hint of his usual mocking tone to be found. Which admittedly made Harry feel warm and giddy, but like *hell* was he going to admit to liking such a cliché term of endearment. He had more pride than *that*.

"I didn't give him a shovel talk, I just asked him to make sure that Melissa was happy seeing as she's been caring for me her entire life," Harry replied primly, fluttering his eyelashes at James' grin. "I didn't say a single threatening word."

"You stared him dead in the eyes with those big green orbs unnerving him before tearing up, didn't you?"

"It's not my fault the man has no willpower when it comes to children," Harry sniffed with an air of superiority. *No wonder Sirius gets away with murder.*

James lifted his hand and started stroking his hair, a gentle smile on his face that was at odds with the lingering glint of amusement Harry could see swimming in hazel orbs. Harry closed his eyes and leaned into the warm hand, relishing the quiet.

This was what he'd always wanted, a simple life where he could just be Harry with someone he loved. It was gratifying in a way that being the saviour of the wizarding world could never be.

Harry opened his eyes and leaned forward, pressing a firm yet chaste kiss to James' mouth, humming into the warm mouth when gentle hands wound themselves into his hair and cradled his head. He didn't think he'd ever get used to the rush that came with this addictive relationship, and if that was selfish, then so be it.

Harry wanted to be happy for himself this time around.



The smaller boy pulled back and smiled contentedly before the expression morphed into a smirk that reeked of mischief. James cocked his head to the side, a look of intrigue on his face, and Harry chuckled in response.

“If this is what Sirius is like with Alphard giving him a cousin, what do you think he's going to be like when Melissa and Orion get around to giving him siblings?”

James blinked slowly before an expression of unholy glee painted itself across his face. His soulmate looked to be a split second away from breaking down in hysterics, but the hazel-eyed boy held onto his composure and hugged Harry closer. He leaned into Harry's face with a shit-eating grin.

“Can you imagine Sirius with a little sister?”

And with that hilarious image in mind – and it *was* hilarious; the Black in question was adorably chivalrous when it came to younger girls – James lost it and sunk back into his pillows, cackling away like the crazy bastard he truly was, but always denied being out of some warped sense of ego.

Harry grinned and shook his head, content to simply get comfortable on James' chest while his soulmate had – yet another – meltdown.

*What sort of family am I going to marry into?*

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“Are you okay, Sirius?”

*No, my father's turned into some sort of lovesick romantic, my insane uncle is going to become a father, and there are too many perverts who keep looking at my adorable brother. I thought James was a creep, but this is ridiculous!*

Not that he said any of that out loud. Remus was well aware of the troubles of his everyday life, Sirius having ranted on the topics more than a few times already – earning an exasperated eye-roll each time, which was very unwarranted, thank you very much – and spiralling into a pit of despair, anxiety, and likely premature heart problems.

*Long live the House of Black.*

Sirius rolled over on his bed – rather grateful his aunt Cassiopeia wasn't there to lecture him on propriety again – and shifted so he could peek over his duvet to eye his studious roommate. Remus was sat at his desk, jotting down notes as he scanned over a dusty tome, a slight furrow between his brows as he studied what was no doubt centuries-old vernacular. Seeing as Remus often ranked within the top five students of the year – always making it into the top ten, at the very least – it was a common sight, though he did have a tendency to overwork himself.

The brunette got ill fairly often, as did his mother seeing as Remus often took time off to visit her. It was ... *odd*. Sirius wasn't stupid by any account, but he didn't know a lot about health

and sickness, so he wasn't in the best position to figure out the issue. Remus was his best friend, and the Black would be more than happy to help in any way possible.

It would help if Remus wasn't lying to him.

Growing up as the son of Heir Black and ... *that woman*, not to mention being surrounded by the general back-stabbing of his older relatives, Sirius had learned to read body language and voice intonation from a young age – *fun memories, I miss them so much* – so spotting the lies in someone not trained to hide their emotions was painfully easy. It was even more obvious with Remus' clear guilt that was like a flashing sign whenever he looked at Sirius. The way he fidgeted, his eyes continuously flickering to the side, muscles coiled tightly with obvious tension, the young Black reasoned even the densest members of his family – *looking at you, Uncle Alphard* – could tell they weren't being told the truth.

He wouldn't say anything, though. Sirius knew that everyone had their own secrets, whether they wanted to know them or not. Remus more than likely had his own issues, and unless it looked like the brunette couldn't handle things by himself, Sirius wouldn't act like a self-entitled arsehole and butt his nose into the other boy's business. (He'd seen his uncle Cygnus make a twat of himself enough times to know how *not* to act by now.)

Secrets were personal, so he wouldn't pry. Everyone was entitled to their own privacy. Or needed it because nobody needed to find out the truth of certain things that would completely redefine the perspective their society had on a certain group of individuals. Which was already tenuous because of arrogance, ignorance and a lack of empathy, all tied together with a superiority-ridden ribbon of callousness born of social elevation.

He respected his family, but he wasn't blind.

Besides, their society already looked upon the House of Black with a healthy dose of wariness born from dealing with the more temperamental members of the family. People really didn't need to start examining the secrets of The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black beyond casual interest. Sirius knew there was much to be done to regain a position of respect among all factions, respect which would remain absent if the House's secrets came to light. Like the fact that three grown adults all died at the Black reunion the summer before he was born. A *tragic* accident. A *terribly unfortunate* occurrence. An incident of macabre fortune for his grandfather, as his three most vocal detractors all perished in a *horrific* accident of tragic proportions.

His family was so screwed up.

*No, nope, not happening. Not even going to think about it. Grandfather is a perfectly normal man, albeit a rather over-enthusiastic dueller with Grandfather Pollux. I'm sure he had nothing to do with three of Grindelwald's staunchest – and craziest – supporters dropping dead on the same day, there's no way. Maybe it really was an accident?* Sirius thought that idea over and snorted, shaking his head in disgust. *Yeah, and the hag that gave birth to me would have been happy for me to marry a muggle-born.*

“Sirius?”

He looked up to see Remus eyeing him oddly, a faint look of concern on his tired face. *What is up with that?* “Are you okay? You're pulling some strange faces over there.”

“I'm fine,” he replied with a grin, ignoring his concerns for the moment. He was the grandson of Melania Black, and that was enough of a reason to be sure his determination would win out in the end. That woman was the very definition of 'tenacious'. “I was just thinking about our Transfiguration essay. It's such a pain in the arse. I'd ask James for help, but he's an even bigger pain in the arse than the work. I still can't believe that idiot is so bloody smart,” he muttered with a frown, thoughts of his irritating – yet admittedly hilarious – cousin plaguing his mind. Even into their second year, Sirius was still suffering from James-related stress. *Prick.*

Remus' lips twitched slightly and he huffed a small laugh. “I'm sure James would help you if you asked, he's not truly a bad person. Look at how he treats Henry.”

“That's not helping his case,” Sirius deadpanned. That 'treatment' was a problem in and of itself.

“Either way, I'm sure you'll figure it out. It's better than going all mother hen on those creeps who keep eyeing your brother,” said Remus distractedly, his green eyes already back on whatever the hell he was reading.

“WHAT?!” he shrieked, whipping his head back round to his room-mate, desperately hoping he hadn't heard what he thought he had. *No. I refuse. This can't be happening.*

Wide green eyes were frozen on his, their owner perfectly still in his chair as if he were preparing to flee at a moment's notice. *He fucking better not.* “Err ... You *know* about this. I mean, you keep going on about it. Why are you going mad now?”

“That was generally!” he cried out, waving his arms around to convey the 'how the hell was I supposed to punish hundreds of people in this bloody massive castle for looking at my way-too-adorable brother'. Which was perfectly understandable; Regulus was on the same level of cute as Henry, and look what *he* attracted! “I didn't do anything when the year started, and it was supposed to have calmed down, but now ...” Sirius closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and exhaled after several seconds. He opened his eyes and met Remus' gaze head on.

“Who was it?”

The brunette swallowed and cleared his throat. “I believe there were several fourth years – Ravenclaws and Slytherins together – who were watching Regulus. And mentioned something about binding themselves to the House of Black.”

*I'd like to see them fucking try.*

Sirius knew well what wasn't being said. *Marriage.* Political marriages weren't rare, and his family had condoned marriages while its members were questionably young in the past, therefore it wasn't outside of the realm of expectation that Regulus could already be considered for such a union. The same for Sirius, except there was probably a general

consensus that the Blacks were trying to make a premium political match for him as the future Lord Black, and were scouring their society for the perfect spouse.

He might have believed it too, except his father had sworn that his children would both be marrying for love after his disaster of a marriage to ... *her*. Neither he nor Regulus would be forced into a marriage for the sole purpose of binding two Houses together, nor would they be constrained in their choices as they grew. Both brothers would be deciding on their future spouses themselves when they were ready. (Something he thought might be an influence of Melissa.) Either way, Regulus would be his own man, have his own career, and marry who he wanted.

*Not these shitty gold-diggers.*

He glared at a spot on the wall as his mind worked furiously over the situation. He considered himself to be a rather peaceful person, but his brother was one area where he'd do whatever he needed to in order to help him. Regulus was his *brother*, which meant that he was Sirius' responsibility while they were at Hogwarts. As the older sibling, he had to take care of Regulus, and if that meant compromising on his morals, then so be it.

Sirius smirked to himself and stood up, ignoring the concerned green eyes across the room as he slipped his shoes on, nodding to himself as he resolved to do whatever he could to protect his precious baby brother from all the creeps in the castle. He could do this.

“Sirius?”

Turning around, he looked at a visibly-cautious Remus. “Yes?”

“What are you doing?”

He grinned at his best friend. “I'm going to fix this!”

And with that, he spun on his heel and marched out of their room, humming to himself as he mentally committed himself to being a Black. *Grandfather would be proud.*

As the door closed, Remus blinked for a few seconds before sighing heavily in exasperation. He fell forward onto his desk, head slamming into his book and dislodging god knows how many centuries of dust. The motes fluttered around his head as he contemplated how this was even his life. *Again.* As he often did when he was around Sirius.

*This is going to go horribly wrong, I know it.*

---

James was studying how Harry's gorgeous hair shone in the rare November sunshine like silk when a body dropped into the seat next to him, interrupting one of his favourite hobbies – *which, rude much* – and making him scowl. He turned sideways to curse whoever had the audacity to cut into his Harry-viewing time, only to pause and raise a brow at the look on his cousin's face. That expression looked *very* familiar to James, though certainly not in this lifetime.

This Sirius didn't usually cause chaos with a maniacal grin on his face.

“Can I help you, Sirius?”

The grin widened even more than James thought possible, his old best friend looking truly demented right now. *Poor sod. He's lucky nobody's around right now, or he'd never find a good shag with that face.*

“I want to get rid of a few annoyances.”

*Alright, forget demented, he's fucking psycho. Jesus Christ, am I looking at a time-travelling Arcturus Black or something? Maybe that particular strain of crazy skipped over Orion.* Say what you will about his management abilities, Lord Arcturus was about as tameable as a bloody tsunami, and his oldest grandchild seems to have unexpectedly followed in his footsteps, albeit driven by a reawakened brother complex. A Mind Healer would have a field day with Sirius Orion Black.

James smirked lazily at his cousin, loving this foray back into his old life. He put his arm around Sirius' shoulder and pulled him closer. “Tell me more, Sirius.” He returned the crazy expression before they put their heads together, muttering about the sad state of the older students in relation to cute young boys who were too good for them and always would be.

He also resolutely ignored Harry's judgemental gaze from across the table.

Harry just looked at his soulmate plotting pandemonium with Sirius – who looked to have spontaneously jump-started his wacked genes thanks to a startlingly naïve Regulus – and shook his head at the two, turning away from them for the sake of his own sanity. Not that he had much, but he wanted to preserve what little he did have.

The green-eyed boy spotted a tired Remus several feet away, the Ravenclaw looking as done with the cousins as Harry felt. *I sense a kindred soul here.* He waved at his friend and gestured to the seat next to him, smiling as Remus looked at him gratefully and walked over and sat down. Harry felt just the *slightest* bit guilty at letting the brunette think that Harry was the calm and collected counter to James' insanity, but he liked the figurative shield it gave him too much to reveal the truth. Besides, Remus was smart, scarily so, so he was going to figure out the truth sooner or later. And Harry would get to see the result up close and personal. He was looking forward to it.

(Was he too much of a sadist? He wasn't even sure any more. James had ruined his mind, he was sure of it.)

Harry leaned to the side and whispered, “Do I even want to know?”

“I think I accidentally set off some sort of subconscious trigger when I mentioned Regulus at the mercy of unscrupulous people who were after his looks and/or money.”

Harry briefly remembered how devastated older Sirius had been at Regulus' fate, even while trying to pretend otherwise, and winced in his seat. “Yeah, that'll do it.”

Remus just studied the two co-conspirators with a face that screamed 'I give up' and sighed heavily. "I'm going to regret this, aren't I?"

The reborn Peverell refused to answer him verbally, simply patting him on the shoulder in commiseration. It wasn't Remus' fault that he underestimated the Black madness in Sirius.

"Just think, at least Regulus isn't actively looking for a relationship right now. Can you imagine what the world's most protective big brother will be like when that happens?"

Remus froze for a few seconds, causing Harry to nearly lose his shit and cackle hysterically, before the poor boy whimpered quietly and buried his head in arms on the table. Harry thought he heard something like 'Why? What did I do to deserve this shit?' in a muffled voice, so he decided to pat the brown hair with a grin on his face.

*I can't wait until he stops caring. He'll be hilarious.*

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"This is a terrible idea."

"Well, if you don't want to be here, do us all a favour and bugger off."

*"Excuse me?! I'll have you know –"*

"Will you two please be quiet! This is a very precarious operation and we need to be quiet."

"Operation? What exactly have you been smoking?"

"I don't know why I'm here. *How* did I end up here?"

"Don't worry! It'll be fun!"

"It's a shame we don't have a full set, though."

Harry just sighed to himself and mentally agreed with Remus: he too had no idea how he had ended up here.

No, that wasn't true, he *did* know how, and it was entirely the fault of his stupidly immature and vindictive soulmate. The idiot that had been itching to play a practical joke on his fellow students for the past year, and the same idiot that Harry was – somehow – in love with, and therefore susceptible to his pleading.

Harry had been pulled along for the ride in Sirius' quest to maintain his brother's innocence, James was an all-too-willing accomplice, and Harry had grabbed Remus for his entertaining reactions. The brunette was basically the straight man at this point. (Which was ironic, because Remus Lupin was anything *but* straight. Harry still wasn't sure what the specifics were, but marriage to Tonks aside, Remus hadn't been a purely ladies man, that was for sure.)

Along the way, they'd run into Lily and Alice – the power of true friendship apparently transcending the barriers of Houses; fate was a weird thing – who'd happily joined in for some fun. Well, *Alice* thought that taking some revenge on those deserving of it would be

fun, anyway. (Neville would have been a *very* different man if he'd been raised by this woman.) Lily had just started mocking the plan, which had infuriated James who started arguing back, and that had caused Snape-Prince-Whatever-I-don't-care to materialise out of thin air and try to defend the spirited redhead. Who *really* didn't need it because she was the walking embodiment of fury, but at least he tried.

Last but not least, a bewildered Frank had been nabbed by Alice as they made their way to an abandoned classroom near the library to plot and prepare. The future Longbottom couple were apparently childhood friends who'd known each other since they could walk because their mothers were friends. More specifically, Alice's mother was the sister of Augusta's brother-in-law. Complicated, yes, but rather the norm for their society, Harry thought.

“– still don't understand what you mean by 'set' though? What set?”

Harry tuned back into the random squabbles of a bunch of twelve-year-olds and mentally conceded the last point. Frank was talking shit at the moment.

The boy in question had a broad grin on his face. “I meant Houses. Look, we've got two Slytherins, two Ravenclaws, and four Gryffindors, but no Hufflepuffs. It's not very fair, is it?”

Alice giggled and jumped to her feet from her seat next to her future husband. “It's a good thing my cousin became a badger this year then, isn't it?”

And with that, the excitable girl darted off out the room, presumably to go and acquire a Hufflepuff for the sake of having a full contingent of Houses for their revenge quest. (And that really was what it was, no matter how much Sirius wanted to frame it as some sort of protection act. *It doesn't matter about time and place, Sirius'll always be a moron, won't he?*)

“Do you think this'll really work?”

Harry turned to a sceptical-looking Remus and smiled lightly. “I know it sounds ridiculous – and immature and stupid, don't worry, I know what you mean – but you also need to consider the fact that Sirius is a very determined individual.” He paused and carried on with a wry grin. “And somewhat of an idiot, of course, but he *is* likely to succeed in his stupidity.”

Remus snorted softly and sat back in his chair, eyes sweeping over to the heated argument between James and Lily. Considering Harry had heard his own name hissed at least twice in the past minute alone, he was going to feign ignorance in favour of self-preservation. Remus should probably do the same.

Before the pre-teen spat could escalate into full-out violence – something Harry *really* couldn't be bothered to deal with today – Alice returned with even more giggles, arm in arm with a younger girl, the older one with a warm and gentle smile directed at the other as she guided her apparent cousin into the room.

Alice grinned brightly at them all and pulled her companion forward. “So, I know we're all older, but that doesn't mean we can't be friends with people in other years. That's just silly. And I want everyone to make her feel welcome,” she added airily, a look like butter wouldn't melt in her mouth, all topped off with a look of 'do as I fucking say or nobody will ever find

your body' flashing from her blue eyes. It was a captivating – if somewhat terrifying – sight to behold. *Go, Alice.*

“So, I'd like to introduce you all,” Alice said with a warm expression, face strangely devoid of the previous murderous hints evident mere seconds ago. “This is my younger cousin who just started this year, Pandora Rushden.”

The smaller figure stepped forward and lifted her head, causing Harry to freeze in his seat and stop breathing. The colour of the tie was all wrong, and the girl's blonde curls were pulled back into a simple braid that fell to the small of her back, but everything else was identical. The curious blue eyes, the air of simplicity about her, even the exact shape of her face.

If this wasn't Luna's mother, he'd marry Snape right now.

He ignored everyone else introduce themselves – another casual 'fuck you' to centuries of bias and rivalry that Harry was inordinately proud of – and studied the dainty witch in front of him. Harry had always assumed that Pandora Lovegood had been a Ravenclaw like her future daughter, as Luna had been the subject of many comparisons just as Harry had. As Harry was considered the second coming of James because of Gryffindor, Harry thought that Luna and Pandora had shared Houses too. *Well, apparently not.*

Blue eyes swept across the odd mixture of students before meeting his, the distinctive powder blue shade boring into his with an intensity he hadn't seen since the last time he met Luna in his old life. Not for the first time, he wondered how much his eccentric friend had truly known. Or Seen, if rumours of her abilities were to be believed.

The small Hufflepuff waited until everyone became embroiled in their previous conversations before wandering over to Harry and stopping just over a foot away from his chair, head cocked to the side as she studied him. Pandora had a certain focus to her gaze that Luna had always lacked, making Harry curious as to whether this girl knew more than her future progeny or less. It was strange; he felt both disconcerted by the staring and also at home because of the familiarity.

Was he selfish for relishing having some part of Luna back in his life?

She blinked once, the motion slow and deliberate, before she broke out in a wide, gentle smile. “Thank you, Harry. For everything you did to help her. You were a true friend to her, and I hope I get to experience that, too.”

His throat felt tight, blocked with the memories that he usually tried to ignore. There were many things about his last life that he was glad to be rid of, but there were also things that he genuinely missed, genuinely mourned as he would never get them back in the same capacity as before.

Luna was one of them.

His true friends could have been counted on one hand by the time he died before, and Luna had been the closest one at the end. Luna was ... pure. Pure of mind, pure of intentions, pure



in every way possible. There were things that Harry had regretted not doing over the course of his life – or regretted not doing another way – and Luna had always been there when he needed her, even without him asking her for help. (There was a reason that Ginny had always felt the most threatened by her blonde friend, even with her happy marriage to another man.)

The chance to get to know the woman that had given one of his best friends life, to appreciate the woman who'd saved her own child at the cost of her own life like his own mother, it was an astounding situation. Harry felt blessed. He knew that he was transferring his longing for his friend onto this innocent little girl, but something deep within him was still raw and jagged without the nonsensical jokes and the scent of dirigible plums floating around.

His magic might be reaching for Pandora Rushden as a way to compensate for his loss, but as long as he didn't forget the reality of his situation, Harry was content to be a little selfish for once.

He cleared his throat and grinned back, the motion feeling surprisingly genuine in light of his messed up emotions. "I'd like that too, Pandora. I think we'll be good friends."

Her eyes lit up with joy and she sent him a small smile. "Have you ever heard the phrase. 'Things we lose have a way of coming back to us in the end, if not always in the way we expect'?"

"Yes," he whispered, remembering Luna's melodic voice soothing him.

Pandora's smile widened until she was beaming at him. She leaned in closer and dropped her voice so nobody else could hear them.

"Well, it also pertains to people, you know. People can also come back to us."

And with that, the girl pulled back and winked at him, causing his heart to start racing as she skipped back to Alice's side, her thick braid swinging behind her as she did. Harry thought she needed some radishes and flowers in her hair.

*"Also pertains to people."* If there was one thing to get him excited about the future of this world, it was those words. Things might not happen in the same way, and couples may diverge and shift from what he once remembered, but souls were unique entities. They might not appear in the same exact fashion as they once had, but Harry just *knew* he was going to see the ones he missed again.

He couldn't wait.

"Are you okay?"

Harry tilted his head back and met James' worried gaze. He smiled softly, feeling unusually light for once. "I'm great. I think the future's going to be a wonderful place to be."

James looked bemused at his answer, though entirely believing of it. "Really?"

"Really."

“Good.” Hazel eyes gained a glint of mischief as his soulmate's face broke out in a smirk. “However, just because the future's going to be awesome, doesn't mean there aren't things to do in the present.”

Harry snorted and rolled his eyes, glancing around the room. For a bunch of small pre-teens, there was a rather distinctive aura of revenge present in the dusty room. He was almost impressed with the amount of planning going into the vindictive conversations, and probably would have praised the situation if it hadn't stemmed from Sirius being a compulsive worrier and a mother hen of epic proportions. *I pity the future of Regulus' love life.*

He looked over at Sirius, the boy fervently gesticulating at the newcomers as he explained the situation, and Harry felt a reluctant grin make its home on his face.

*This is going to be hysterical, isn't it?*

---

Harry watched as the – dare he say, almost *dainty* – Regulus Black wandered into the Great Hall with Bartemius Crouch Jr., the two Slytherins engaged in a subdued conversation, looking for all the world as if they didn't give a rat's arse about the entirety of their lives.

Upon a closer look however, Regulus' silver eyes were glinting with barely-concealed enthusiasm, while his companion's lips were twitching every so often, almost as if he was physically restraining himself from bursting out with raucous laughter, instead of holding his composure like the perfect little pure-blood he was supposed to be. It was actually rather endearing to see, Harry thought.

A far sight better than the crazed wacko who was Voldy's starry-eyed groupie, at least.

The two sat at the end of the Slytherin table together, a little removed from everyone else, before two small figures floated over to the sea of green and sat down opposite the boys. The newcomers suddenly became the subject of many a dirty glare and disgusted sneer by the older students for their yellow and black ties, but Regulus and Barty didn't bat an eye and warmly greeted the two girls.

Pandora, for all that she was a gentle and calming soul, had a wicked streak a mile long that Harry distinctly remembered from when Luna decided to gift Malfoy with a ferret named 'Dragon'. (Which was enough to bring tears to his eyes even now, because that was pure evil, and brilliantly genius to boot.)

The small blonde had decided to help their group in their ridiculous endeavour – after having been enlisted by Alice, he was sure – and had immediately struck up an unlikely friendship with Regulus, the boy apparently appreciating a friend who wasn't either his cousin or someone trying to suck up to him because of his money and name. Something Harry could unfortunately relate to. In *both* lives.

Luna's mother wasn't the only new Hufflepuff that Harry had become acquainted with recently, either. Pandora had brought along her first cousin, Himalia, and the cheery badger was more than willing to assist in making a bunch of perverts regret their life decisions, purely because the situation allowed her to expand her social circle while simultaneously

being entertaining as fuck. (Not her words, but Harry found her ruthless and shameless pragmatism fucking hilarious to witness. It was refreshing to see a person be so open about their motives. That this person was an eleven-year-old girl with bows in her curly hair made it all the better.)

“I think today is going to be wonderful, don't you?”

Harry snorted at the faintly sarcastic tone and side-eyed his companion. “If that's what you want to call it, then be my guest. Doesn't change the fact that I know you're only being a twat because of boredom, idiot.”

James sent him a mock offended look. “How rude,” he pouted, eyes glittering with mirth. “I'll have you know that I'm assisting my cousin in order to ensure that our mutual relative remains innocent and untouched by the egregious immorality of the tainted magicals with whom we unfortunately share this space of esteemed education. Were it not required of myself as a just and noble man, I would happily remain absent from the entire situation in order to remain in bliss with you, my one and only true love.” He finished his speech with his nose in the air, James' imperious air making him look untouchable, even with the melodramatic hand on the heart that completed the picture. The only thing marring it was the faint grin on his handsome face.

The only thing stopping Harry from descending into hysterics was the desire to see Regulus' stalkers get their due.

Harry shook his head amusedly. “You're such a twat.”

“I'll take that as a compliment from you, *Darling*.”

That wink was entirely unnecessary, thank you very much. As if he needed another reminder of how pale he was.

He turned away from James – committing the traitorous snickers to memory for his own revenge later on – and studied the Ravenclaw table. Sirius was almost vibrating in his seat, torn between gazing haplessly at his brother with pure adoration and pride – *bloody hell, I think this Sirius is even worse than the last one* – and gazing at everyone single person in the hall that had the misfortune of looking over at Regulus, deliberately or otherwise.

*What a mess of a human being.*

Which he was, don't doubt it, though this version was a mess in his own way. It was almost impressive, the way the Black blood had the ability to manifest in a whole host of batshit crazy quirks and behaviours across all generations, even within the same person. All he had to do was glance sideways to see his soulmate attempting to stuff an entire bacon roll in his mouth while Alice giggled at him to see evidence of this insanity. James was a fucking *idiot*. Which said *far* too much about Harry's own sanity than he was comfortable with admitting, but at least he was self-aware enough to admit to his failings. (In the privacy of his own mind, anyway.)

He rolled his eyes before he caught sight of one of Regulus' more common stalkers, a Slytherin fourth year from one of the branch families of the Borgins. The sleazy creeps hadn't ever managed to secure a marriage with the Blacks on account of the older generation being pure-blood supremacists of the highest order. Well, that and the Borgin family having a slimy reputation that got them in hot water more often than not. It was as if they'd never heard of the phrase, 'Don't do something stupid, and if you do, don't get caught'. It was kind of pathetic, really.

Harry studied the teenager – his name escaped him right now – whose eyes found Regulus before they lit up with smug satisfaction, a smirk settling across his face. The brat strode over to the youngest Black brother, arrogance oozing out of him like the Draco Malfoy of old, and looked as if he was the literal cat that caught the canary. Harry wasn't too sure he even wanted to know what was going through his mind.

As soon as he got within three feet of Regulus – and James had been *very* direct with that knowledge – the Borgin opened his mouth with a self-assured grin, clearly beginning to try and suck up to Regulus for the sake of money and prestige. It was, after all, all he'd been doing for the past month. However, before any words could be said, a look of abject horror pasted itself on his face, the skin looking to be attempting to simultaneously redden and pale. Harry wasn't shocked.

The echoing sound of Borgin loudly passing gas *was* rather embarrassing.

Harry could feel reluctant tears in his eyes, his shoulders hunched together as he bit his lip, desperately trying not to start cackling like an escaped psychiatric patient. One look at Regulus' appalled face was the last straw though, and Harry dropped his head to the table, choking into the polished wood at the image of Borgin's face.

The sound of jeering laughter as the Slytherin ran away would have made Harry pity the other student if he hadn't heard the tosser himself gloating about marrying the Black 'spare' for his own reputation. At least this time around, James and co. were keeping the subjects of their pranks to those wholly deserving.

He twisted his head on the table, snorting at the sight of James and Alice collapsed against each other, giggling hysterically at their success. Those two were an unholy duo, and Harry wondered if perhaps Lily being in Gryffindor had been a mediating influence between them before. Now they were just pure evil.

Harry was morbidly curious what any child of theirs would have been like.

Pulling pranks like this would have been common, he was sure. Harry was genuinely impressed that they'd managed to pull off something this difficult. Having Sirius gift his brother with a bracelet which was the trigger for several different spells was pure genius, as was their group's ability to discretely jinx Regulus' stalkers without them noticing. The distance trigger was also brilliant. He was sure even Hermione would have been enthralled with the spell work. Not with its *purpose*, but the logistics of it.

Essentially, Regulus was wearing a piece of jewellery that acted as a trigger to any of the spells they'd used. Whenever any of the creeps came within three feet of Regulus, the spells

would release and they'd suffer some lovely humiliation. Nothing overtly demeaning or painful, just a little bit of humiliation to act as a warning to stay the fuck away from eleven-year-old boys.

Passing gas, hair changing to garish colours, saying nonsensical phrases and/or singing off-key, developing temporary acne, all these things and more were some of the spells their enterprising group had decided upon in their planning.

Harry snickered to himself. He wondered how the sixth year scumbag would react to being a fluffy kitten for the day.

He picked his head up and gazed across the hall, grinning at Regulus' open laughter as he leaned against a snorting Barty.

At least Regulus would find it funny. He kind of deserved it at this point.

---

**Henry!**

*I know it hasn't been that long since I wrote to you, but I simply couldn't wait to tell you the news! I'll likely send you a more detailed letter soon enough, but Dorea's insisted that we definitely must go shopping right this very moment. I swear, that woman is a force of nature. Deadly, but effective.*

*Anyway, you know about the fact that Orion and I have been courting for a while – don't roll your eyes at me Henry, I know what you're like – but earlier today he took me for a picnic at one of the older properties of his House. It was so romantic! I'd go into more detail, but the outing itself was apparently only a cover.*

*Orion asked me to marry him, and I said yes!*

*I know we haven't been seeing each other that long, but I'm truly happy with him, Henry. I know you said that you were happy with the two of us in a romantic relationship, but I hope you can find it in yourself to support this marriage. I'm fairly certain that you will, and this is likely nerves making me talk in such a way, but the two of us have been a family by ourselves for so long. Inviting someone else into the fold is a big change for us.*

*I love him, Henry.*

*I'm well aware that you're probably snorting or something like the cheeky little shit you are – you know I'm right – and that you're thinking I'm an idiot for even worrying about this, but I am. So there.*

*Please write me back soon, I need your help with the wedding plans. Bloody hell, I'm going to be a married woman – someone's wife! Orion's wife. My life is insane.*

*Your favourite cousin,*

*Melissa.*

---

Harry finished reading and smiled wryly, not at all surprised by this turn of events.

He'd seen how Orion doted on his cousin – being extra chivalrous after Harry's *extremely polite* conversation with the man – and how Melissa constantly looked delighted whenever the man came up in conversation. It was sweet.

Oh, he had no doubt that Dorea was responsible in large part to this particular pairing coming together, but the Potter matriarch was a genuinely caring person deep down – deep, *deep*, down in the very recesses of her soul, according to James – and wouldn't have interfered unless she was going to help them.

Which she had, if this letter was anything to go by.

*Orion Black as my cousin-in-law, huh?* Harry grinned and rolled his eyes at the questioning look from James, handing the letter over as he dove back in to his porridge. Harry thought back over the pleading words and wanted to scoff. As if he'd have a problem with Melissa marrying Orion. The truth was, if Harry hadn't approved of a man his cousin liked, there wouldn't *be* a man around to marry.

He wasn't a murderer or anything, but there was more than one way to make someone disappear. Just saying.

James coughed to his side and Harry saw his shit-eating grin, hazel eyes locked on his and sparkling with glee. The taller boy looked across the room, the grin widening even further than Harry thought possible, and he frowned in confusion as he looked for what had caused – yet another – fucked up expression to emerge on his partner's face. He looked like a right twat.

*Ah, that'd do it.*

Sirius, poor naïve Sirius, the boy who was still unnaturally focused on ensuring his brother remained entirely innocent of any type of corruption in the world – which was already unlikely to be true seeing as the boy was related to Alphard fucking Black – was someone who hadn't been keeping up with the developments of his father's relationship as much as he probably should have. He was so behind, in fact, that the letter dropping onto the table in front of him was likely going to give the poor sod a heart attack.

Harry sat back and watched the puzzled boy pick up the letter, looking both confused and happy to be receiving post from his father despite it deviating from their usual schedule of correspondence. He tore open the envelope and began reading, his silver eyes immersed in the script on the expensive parchment. Orion's letter looked to be far longer than Melissa's, but the Heir Black was much more serious than his fiancée. And also not currently at the mercy of the woman on a mission that was Dorea Potter nee Black.

Sirius' eyes flicked back and forth for a good minute before he clearly reached the announcement, his narrow eyes almost round as his eyebrows shot up, looking entirely too much like a caricature of some kind – the gaping mouth and dumbfounded expression really not helping – for Harry to deal with. He choked on a laugh, leaning sideways to bury his face in James' arm as he held in his hysterics. *Bloody hell, I haven't seen that face on him since he*

*thought I was in a threesome with Fred and George.* (Possibly one of the funniest memories he had of fifth year, purely for the same gobsmacked face that Harry saw now. Sirius Black would always be one of the most entertaining people to wind up.)

The future Lord Black slowly twisted in his seat, head angled towards the Gryffindor table as unseeing grey eyes searched the raucous table for his target. Upon meeting Harry's eyes, the young Peverell pasted an excited, yet entirely innocent, beaming grin on his face and waved the letter in the air, punctuating their exchange with a happy wave.

Harry couldn't hear anything, but he could have sworn that Sirius whimpered before he blanked, looking as dead inside as an Inferius. (Not the most attractive comparison, but he looked *done* with life.) Harry causally raised his goblet at his soon-to-be cousin by marriage, toasting him with a gentle smile that was completely at odds with his inner maniacal laughter, no doubt unleashed by the awful personality traits that he'd absorbed from James through prolonged exposure. Like social osmosis.

*Cheers to our families joining as one entire, dreadful mess of insanity.* Harry took a sip of pumpkin juice and tried not to smirk in response to James' snorting laughter from next to him. What a group they were going to make as they aged. He shook his head ruefully at the letter next to his breakfast.

*Isn't my family great?*

## Chapter End Notes

Hey guys!

I've had the hardest time writing this chapter, and I have no idea why. I don't know. Either way, here's the next chapter!

In case it wasn't clear, I skipped ahead quite a few months from the previous chapter, which took place around July. It isn't explicitly stated - because I couldn't figure out how to do it without it seeming forced - but this chapter starts around the end of October/beginning of November. And yes, I have decided to have nearly ten children being born soon in this fic, because why the hell not? Honestly, I just love the idea of James getting more obviously broody and Harry threatening to castrate him if he ends up pregnant before graduating, all with Dorea smirking in the background.

Sorry if I sound insane, I'm about to start a week of nights and I'm exhausted af rn lol

Anyway, here's another chapter, I'll probably have the next one out sometime next summer at this rate, and I'll see you ... whenever.

Later!

# New quests and uncharted territory

## Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'

Not full-on sex, but there are a couple of explicit scenes. Sort of. If you want to read the vague/clean version, head over to [ff.net](http://ff.net).

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Don't you look cute.”

Harry didn't have time to do more than widen his eyes before another body collided with his, knocking the both of them onto the bed next to him.

He let out a small grunt at the impact and wiggled to get free, though he knew it was truly a lost cause. Harry huffed and relaxed onto the duvet, allowing the idiot on top of his body to straddle him and gaze down into his eyes, an annoying smirk on his face that made Harry want to punch the idiot.

It wasn't surprising. As much as Harry loved him, James had a gift for inciting violence.

The hazel-eyed moron grinned down at him, seemingly rather happy with himself. Which Harry didn't doubt for a moment. His soulmate often decided that being a complete and utter prat was a good way to spend his time.

James raised a brow. “What's with the pout?”

“I'm not pouting,” he shot back with a glare.

“You might want a reality check, Darling.” James grinned even wider, a teasing glint in his eyes. “You're not quite as physically fierce as you think you are. Not that it's a problem,” he said airily. “I quite enjoy how gorgeous you look when you're angry.”

Harry was *not* blushing at James' leer. His soulmate was a twat.

“Shut up,” he grumbled. Harry glanced out the window, spotting the sun high in the sky and frowned. Looking back at James, he rolled his eyes at the unrepentant air of glee about the taller boy.

“James, you *do* realise that we're supposed to be getting ready, don't you? I don't know about you, but I don't want your mother to come up here wondering where we've gotten to.”



James winced slightly. “Yeah, I guess. I don't particularly fancy getting cursed for 'corrupting' someone as 'innocent' as you.” He shot Harry a pointed look that had the smaller boy grinning. “Which is such *bollocks*. I still don't get how she doesn't see what sort of devil you really are.”

Harry smirked wickedly at James. “Because I'm fucking awesome, that's why.”

That got a surprised laugh out of his soulmate, and Harry felt inordinately proud at seeing it. It wasn't often that he was seen as the arsehole between them; he quite liked having the tables turned for once. (Which didn't say much for his mental state, but he could begrudgingly admit that that ship has sailed long ago. As long as the general public didn't realise that he was a walking psychological disaster – *especially* Dumbledore; he didn't relish the prospect of being dubbed Tom 2.0 by the interfering old bastard – it was all good.)

Harry suppressed a smirk and leaned up, pressing a deep kiss to James' lips, using the small sound of surprise to dart his tongue into his soulmate's mouth. James groaned and wrapped his arms around Harry's waist, making him grin internally. While James was thoroughly distracted – another point to his inner pride – Harry spun them rapidly so he was on top of the taller boy. He pulled back from the filthy kiss, pecked the other boy's lips once more, and jumped off the bed.

He turned around, smirking wickedly at his fellow Gryffindor on the bed. James looked a little wrecked on the bed; his cheeks were flushed, clothes ruffled, and his hair looked somewhat reminiscent of their afterlife adventures in the Gryffindor Common Room. The expression on his face made Harry nearly snort. James clearly didn't know what he should be focusing on, internally flitting between his mental arousal and trying to process that Harry had in fact just abandoned him on the bed. *What an idiot.*

Harry tilted his head to the side, raising a thin brow in question. “Aren't you going to get changed, Love? We *do* have a wedding to get to, you know?”

James groaned loudly and turned onto his side, curling into a ball with his head in his hands. It was thoroughly entertaining to witness.

Hazel eyes peeked up at him. “I hate you so much right now. You're such a sneaky little shit.”

“Guilty as charged.”

“You don't even care, do you?” James asked as he sat up, shaking his head at being duped. *Go, me.*

Harry smirked wickedly. “Should I?”

Before James could say something else – and make Harry try and hex him for some sort of impropriety, seeing as that look in those hazel eyes promised nothing good for Harry's blood pressure – the two soulmates paused at the sound of footsteps walking up the corridor outside the room.

The taller boy jumped off the bed and quickly spelled his appearance neater, ridding his clothes of wrinkles and ensuring his lips weren't swollen. There wasn't much point in using magic on his hair; it was useless on a good day. James quickly ran a hand through his hair, getting rid of the just-been-shagged look, but instead leaving it looking like he'd been dragged through a hedge. Backwards. While struggling. Several times. (It was okay, Harry loved him anyway. And could sympathise *so* badly.)

Harry did the same, smoothing his robes and spelling his hair to be tidier. Since he'd been in the past, Harry had been growing his hair out for the first time. (Because Gin had been *weirdly* obsessed with him keeping his hair short so they could look like the next Lily and James. The less said about that utter disaster of a woman, the better. He'd clearly been royally fucked in the head to marry her. *Yay for PTSD.*) His hair now fell just past his shoulders, so Harry quickly pulled it back into a small ponytail, with some wavy strands framing his face.

The door opened, and Dorea strolled in, looking both entirely relaxed and like a woman on a mission that needed to be completed *now*. Considering she'd organised the entire ceremony with only Melania Black – Lady Black to represent Orion, and Dorea for Melissa – it wasn't surprising.

James' mother looked beautiful in a simple cream dress with dark green ivy patterns all over. The sleeveless garment fell to just below the woman's knees, and there was a thin black belt at her waist. Dorea's hair was back in what appeared to be a simple bun, until you realised the bun was a mass of twisting plaits that Harry could make neither heads nor tails of. He didn't think he'd ever figure out how she got it like that.

“Boys, there you are! The ceremony is due to start in half an hour, so I need you to head down to the grounds now.”

Dorea walked forward, reaching for her son to try and fix his hair somewhat. To Harry's utter shock, the woman actually managed – with a liberal use of magic – to style James' hair into something like it was deliberately messy, which gave his soulmate a polished look that Harry was rather appreciative of. His other half almost looked mature. *Will miracles never cease?*

“Henry.”

He turned at the sound of his name, and stilled when Dorea casually repeated the same action with his hair, smoothing out flyaway strands, styling the loose parts, and generally fussing over him. The woman was muttering under her breath as she straightened his collar before she pulled back with a smile, gently stroking his head while she grinned at him.

“That's better! Now hurry along, and make sure to send any stragglers to their seats if you find them. Merlin only knows there'll be some idiot wandering around where they're not meant to be.”

The woman bent down to press a quick kiss to James' head, smirking when he offered a token protest to the action before doing the same to Harry. She smiled softly at Harry's stunned expression and left the room with a pointed look at them, reminding them to hurry.

Harry touched his head where the woman had kissed him, feeling warm inside despite the small urge to cry. Having the woman practically treat him like another son, even though she had no reason to, brought forth his deeply-buried desire to have parents. He might have had the original Henry's early memories, but overall he was more Harry than Henry Peverell.

In his own memory, he'd never had a parent that cared for him unconditionally. Sirius and Remus might have tried before, but being in the middle of a war hadn't exactly been conducive towards easy familial relationships. Seeing – or experiencing – James' parents care for him so much was enough to leave him feeling vulnerable. Melissa was closer to his sister than any parental model, therefore receiving that sort of love was astounding to experience. Dorea and Charlus cared about him because James did, simple as. They weren't obligated to treat him like their own child, but they were.

It was humbling.

James took his hand, squeezing softly as he smiled at him. His face was gentle, no hint of his usual mocking smirk or provocative leer. His soulmate remained silent, instead leading him out of the room and through the manor so they could get to the wedding ceremony.

The two walked entirely in silence, Harry still feeling off balance, even if he could admit that he still craved that parental affection. He couldn't help it; a part of him was always going to want what he hadn't experienced before. He had in his adult life.

“You ready?”

Harry turned to James, grateful for his quiet support while he'd been focused on his own swirling thoughts. (And somewhat bewildered at the show of maturity, but he wasn't going to mention that; the idiot had a big enough ego as it was.) He squeezed the other's hand before separating them, rolling his eyes at James' muttered protest. *Moron.*

“Let's go see Sirius have a breakdown at getting a new stepmother.”

James laughed loudly, his hazel eyes sparkling with mischievous glee at the prospect of his cousin's imminent mental crisis. (Harry would have scolded James if he weren't of the same mind. He really did have an awful personality, didn't he?)

The two boys made their way through the gardens at Black Manor, joining up with the guests just as a harried Lord Black appeared looking as if he was desperate for a drink of the alcoholic variety.

Harry held in his grin at the sight.

*This should be fun.*

---

James looked around the decorated hall and shook his head, utterly bemused at his surroundings. He couldn't see a single thing that looked out of place; it was quite astounding.

His mother and Melania Black were miracle workers, and nothing would convince him otherwise.

The sheer level of detail that had gone into creating this day was incredible. (Orion and Melissa hadn't been engaged that long, yet they'd elected to get married not even six months after that. Which James could understand; if they had a strong enough relationship, then there was no real reason for delaying the ceremony.) As such, planning had had to occur rather quickly.

Location security, decorations, finding a trusted officiator, sorting out food and guests ... In just mere months. *And* they'd managed to get permission for some of the students to come home for the day. His mother and Melania were *machines*. Ruthlessly efficient, subtly threatening, endlessly devious machines. Machines that had a predilection for caffeine, alcohol and blackmail. (James had a sneaking suspicion that his aunt Cassiopeia had been involved with the latter somehow, even if only in the periphery.

He didn't want to admit it, but he was starting to understand Sirius' constant rants on the crazy Black women. It was like being batshit insane was a prerequisite or something.)

In just a matter of months, a ceremony had been scrupulously planned down to the tiniest detail, which had included the guests, and how many of their society were to be invited. Orion had adamantly shot down the idea of having a public ceremony, and had barred any and all media journalists from attending his second wedding (likely due to the fucked up memories of the first). Therefore, it had been organised as a private affair, an unusual occurrence for something as politically challenging as this.

The couple in question might be marrying for love, but aligning the Houses of Black and Peverell in this manner had stirred many a whisper about the future goings inside the Wizengamot since the announcement. The Heir to the Black family and the Regent Lady Peverell marrying was more than enough to ruffle a few feathers, especially because the masses were still trying to figure out where the bloody hell the ancient House had appeared from after centuries of absence.

Inciting even more interest, his mother had taken great delight in 'letting slip' – *calling bullshit so much, Mum* – to some of her friends that the wedding would only have a limited guest list, and she couldn't have been sure who would be asked to attend.

What James found even more hilarious – *shut up, Harry* – was that his darling mum had deliberately stirred up interest in the Black family, only to turn around and metaphorically shut the door in people's faces. *Everyone* wanted to be one of the people 'worthy' enough to get an invite, but nobody would deny or confirm whether or not they were one of the lucky few, all to save face in front of everyone else. Being invited to witness the wedding of the future Lord Black, Lord of one of the premium Houses of magical Britain, was a privilege, after all.

The irony was that the two devious witches in charge of organising the whole affair had long decided it would be a day for friends and family *only*. While the snobby gits of their society would run around trying to figure out who'd been rewarded with an invite, Melania and his

mother would happily have informal meetings and invite those Orion and Melissa actually wanted there. More or less.

James was pretty certain that Orion hadn't really wanted certain members of his House there, but the Blacks were a tough lot to keep away, *especially* when it was the wedding of their current Heir. Padfoot's old man had been more or less fucked on that front.

Currently, the massive hall in Black Manor was covered floor to ceiling in ribbons, various wall hangings, floating balls of light, and a mixture of flowers and vines that crept up the walls and furniture. It was rather pretty. And, of course, he was *in no way* taking mental notes so he could start planning his own wedding with Harry already. It wasn't as if he wanted to get everything already set up so he could sling his beloved soulmate over his shoulder, disappear to a ready location, and marry Harry as soon as their time at Hogwarts ended. James was definitely *not* plotting in any way, shape or form.

Not out loud, anyway. Harry might curse him or something. (Which really shouldn't be as hot as it was.)

“Where is he, anyway?”

James frowned to himself, wondering where his gorgeous other half had wandered off to. He could see his aunt Cassiopeia smirking at Lord Herbert Burke – the widower of Aunt Belvina – and casually twirling her wand. Uncle Marius had a highly amused expression on his face as he watched the spectacle, cheerfully chatting away to Uncle Pollux. The two men were nonchalantly discussing something, clearly uncaring of the fact that their sister was mere seconds away from committing murder at their nephew's wedding reception.

*Yeah, not going there.* James might have a terrible sense of humour – which Harry might moan about, but the fact that they were literal *soulmates* who complemented each other perfectly didn't say much about Harry's own mind; *bloody hypocrite* – but he did possess *some* self-preservation.

Get in the way of the old bat that had helped his mum become a crazy woman? *Yeah, no thanks.*

*Old Arcturus and Melania are gossiping as always ...* He didn't need the memories of being an adult to know that getting in between the older generation and the opportunity to dig up dirt on their enemies was a spectacularly bad idea. Adding in his aunts Callidora, Cedrella and Charis, *and* their husbands, was enough to have him feign complete and utter ignorance on that situation. He was less likely to die that way.

He wandered through the hall, dodging guests and floating trays as he went. James smirked at the sight of Lady Regina Fawley deliberately flirting with Orion, leaning in and fluttering her eyelashes at the uncomfortable man. What made it even better was that Melissa was laughing raucously and egging the older woman on, grinning evilly at her new husband's glare. James didn't know what Uncle Orion's problem was; Lady Fawley might be over thirty years his senior in her mid-seventies, but she was still a beautiful woman. She might have a husband and be happily married, but James had grown up with Alphard around. Extra-marital sex wasn't exactly a novel concept to him.

The boy dodged around a group of manically grinning witches, inwardly shuddering as he imagined what sort of havoc those women could cause if they just tried. Considering the group included the mothers of Frank, Alice, Pandora, and Dorcas, stumbling into their path – whether accidentally or not – was just asking for trouble.

“James?”

Turning his head, he saw Sirius with Regulus, Caspar and Barty. *Huh. Barty still hasn't cracked, I see. I wonder if Harry'll be disappointed ...* His thoughts trailed off before he perked up, turning to his three young cousins, resisting the urge to cackle like dear Bella when she wanted to make someone piss their pants.

(Hey, it was funny, alright?)

“Have you seen Harry?” he asked innocently, lips twitching slightly. “I haven't seen him for a while.”

Sirius was looking at him flatly, eyes slightly dead inside as he stared at James as if he wanted to kill him. Or off himself. James wasn't too sure. It was pretty funny, though; this version of Padfoot was pretty different from last time around, but he was definitely happier. Considering Walburga was six feet under and not around to drive everyone else to insanity, it was fairly obvious as to why. If *he'd* had that hag as his mother, he would've run away as soon as he could walk. *Fuck waiting until sixteen.* (Now he thought about it, Sirius had had remarkable patience as teen, even as a loudmouth drama queen.)

The Ravenclaw's eyes bore into his. “I haven't seen Henry since he went to the restroom.” Sirius sighed and swept his eyes across the room. “Lucky bastard, escaping like that.”

James snorted, grinning at Sirius' resulting glare. *Love you too, Cousin.*

Regulus was trying to clear his throat, clearly just barely holding in the laughter that wanted to escape. The boy was studiously avoiding his brother's pissed off gaze, instead focusing on the group of children in the corner of the hall opposite them. Barty was quietly snickering to himself, grinning widely at Caspar and trying to get the younger boy to join in with them. *Would you look at that? Family bonding, Black-style.*

He spotted Orion leading Melissa onto the dance-floor and smiled at the sight. They were pretty damn cute as a couple. Not as much as him and Harry, of course, but not everyone could win in the game of romance like him and his soulmate.

*Speaking of ...* James frowned to himself, mentally reciting his other half's commentary about the decorations earlier on. Harry had wanted to check out the gardens because his mum and Melania had decided to work out something with some local Faeries for the gardens. Seeing as it was getting dark outside, he had no doubt that things looked bloody amazing outside right now.

He turned to Sirius and smirked evilly, lips twitching further at his cousin's wary demeanour. *Poor sod. I'd feel more sorry for him if it weren't so bloody entertaining to torment him. He makes it so easy, dumb dog that he is.*

Clapping Padfoot on the shoulder once, he wiggled his eyebrows for emphasis. “If I don't see you later, make sure you don't interfere with your dad's love life. If you want another sibling so quickly, they'll need some private time to indulge in the creative process, if you get my drift.”

He darted away between some random adults to a horrified shriek of “JAMES!”, roaring with laughter as he did, stomach aching and legs burning from sprinting so quickly. Sirius was going to be pissed with him for a while, but he'd get over it. Hopefully soon. It was fucking weird seeing his former best mate as something like a scandalised prude. (James had once born witness to Sirius Black stumbling around with a dopey grin and a purple hickey on his neck, looking beyond smug at his exploits. He wondered if a few years and a spontaneous dose of hormones would awaken that part of him again.)

James wandered outside and meandered through the massive hedges, pausing briefly at the deep groan emanating from several feet to his left. The boy smirked slightly and shook his head. *It's Alphard and Heather all over again.* He looked around quickly, and upon spotting no-one around, pulled his cloak out of his pocket and covered his body. *This should be interesting.*

After thoroughly silencing his shoes and clothes, James tiptoed towards the suspicious moaning and shuffled around the hedge that was clearly hiding the amorous couple. Or people. Hey, if someone wanted to have a threesome – or moresome – he was all for it. Free love, and all that. James considered himself to be an open-minded bloke when it came to romance. As long as nobody ever got to see Harry during sex, then people could do whatever they wanted. (Perhaps not the best way to measure sexual acceptance, but at least he *had* a way to measure things. That was more than some could say.)

He bent forward and peeked around the leaves, eyebrows raising at the sight before him. It might not be as scandalous as seeing his uncle balls deep in his aunt in the middle of his home, but having a filthy snog in the grounds of Black Manor with a cheeky handjob thrown in wasn't the smartest thing to do.

Gideon Prewett – a great guy, if somewhat impulsive (*and apparently a massive pervert*) – currently had his tongue down his target's throat, ravishing the other man up against the fauna. One hand was gripping a tanned throat, the other clearly going to town on his partner's cock. The redhead's hand was moving bloody quickly, likely spurred on by his lover's enthusiastic moans and thrusting hips.

*Definitely not a couple I ever expected,* James mused with a small grin. Gideon and Benjy Fenwick had both been in the Order last time around, but James had never noticed any of the chemistry he could see right now between them. Benjy was a cheerful guy who'd gone to school with Gideon and his brother, so perhaps this 'relationship' wasn't as new as James thought. Either way, they were clearly happy with the direction their libido was sending them, and he'd seen enough for a lifetime.

*Bloody lack of hormones. Being a late bloomer sucks.*

He quickly left – those groans were increasing in both pitch and speed, and he *really* didn't need to see those two come all over each other – and made his way towards the pond further

away from the main house. He ditched his cloak and removed his spells – no need to make himself seem suspicious – before rounding the closest hedge into the clearing next to the pond.

James paused at the sight of the water. Multiple Faeries were hovering over the water, casting an ethereal glow over the dark water. The ripples distorted the bright light, sending it in every direction as the tiny creatures flew in whatever direction they wanted. It was a beautiful sight.

So was Harry with his feet in the water.

His soulmate was sat at the water's edge, his socks and shoes discarded to the side with his outer robes. Harry had rolled up his trouser legs so he could dip his feet into the cool depths of the pond, and was sat casually with his hands splayed out behind him. He had his head tilted back so he could stare at the sky, light from the moon and the Faeries dancing across his pale skin. Lightly curled hair was loose around his face, dancing in the gentle breeze sweeping across the grounds, and James could feel his breath catch in his throat.

*Merlin, how did I end up this lucky?*

“James?”

The taller boy blinked back to reality, noticing Harry's piercing green eyes locked on his, a questioning look on that ridiculously gorgeous face. He shook off his sappy – yet entirely justifiable – thoughts and walked over to Harry, dropping down behind him and pulling the other boy close. James spread his legs so he could hug Harry tight against his chest, and he sighed quietly, hooking his chin over the shoulder in front of him.

He inhaled deeply and closed his eyes, happily basking in Harry's natural scent mixed with the tang of raspberries the other boy had been eating earlier. It was bloody intoxicating, and once more James mourned the lack of a sex life. Sort of. (He definitely missed sex, but he had Harry all the same. That was more than enough. Besides, good things come to those who wait. This way he could prepare for the day that brilliance happened once more.)

“James, are you okay?”

“Hmm, I'm good,” he murmured. “Just wondered where you went.”

“Sorry about that. It was getting a bit loud in there.” Harry squeezed his hand tightly.

He smiled to himself. “It still is. Don't worry, it won't be long until Uncle Orion and Melissa head off together.”

Harry snorted softly. “I still can't believe they ended up married after all. Your mum's a terrifying match-maker, you know.”

“I'm aware.”

The two lapsed into silence, watching the tiny balls of light flit back and forth across the body of water, no rhyme or reason to the movements. The glow illuminated a few leaves



drifting across the pond, the ripples disrupting the bright lights as they floated. It was a peaceful sight.

“Hey, James?”

His eyes found the side of Harry's face, hugging him tighter. “Yes?”

“... Can we have some Faeries at our wedding?”

James stilled and blinked rapidly, wondering if his wishful thinking had finally started making him hallucinate. He shifted so he could see Harry's face and felt his heart race at the red flush in front of him. Despite the obvious embarrassment, his soulmate was staring him in the eye resolutely, chin raised slightly and a determined set to his face. It was a far cry from the mortified looks of the Harry from nearly two years ago.

James really did love him.

He smiled properly at his future husband, refusing to smirk or grin childishly, reaching forward to cup Harry's face in his hands. James pulled the other boy toward him and pressed a chaste kiss to Harry's soft lips, letting his eyes fall shut as he fell into the warmth of their intimacy.

It was worlds apart from their common lust-driven flirting, but James craved it all the same. He might joke that he was desperate for the return of their short-lived sex life, the amorous greed that had kick-started their relationship, but this was so much more real than that.

James had never truly had something this genuine, he thought as he hummed into Harry's warm mouth, wrapping an arm around his lover's neck. His love life had been practically non-existent before his unfortunate death, most likely because he simply hadn't been in the right frame of mind for a true relationship. (Knowing as he did now that Harry was his soulmate, it certainly explained a few things.)

He also knew that Harry's life and marriage had been a disaster from start to finish because of various issues, so he knew that the smaller boy also hadn't experienced a bond this pure and natural. Having the two of them make this journey side by side was both desirable and humbling to James. It soothed the possessive side of him while also reminding him that he and Harry were in this together. They were both learning and growing to love one another at the same time.

He wasn't sure what he'd done to deserve this experience, but he wasn't going to question such a blessing.

James pushed harder into Harry for a brief moment before pulling back, resting their foreheads together. He opened his eyes and gazed into Harry's eyes, an unconscious smile appearing on his face. Those bright green eyes might be a little unsettling to some, but he didn't think he'd ever get enough of seeing them light up with happiness or mischief. Even that evil glint that promised retribution was a delightful thing to witness. Anything other than sadness was brilliant to James.

He slid a hand around Harry's neck to stroke his soft cheek, revelling in the spectacle of his soulmate's eyes fluttering, thick eyelashes brushing his pale skin. Harry blinked his eyes open and smiled sweetly at him, looking nothing like the boy that had once second-guessed everything about his own emotions in relation to James. Seeing him look so confident and comfortable in himself was a heartening experience.

James brushed Harry's bottom lip with his thumb. "I think the Faeries are a good idea. Any other suggestions?"

"Well ..."

As they sat there in the relative silence, quietly trading possible wedding plans back and forth, Harry's smile slowly lost its shy edge and took on a teasing shape, his lips curling and eyes lighting up excitedly at the idea of their future marriage.

James wondered if he'd end up with smile lines before the age of twenty with how much he was grinning at Harry's enthusiasm, but that thought wasn't nearly enough to deter him. Getting his soulmate to be so openly excited was usually quite difficult, so he was going to enjoy every second of the endearing picture.

He gazed at Harry's light-hearted laughter and felt himself soften.

*I'll do whatever I can so you never lose that smile.*

---

*He lifted his head, breathing heavily and chest heaving.*

*His eyes rove over the toned body underneath him, his gaze burning as it traced a course across every dip and curve. Sweat dripped off the pale chest as his lover gasped and writhed in his embrace. He smirked at the sight.*

*Bending down slowly, he pressed a trail of open-mouthed kisses across a firm chest, circling one pink nipple with his tongue. He sucked on the bud and smirked at the needy moan from the other man's voice. It was hoarse and rough, no doubt from the earlier screaming. He supposed abusing his prostate for close to an hour hadn't helped.*

*His teeth skimmed over a sensitive neck and bit down at the corner of a soft jaw, alternating between sucking and nibbling, all the while soothing the bruised area with his tongue. One hand was lazily stroking the cock underneath him, relishing in the sensation scorching flesh. It wasn't anything he hadn't felt before, but it certainly wasn't something that ever got old.*

*He licked into that tantalising mouth, swallowing the throaty groans and teasing his lover's enthusiastic tongue as his other hand stroked down a beautifully responsive body. He gripped a firm arse and squeezed, a jolt of arousal going through his body as the other man arched up into him even more, rubbing their bodies together shamelessly.*

*Pulling both his hands back, he quickly grabbed one of the muscled thighs under him and lifted it, completely exposing the loose entrance for his viewing pleasure. His eyes flitted back*

*up, locking with those of the other man, grinning wickedly at the lustful glint to the bright orbs. Definitely no problem there.*

*He gripped his own member, stroking slowly for a few minutes to take the edge off. It was difficult with such an enticing sight laid out before him. He was only human.*

*James leaned forward to guide himself into Harry's pliant body, anticipating the warmth gripping and stroking him towards completion ...*

---

Hazel eyes shot open and James's heart pounded, sweating through his pyjamas as his mind played over his dream.

“FUCKING DAMN IT!”

Harry, naked. *Harry*, splayed out for *him* and him only. *Harry*, post-orgasm and *ready for more*. *Harry*, and *him*, and *sex*, and post-puberty bodies with actual erections for a spectacular marathon of endless sex that would leave both of them covered in sweat and struggling for breath ...

He glanced down and lifted his duvet, staring morosely at the lack of a reaction. He rolled over and screamed into his pillow, all the while trying to ram his head into the bed in whatever spot he could.

*Why the fuck did I have to wake up?!*

Life wasn't fair. It *sucked*. He forced himself to lay still and closed his eyes, repeatedly inhaling deeply before exhaling, *determined* to calm himself down. No matter what some people said, James had a lot more control of himself than was immediately obvious.

He flopped back onto his bed and stared at the ceiling, beyond pissed off at being thirteen again.

*This is getting ridiculous.*

---

*Harry's so mean to me ...*

James huffed and flopped forward onto the sofa, giving no fucks as his glasses dug into his face where they were squashed at an odd angle. He groaned into the soft cushions, wiggling sideways so he could get his whole body onto the sofa. He wanted to mope properly, and that required a certain level of comfort.

After his shitty teasing dream – which had done *nothing* to his body except make him rage internally; not exactly the sort of passion he'd been aiming for – he'd eventually gotten back to sleep, but his dreams had been plagued by memories of that specific fantasy. Sleep had been restless, to say the least.

The next day, James had called Harry with his mirror, ready and waiting to rant about his shitty situation. All he'd wanted was some *sympathy*, maybe a loaded promise or two for their

future sexual exploits, just some *understanding* from his beloved soulmate.

Oh, how naïve he'd been.

Harry had given him a flat look, shook his head with sheer disappointment emanating from him, and briefly lectured him with short, clipped sentences, delivered in a sincerely disappointed tone. His other half had then told him to get over himself, then gone off with Melissa to spend the day with the Blacks.

Harry was an utter *bastard* when he wanted to be.

Granted, James found the sassy and sharp-tongued version of Harry to be incredibly attractive – he couldn't *wait* to see his soulmate give someone a verbal smack-down at some point – but he wanted Harry to feel bad for him. Seriously, did he not understand how bloody detailed that dream had been?

“James?”

He grunted and rolled over, lifting his head to see his parents looking at him weirdly. As much as he loved them, they weren't exactly innocent when it came to the disaster that was his personality. (Hey, as much as he acted like a superior little shit, he was pretty self-aware, thank you very fucking much.) Between the apathy and anxiety from his father, and his mum's general insanity tinged with murderous tendencies, he was fairly normal. He could be a *lot* worse.

“Mum? Dad?”

Dorea walked towards him, stopping a few feet away. “We've got something to tell you.”

He blinked at the composed tone and sat up, narrowing his eyes at her blank face. She wasn't joking at all.

Charlus cleared his throat and moved to sit on the sofa opposite James. “It's not anything bad, so you can relax. It's more something that came as a bit of a surprise.”

“It wasn't a conscious effort, it just happened,” his mum added as she sat next to her husband.

“So, what's up? If it's not a bad thing, is it something good?” he asked slowly, trying to ponder through the situation. This certainly hadn't happened last time around.

The two adults shared a glance before turning to him with a bright smile, the expression soft rather than the teasing look they usually gave him. This was definitely a happy occasion, whatever it was. Dorea sent James an exceedingly gentle smile and opened her mouth.

“I'm pregnant with twins.”

He froze in his seat, body entirely still even as his mind raced a mile a minute.

*What. The. Ever. Loving. Fuck?*

James had always been an only child, this life *and* his last. He knew his parents had originally wanted more than a single child, but his mother had struggled enough to conceive James. The couple had decided not to try again after him, instead choosing to be content with just a sole child.

Neither of his parents had ever given James the impression that they were disappointed with him for being an only child instead of one with siblings. They'd loved and cherished him – and spoiling him far more than was appropriate, as he'd long realised – focusing on their small family unit instead of expending effort to expand it.

Dorea Potter hadn't been pregnant at this time before. That was a fact. He might not remember every little thing about his life before dying, but he could distinctly remember the summer before his third year. Just like the previous timeline, little Nymphadora Tonks had been born a couple of months before the end of the school year, so his mum had dragged the family over to the Tonks house to congratulate the family on the birth of the girl.

The same had happened this time, but there was a distinct difference in James' memories. That being alcohol. Last time, his mum had gone all out, and she'd been so wasted that his dad had had to stun the woman before she ran off to kill Walburga for her shit parenting. (Which, he certainly couldn't blame her for. Honestly, James was more surprised that someone hadn't offed the crazy bitch years before her too-late demise.)

This time, Dorea Potter had stuck to the juice and therefore didn't have to be dragged away from a quest of retributive vengeance, much to James' disappointment. He'd been looking forward to a spectacle or two, and he wasn't talking about baby Nym puking all over Charlus, hilarious though it had been.

So, in hindsight, his mother staying sober so often was a pretty big indication of the pregnancy. He hadn't been expecting it, but it made sense. It was weird as fuck, but he'd be lying if he said he wasn't interested in having siblings.

James had wanted to be a big brother last time, but he'd kept quiet about that particular desire after figuring out his mother's problems with having children. He might have been an even bigger prick last time around, but he hadn't been horrid enough to be so cruel to his own parents.

He cleared his throat, sending his parents a reassuring grin. “So, I'm going to be a big brother. When are you due, Mum?”

The woman's shoulders relaxed. “I should be giving birth at the end of November, or early December. I'm already in the second trimester, and I haven't had any problems yet,” Dorea said with a relieved smile, one hand on her lower stomach. “With the way things are going, you'll have two siblings in time for next Yule. You'll be able to meet them during the break in December.”

“Do you know what you're having?” James asked, feeling quite excited at the prospect of such a new experience.

“Funny you should ask that,” his dad snorted, rolling his eyes for emphasis. “It turns out that you'll have a younger brother *and* a younger sister. Why choose one when you can have both?” Charlus asked rhetorically, shaking his head with a slightly bewildered look on his face. James would feel sorry for his dad if the sight weren't so fucking funny. *Sorry, Dad. Karma and all that, you know?* (James was sure his father had done *something* to warrant being driven towards insanity.)

Dorea responded with a scathing comment that James missed, and his dad didn't miss a beat before shooting back at his wife, beginning yet *another* back and forth. James sat back wishing he had some popcorn as his parents descended into a petty argument that was peppered with references to old age, an inability to clean up after themselves properly, and an affinity for high-sugar snacks, all interspersed with playful grins and a teasing tone. If James weren't their son, he'd be disgusted by their sappy affection.

He smiled to himself at the picture in front of him, wondering if one day he and Harry would be in a position to have ridiculous arguments that made their children roll their eyes with distaste. It was such a simple tableau to imagine, but it was one that warmed James nonetheless. He looked forward to being a father with his soulmate by his side for the whole adventure, good times and bad. They'd be a great balance, and Harry was going to be a *wonderful* parent, no matter how much his self-confidence dipped sometimes.

One day, the two of them were going to be happily enthusing over their newest child, eagerly discussing the baby's gender, how they were going to decorate their room, speculating over their appearance ... He and Harry would no doubt obsess over every little thing about childcare, panicking until they got used to the routine of caring for their own child.

It was going to be an amazing thing to experience.

James studied his parents and grinned to himself, trying not to snort as his mother exasperatedly berated Charlus, the older man smirking at her cheekily, laughing unrepentantly at his antics when Dorea pointed her finger at the man snickering like a child.

*I guess now's the time for a new adventure.*

## Chapter End Notes

Hey guys!

So, I think it's safe to say that 2020 has been a spectacularly shit year so far, and we're not even halfway through. Oh joy.

If anyone was wondering, I was going to finish writing this a few days after posting 'In This Time', but things went to hell rather quickly. It's morbidly funny, in a horrific way. My mental health took a dive, my physical health followed - and there's a lack of services for my specific problem because of the lockdown, and then someone in my close family got diagnosed with cancer. It's been a shitty couple of weeks.

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed the chapter. I finally got around to writing a (more or less) cohesive plan for this fic, so there's now going to be around 25 chapters once I finish. Though I will say this number is just an estimate. God only knows what my mind might come up with between now and then.

Also, I've uploaded some more family trees to deviantart (anime-otaku20), so check them out if you want.

Thanks for being so patient guys, and I'll see you next time. Stay safe!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!