

The Venom Peddler

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by [lightningfury](#)

Summary

Curiosity killed the cat, satisfaction brought it back. Harry's curiosity leads him to exploring the Chamber a bit more thoroughly before he leaves for the Summer. What he finds there gives him a new responsibility beyond just himself and a lifelong satisfaction in the choices he makes from there on.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

June 23rd, 1993

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Curiosity Killed the Cat. Harry thought as he slid back down the long tube to the Chamber of Secrets. He carefully held his broom above his head so that it wasn't harmed when he landed. As he stood he rubbed his sore rump. Maybe he should have just ridden the broom down. He shouldered the broom over his left shoulder while he pulled out his wand to light up the tunnel.

He came to the cave-in pretty quickly. He transferred the lumos light to a couple of stalactites. It was a simple variation of the lumos spell found in his first year book of spells. He quickly levitated the rocks out of the way. He stacked them to the ceiling carefully. He didn't know if it would help in another cave-in but it couldn't hurt.

He only made a hole big enough for him to walk through. Shifting the rock any more seemed dangerous. Not that this entire venture wasn't dangerous. He'd offered to let Ron and Hermione come with him but they'd both flatly refused. At least someone knew where he was.

He came to the puzzle door covered in snakes again. "Open." He hissed and once again he was in the immense hall of the Chamber of Secrets. He'd heard Ginny say that she remembered nothing that happened while she was possessed when she answered the people who were rude enough to ask whenever one of her brothers weren't there to scare them off. It seemed a pity to Harry that he was one of the few to ever see the grandeur of this chamber.

Using the lumos spell again on the first of the line of pillars saw them all lighting up then lighting the huge chamber beyond that. Harry supposed that made sense. Kind of like how turning on the light switch in a muggle house could turn on various lights at once. With more light Harry could see the pillars were elegantly carved marble once white but now somewhat dirty with green algae. There were carved snakes of various shapes and sizes wrapped around the pillars like vines.

With the light Harry could see the water was mostly clear and clean. Besides the smell of snake the Chamber didn't smell like a sewer despite the entrance being under a bathroom. Harry wondered if the Chamber was connected to the lake and had always been a part of the water system for the castle. The girl's bathroom would have been a ungendered bathroom in Salazar's time. It's not like it'd would have been unusual for him to visit it.

Harry wished he knew more cleaning spells. With the Chamber all lit up he could see several fantastic mosaics on the floor and the ceiling but they were dingy with age and algae. Once in the center of the room where the basilisk corpse still lay Harry could see that this room was the center of several hallways like the one he'd come in through.

It only reinforced that this was probably Hogwarts' ancient water system. Harry smiled. He could only imagine how much time he could spend down here exploring if he had the time. If

only he could stay at Hogwarts during the summer. He'd bet if he stayed down here the Headmaster and the other teachers probably wouldn't even notice.

He walked up to the large head of what he assumed was Salazar Slytherin. This statue looked very different to the hunchbacked monkey figure of a statue he'd seen upstairs of the Founder. He thought he'd seen? Yes! There were two staircases one on either side of the head leading up to where the Founder's hat would have sat. Harry quickly ran up the steps to the small balcony up there.

From above the Chamber looked even more impressive. As did the huge dead snake. Harry shuddered. Despite the nightmares and his own memory of the fight it was hard to believe he'd actually survived, that he'd actually managed to fight and kill the massive snake. He rubbed the healed puncture wound on his arm. It was as big as a galleon on the top and still as large as a sickle on the bottom. He could still remember how Madam Pomfrey had paled when she'd seen it. With the phoenix tears he'd survived the bite. Madam Pomfrey said something about wounds healed by phoenix tears shouldn't leave marks and it concerned her that this one did. She'd cast spell after spell on the wound but finally released him when nothing came up. Still she looked at him with worried eyes every time he glanced at the Head table.

Harry turned to face the doorway behind him. Again it was a stone door covered in snakes. "Open." He hissed. Once the snakes had pulled back Harry stepped through and stopped in shock. Whatever he'd been expecting inside Slytherin's innermost chamber an ancient kitchen was not it. There was a massive hearth that took up a good quarter of the curved wall. There were various iron levers that could move to hang over the fire. Everything from a hook for a kettle to what looked like something you could spit a cow on. Various pots and pans hung from the ceiling and an old shelf curved against the wall across from the hearth that had held what Harry imagined were once foodstuff now long since turned to dust. A sink for washing up completed the assembly of items needed for cooking.

There was a grated hole in the floor and a solid oak table against the far wall between the shelf and the hearth with a single chair. Harry guessed that Salazar had not entertained much here in his secret chambers. There was another stone staircase just inside the door and Harry trotted up it next.

Here there was a living area. A chair and sofa near the hearth, a small end table. A blanket and pillow lay askew on the sofa along with an empty glass and a discarded book. Harry had the urge to go straighten up. Take the glass downstairs to the sink. Put the book in the small alcove he could see near the large four poster bed in the corner. A desk and chair sat under a globe that Harry didn't hesitate to light up. The walls were covered in tapestries that moved like pictures and portraits. The largest was one of a fen under the late spring sun. Another appeared to be a family tree of some sort. It started with Salazar but quickly ran out of room after twenty or so generations. Apparently the family had been rather vast at some point. Harry wondered why there weren't more parselmouths.

In a small alcove behind the bed Harry found a bathroom with a huge sunken stone tub and an almost throne like toilet. A sink and mirror sat near the entrance. A cup with the remains of a shave brush sat on the counter next to a rusty straight razor. The mirror slowly lit up as

Harry walked closer and muttered something in a very thick accent. Harry didn't understand most of it except for something that sounded like 'birdd' and 'nest' and assumed this mirror, like many before it, had something derogatory to say about his hair.

The next level up revealed a lab not terribly unlike the potions lab in the dungeons. Cauldrons were on the table as well as stored under it. Shelves of potion ingredients too many for Harry to count at a glance surrounded the walls. Most of the contents were dust now but it looked like a few items made of harder stuff had survived. The next floor up was mostly bare for some reason. Only after a lumos revealed an engraved pentagram on the floor did Harry realize this must be for rituals.

The next floor up held two tables with a great variety of runes and other markings on them. Harry noted the pentagram was prominent again. Like in the potions lab downstairs there were shelves of crystals as well various other items that looked like potion ingredients again. There were also swords, daggers, spears, staves, armor hanging on the wall. He wondered what all this stuff was for. Certainly nothing he'd learned of in Hogwarts so far.

As Harry climbed to the next floor up he wondered why so much seemed untouched. Surely Tom had done what Harry was doing. Poking around. Exploring the Chamber to its fullest. The next room was one Harry had been expecting. A private library. This room had the largest ceiling by far and also seemed to be the top floor. It wasn't just books but also scrolls, clay and stone tablets. Almost everything in the room had the same curly shifting script. If the entire book wasn't written in the twisty script then notes in the margins were written in it. Reading it was interesting. Harry could hear the hissing words in his mind which made sense he supposed. Parseltongue was a language with layered nuances. Even the simple word 'Open' took several syllables to say. Despite the age of the books they were in good condition. Harry knew you couldn't put as strong a preservation spells on things like food and ingredients that you could on parchment so that probably explained it.

Harry read one of the stone tablets which talked about the origin of parselmouths in England. Apparently a cult had ritualistically swallowed snakes whole to gain the ability initially. Harry shuddered. That sounded nasty. Apparently after several generations had done this parselmouth became an inheritable ability. Harry pulled back from the tablet with a raised eyebrow. Bully for them. It still made Harry wonder why there weren't more parselmouths. Maybe the knowledge had been lost once it became inheritable?

He cast a tempus and figured he had about four hours left before Ron and Hermione would raise an alarm. He wondered if there was any information in here about basilisks. He looked through the scrolls first and found a beautiful rendering of the King of Serpents. He started reading eagerly but it looked to be a guide to breeding basilisks. He frowned but nevertheless skimmed through the document when he saw something that startled him and stopped him in his tracks. He read out loud in a quiet hiss. "Once one has bred a basilisk breeding more is easily done. Basilisks are genderless and lay eggs based on the presence of their master. It can be up to the master whether to care for the eggs and ensure their survival or to leave them in the nest to die and be reabsorbed by the basilisk. A basilisk may undergo this process several times over its lifetime. All that is needed is the presence of a speaker to trigger gestation."

Harry's eyes grew wide and he quickly put the scroll down on a desk. He grabbed his broom and hurried down the stairs to the kitchen. There he peered down into the grate into what he had assumed was the basilisk's nest. Sure enough there was a small bundle of what looked like chicken eggs sitting in the center just under the grate.

Harry ran outside into the large part of the chamber again and leap off the balcony on to his broom. He hovered gently into the still open mouth of the statue and found his feet in the small nest. He cautiously approached the eggs before finally kneeling down next to them. He reached out a slow hand but jerked back in surprise when the egg lurched towards him.

He breathed out in shock. They were alive. He reached out again and quickly scooped the one that had moved up in his hand and brought it to his ear. "Hello." He hissed.

He could hear the tiny hissing of the snake inside and from in front of him the hissing of the other eggs. Quickly he tucked his shirt into his loose pants and tightened his belt before gently lifting and slipping each egg into his shirt. They nestled warmly against the skin of his belly. There were six eggs in total.

He mounted his broom and hurried back up to the library. Now that he knew there were eggs to hatch he wanted to read that scroll more closely.

We don't have to see you?

Chapter Summary

Harry starts down the road to independence.

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 2 - June 25th, 1993

Getting back to Privet Drive with six basilisk eggs was easier said than done and once he got there he immediately realized there was no way he could stay there the whole summer. He had to do things like sing parseltongue songs and keep the snakes on him the whole time. They'd need food once they hatched too. He'd been planning to visit the alley anyway this summer and had asked Percy how he would go about it. Maybe he could hang out there all summer?

With a sigh he headed downstairs. Standing at the entrance into the family room it didn't take long to catch his uncle's attention. "What do you want boy?! Isn't it enough we had to drive all the way to London to pick you up?! What do you want now?!"

Harry took a deep breath. "I don't want to be here anymore than you want me to be here. But the way I understand it I have to sleep here. For at least a couple of weeks each summer. So here's my deal. I'll leave in the morning. Early. Before you even get up for work Uncle Vernon. And I'll stay gone. The whole day. Stay gone from Privet Drive entirely so even the neighbors won't see me. Then after dark I'll come back to sleep."

Uncle Vernon thought for several minutes frowning fiercely. "I won't have to see you?"

"No sir."

"We won't have to feed you?" He said a bit more eagerly.

"No sir."

Uncle Vernon glanced at Aunt Petunia as if weighing not having to see or feed the freak vs having their indentured servant back. Finally they nodded to each other.

"Well the sun's out now boy. Get out of here." Uncle Vernon barked at him.

"Yes sir." Between one breath and the next Harry was out the door, his wand up his sleeve, his money pouch and house key in his pocket and six baby basilisk eggs gently swaying against his belly.

First things first he got off of Privet Drive in a hurry. Over on Rose Rd he came to a halt and with a deep breath threw up his wand hand like Percy had told him. At first he thought he'd done it wrong. Maybe his wand needed to be in his hand? But a few minutes later a garish orange double-decker bus came to a stop in front of him. The door opened and Harry climbed on.

June 25 th , 1993 - evening

Diagon Alley was different in the evening. Most of the shops were closed but Harry found a small café to buy a sandwich and crisps at down one of the side alleys and wandered the alley with the hood of his hoodie pulled up for almost an hour before finding a luggage shop down yet another side alley. Diagon was much more of a warren than he had realized.

He had gotten a cheap standard student trunk with Hagrid but he would need something different if he was going to be gone from Privet Drive. He just had too much stuff he didn't feel safe leaving there and not enough pockets to hold everything he wanted to bring with him.

"Hello young man. May I help you?" The shopkeeper came out from the backroom with a tired smile.

"Hello. Are you gonna close soon? I don't want to keep you."

"I'll be here working until late anyway. Doesn't seem much point in closing the shop if I'm here. Especially since it might result in a late customer like yourself." The shopkeep leaned back against the counter. "Hogwarts let out already?"

"Just today sir."

"You're a bit early to be shopping for school supplies then. Trunk get damaged?"

"Not really I don't guess." Harry shuffled awkwardly. "It's just not right for me."

"Oh?"

"Well. Ya see I live with my aunt and uncle during the summer and they're muggles. They hate magic and most summers they lock my trunk away. I made a deal with'em this year. I'd stay away during the day only returning to sleep and they'd...let me I guess." Harry looked away at the trunks of various sizes on display. "I don't want to leave my things there though but I can't lug a trunk around with me either."

"Ah you need a traveler's pack." The shopkeep led Harry further back into the shop where there were a great variety of bags and small suitcases. "Trunks are great when you're stationary but with some work a traveler's pack can be just as useful." The shopkeep looked him over and taking in his youth grabbed a drawstring backpack down from the rack. "Now this little number is great for the traveler who's going amongst muggles." He brought it over to the counter. "You see the combo lock here is keyed to show what you want it to show. So you turn the dial to 684 or mug, if you will, open the bag and you'll see exactly what you'd

expect to see given the outside of the bag. We sell some muggle textbooks and pencil cases you can stash in here to make it look convincing.”

The outside of this bag showed a standard canvas backpack in a grey color. There was a strap going from the front to back with a lock and two adjustable straps on either side to make it a backpack. Harry estimated he could put around six or seven of his spell books inside with room to spare. There was a small outer pocket as well.

“Now if you change the numbers to 624, or mag, it’ll open to a much more expanded space.” The shopkeep demonstrated. The bag opened to show an empty room about three meters cubed and a short ladder down into it. “Shall we?” The shopkeep put the bag on the floor and climbed down into the bag.

Tentatively and with a care to his eggs Harry followed.

“Now down here you can put up a few bookshelves, a desk, maybe a hammock.” The shopkeep showed him a box next to the ladder. “In here are the anchor stones.” Inside was a single long thin crystal with a variety of runes inscribed on it. It was slotted into a four by four grid. “You can add rooms or make what’s here bigger. Generally speaking the first trunk you get should be as customizable as possible. A trunk or bag in this case is something that should grow with you. I myself live in my trunk to this day. I keep it in the back of the store. Saves money as I don’t have to rent an apartment or a house.”

Harry nodded eyes wide.

“Are you taking runes?”

“Uh. No. My mate said to take divination. And I’m taking care of magical creatures.”

“Look, play with your bag this summer. I’ll be here to give you advice and with this purchase a deal on our many additional products. If you think it’s something you’re interested in Hogwarts will let you switch courses within the first month. Divination isn’t as big a load of codswallop as the current teacher would have you believe. Many witches and wizards use some part of it in their everyday lives. One doesn’t have to be a seer to gain insight from their tea cup. Runes should be a mandatory course in my opinion.” The shopkeep climbed out of the bag and Harry followed him.

“So how much is it? I’ll probably need to go to Gringotts for money.” Harry frowned kicking himself that he hadn’t gone before.

“Standard bag, with lock, sixteen slots worth of growth, is 200 galleons.”

Harry winced. “Yeah I’ll definitely need to go to the bank. Do you know when it opens?”

The shopkeep gave him a look. “Bank never closes. I’ll wait until you get back.”

“Thanks.” Harry said before heading out to the bank.

Behind him the shopkeep picked up the fallen broom and dumped the tea leaves out of his cup.

Harry hurried down to his vault and back up again. He'd counted out 200 galleons just to be sure he had enough and then shoveled in about the same amount in again. He'd need money if he was going to stay away from Privet Drive most of the day. He exchanged a few galleons for two hundred pounds. While he hoped he could use this summer to get a bit more acclimated to the wizarding world it would be nice to be able to retreat to the muggle world.

He returned to the luggage shop and with a ringing of the bells above the door the shopkeep again emerged from the back. Harry wondered what he was working on back there.

"Well now just pick you out a colour and I'll ring you up. I also jotted down a few of the more standard additions people tend to make. Being muggle raised you might not think of these. I find Muggleborns tend to be unimaginative. They think the wizarding world is old fashion and backwards and can't wait to bring in their modern conveniences without ever realizing that we already match them or surpass them in innumerable ways."

Harry snagged a forest green bag and placed it on the counter. He took up the list to find things listed like stove/oven, cold box, beds or hammocks, the bag opening to different rooms, current room expanded, greenhouse, swimming pools, sinks, potions lab, fireplace, menagerie, the list went on and on listing things both common and extraordinary.

"All of this couldn't possibly fit inside that little room." Harry furrowed his brow and looked up at the shopkeep.

The shopkeep chuckled. "Of course not. That's what expansion charms are for. With a strong enough ward stone and enough of your own power the sky is literally the limit. I wouldn't recommend playing too hard too fast but as you get older and learn more you'll be able to do all sorts of amazing things. You're what? Second year?"

"Yes sir."

"By the time you're a seventh year the knowledge you use now will be unconscious and the things you'll do then you can't even imagine. Have you gotten many books outside of the standard texts?"

"No sir. I'm usually escorted and hustled through pretty quickly." Harry frowned.

"Well take this summer to see what the wizarding world has on offer. Do you know where the library is?"

Harry looked surprised even if Hagrid and Mrs. Weasley hadn't mentioned it he was sure Hermione would...but she was muggleborn wasn't she? "No sir. There's a library here?"

The shopkeep winced and muttered something uncomplimentary about muggleborns under his breath.

"Hey it's not our fault. One day you're just going along thinking you're a freak then you get a weird letter and a giant comes and takes you to the alley and you spend the day thinking you're dreaming even as you're rushed through getting this load of supplies without getting to pick and choose anything extra or go exploring then bam! You're back home hardly daring

to believe it's real except now you've got a wand and an owl. They give you this train ticket for platform 9 ¾ but when you get to the station there's no such place. If I hadn't heard someone talking about muggles in the station I'd have missed the train entirely! Then Hogwarts is great but it's a school and there's all these rules and kids and you have no idea what the world looks like outside. Is Diagon Alley the only magic place in London? In England? I only learned there was a Minister of Magic this year because he came to the school to arrest Hagrid!"

The shopkeep remained stoic throughout this rant. "What I was saying is that we really should introduce muggleborns earlier. Give you a proper tour of the alley, the ministry, the hospital--"

"There's a hospital?"

The shopkeep sighed. "Yes."

"Then why didn't they take all the kids that got petrified there then?"

"Prophet said healers were brought in but it was decided not to move them. The more important question is why wasn't mandrake extract brought in from other parts of the world? I hear some of those kids lost almost the whole school year. You think Hogwarts' greenhouse was the only place in the world growing mandrakes?"

"Then why?"

"Cause they were all muggleborn. Were their parents even informed? In cases like that the parents are informed and make the arrangements for the children's care. In the case of muggleborns they're in the care of Hogwarts and Hogwarts decided to wait until their own mandrakes matured."

Harry frowned he hadn't thought of that much beyond Hermione frantically cramming for the exams. What about Justin Finch-Fletchey and Colin Creevey? They were petrified much earlier in the year. Were they able to catch up at all? Would they have to repeat the year?

"Anyway I'm here if you have any questions." The shopkeep grabbed an envelope and a quill. He wrote down a few basic things. The location of the Ministry of Magic and how to get in. The location of the hospital, St. Mungo's, and how to get there. Finally the library, Alexandria Adjunct, and how to get there from the luggage store. "My name is Alan by the way. Alan Goyle."

"Goyle. Like Gregory Goyle?"

"He's my second cousin once removed. Should be in school with you I think."

"Were you a Slytherin too?"

"Does it really matter?" Alan rolled his eyes. He muttered something about judging eleven year olds before handing Harry the envelope.

Harry went to fold it and put it in his pocket before smiling and opening his backpack. It looked normal. He frowned and twisted the combo lock to 624. He frowned down into the room. Not really ideal to store his money if he had to climb inside each time. “Uh what if I need something small but don’t want climb inside for it?”

“Ah summoning charms aren’t till 4th or 5th year. How about instead of this one...” He went back and retrieved an identical one. “Turn to 623 and you get a smaller pouch that’ll expand as needed to a point but that has an auto summon feature.” He showed Harry the huge empty space.

While Harry could see the bottom he felt like he’d have to stick his whole arm inside to reach it. With a small smile he put the envelope inside. It was dark out and he should really be getting home but he’d definitely check those places out tomorrow. He closed it and changed it to mug. In that ordinary space he put his house key and muggle money and drew it closed.

The eggs of course stayed nestled in his shirt. He was wearing two shirts one tied tightly to keep the eggs from sloshing around too much and another to hide the odd lumps. “Is this one more?”

“Just 5 galleons extra.”

Harry counted out 205 galleons. “Thank you Mr. Goyle.” He put the remaining galleons in the magical pouch before closing, locking everything and swinging it around to his back.

“You’re welcome, Mr. Potter.”

Harry blushed and flattened the wild hair down over his scar.

“It’s not the scar Mr. Potter. I went to school with your father. You’re the spitting image of him. Snape must give you hell for that.”

“Yeah he does. How do you know that?”

“It’s not polite to speak ill of the dead.” The shopkeep frowned as if remembering something unpleasant. “You should get home now. It’s almost eleven.”

“Oh yeah. Thank you. I’ll talk to you tomorrow maybe? You can talk about my dad. Hardly anyone ever does. I’d love to hear anything about him. Even bad stuff.” Harry shouldered his new backpack and hurried out the door after seeing Mr. Goyle’s distracted nod.

Alan Goyle pondered young Harry’s final words. He reached under his counter and palmed a single stone out of a bag of them. He frowned at the notation inscribed on it but nodded to himself with a resigned look.

Back at the Dursley’s house

Harry cut through the gardens of a couple of neighbors before finally entering Number 4’s own backyard. He was happy to see the house was dark. He quietly unlocked the backdoor and just as silently closed it behind him. He paused for a minute to listen to the cadence of his

uncle's snores. Dudley's were just a half second behind his father's. His aunt made little whistling sounds that were undetectable from downstairs.

He crept up the staircase taking care to avoid all the squeaky parts of the stairs with long practice from sneaking down stairs to pilfer food. Tonight he was still full from his sandwich from earlier but he'd definitely be looking into adding an icebox and pantry to his backpack. To be able to make himself a sandwich whenever he wanted one. It was hard to imagine such a luxury.

Finally he got to his own door and frowned at the multitude of locks. They made him nervous and he made a promise to himself to get out tomorrow morning before the Dursleys woke up and changed their minds.

Once inside his room he put his bag down and carefully made a nest in his worn mattress with the pillow and his ratty old blanket. Then he carefully removed the eggs one by one while hissing quietly to them. He kept his voice down as low as he could bringing each egg to his lips to hiss sweet nothings to the baby snakes inside.

Harry was ever aware of the snoring in the next room and his uncle's louder snores down the hall. He paused frequently as he moved his things from his trunk to his backpack. Once everything was stacked neatly in piles inside the little room Harry frowned at his empty trunk. It had no enchantments as far as he knew. He lifted it up and tried to put inside the backpack as well. To his surprise the trunk seemed to shrink as it was going through the gap and once inside was normal sized again. Harry laughed at himself silently wishing he'd just tried that first. He repacked his trunk inside the backpack just to keep things neat.

The room inside the backpack was smaller than his room but only just. Harry wondered what else he could get down here. The makeshift desk made from the broken door of his wardrobe? The never used bookshelf that only held Dudley's old toys? Hedwig? He looked over the list the shopkeep gave him and noted menagerie was listed. He'd ask Hedwig if she wanted to sleep the day away inside when she got back from hunting. He definitely didn't want to leave her here alone.

According to the broken clock he'd fixed last year it was nearly one in the morning and Harry had to be out of the house before his aunt woke up at six. With a sigh he set the old alarm clock and then tucked it under his pillow so he would hear it but it wouldn't wake his family. Then he curled himself around the nest of eggs and briefly thanking his ability to sleep anywhere on anything fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

It's been done that Harry missed out on some kind of muggleborn welcome package before. Here one just didn't exist. Most muggleborns are getting the relatively same experience Harry got without the dramatics of the Dursley's fleeing (most of the time). Walked through the alley to buy their supplies then dropped off back at home. Most of

the time someone does tell them how to get to the platform though. Yes Harry's bag is inspired by Newt's. Fantastic Beasts was the first time I really got an idea of what could be done, within JK's world, by adult wizards.

Harry's bag. The look of it at least does exist. It was inspired by this:

[https://www.amazon.com/LOCTOTE-Cinch-Pack-Slash-Resistant-Anti-](https://www.amazon.com/LOCTOTE-Cinch-Pack-Slash-Resistant-Anti-Theft/dp/B07QLFDBXX/ref=pd_sbs_198_9?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=B07QLFDBXX&pd_rd_r=5945b874-a0ef-11e9-835d-e5e435a3ed81&pd_rd_w=jVWar&pd_rd_wg=35BCo&pf_rd_p=588939de-d3f8-42f1-a3d8-d556eae5797d&pf_rd_r=PPAG4R31BYBVC1SH3S0Z&psc=1&refRID=PPAG4R31BYBVC1SH3S0Z)

[Theft/dp/B07QLFDBXX/ref=pd_sbs_198_9?](https://www.amazon.com/LOCTOTE-Cinch-Pack-Slash-Resistant-Anti-Theft/dp/B07QLFDBXX/ref=pd_sbs_198_9?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=B07QLFDBXX&pd_rd_r=5945b874-a0ef-11e9-835d-e5e435a3ed81&pd_rd_w=jVWar&pd_rd_wg=35BCo&pf_rd_p=588939de-d3f8-42f1-a3d8-d556eae5797d&pf_rd_r=PPAG4R31BYBVC1SH3S0Z&psc=1&refRID=PPAG4R31BYBVC1SH3S0Z)

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Percy is an underused resource by Harry in my opinion. I can understand Harry being leery of adults but Percy's Ron's older brother and a prefect. Despite his pompous behavior he's right there in the common room most of the time. Percy is extremely smart and taking literally every subject offered. He would be a font of knowledge about all sorts of things and obligated to help Harry as a prefect. Besides Percy knows his younger brother literally had to rescue Harry from his relatives last year and wants Harry to have a way to leave if he needs to.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

New clothes and the obligatory bank trip

Mr. Goyle shows Harry some basic human kindness and gets his bag fully outfitted.

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 3 - June 26th, 1993

Harry jogged down the street to a café several streets away from Privet Drive. He figured he'd get himself some breakfast then head into the Wizarding World. He entered the café ignoring the looks of the patrons. The café was full of people on their morning commute.

He took a seat at the counter but the waitress gave him a look and hurried into the back. A man followed her back out and went straight over to Harry. "What do you think you're doing here kid?"

"Uh what?"

"This isn't a soup kitchen. You have to pay here."

"Yeah I know that. I'm not homeless."

The man gave him a disgusted look as if to say he seriously doubted that. "Nevertheless I'd like you to leave. You're not a good look for the business."

Harry glanced around at all the disapproving looks of the business men and women of the café. The waitress who looked vaguely like a girl who he remembered from primary school look horrified to see him there.

He looked down at himself and shifted awkwardly as he felt his face grow hot with embarrassment. He knew what they were seeing. Dudley's stretched out shirt permanently stained with dirt and sweat. His ripped baggy jeans. His trainers held together by tape. Dursley's tale about him being a hoodlum was helped by the clothes they made him wear.

He grit his teeth and climbed down off the stool. He gave a tiny sniff as he tried not to cry. He tried to get angry at them for judging him. Stupid muggles. He was a wizard. He was rich. It wasn't his fault that he wore worn out hand me downs.

Outside on the sidewalk Harry paused as he considered that last thought. He was rich. Yeah it wasn't his fault he had to wear the bad clothes in front of the Dursley's but he could get some

decent clothes to wear when he was away from them. He didn't have to put up with rope belts and too large clothes anymore. Harry smiled to himself. He turned and thumbed his nose at the man in the café still standing there watching him.

He held his head high and marched down the road to the local Poundland. He had some trouble determining his size since his clothes were tailored in the wizarding world but here at least the shop clerk was much more understanding and helped him find a few things.

An hour later Harry was dressed in a pair of khakis the same colour as his backpack and wore a nice dark blue shirt that actually fit. His snake eggs he'd carefully made a nest of inside his backpack. Once he was in the wizarding world he throw his robe over everything and put the eggs back in his shirt. He had a pack of brand new underwear, the first he'd ever worn and new socks on under a pair of new black trainers. The socks, underwear and shirts had come in plastic packs holding multiple colors of the same item. With new trousers, shoes and at least three shirts to choose from every day Harry felt pretty good about himself. He walked past the café with his head held high. He didn't look inside to see if they were watching despite the temptation.

He continued to a residential street that was still quiet with no one about and called the bus again. He changed his mind. He'd get breakfast in the wizarding world.

After a fruity crepe Harry wasn't quite sure which way to go first. Finally he decided to head back to the luggage shop. He had some more questions to ask about his bag he hadn't thought of until he was home last night.

The bell jingled above the door and the woman behind the counter looked up and gave him a friendly smile. "May I help you?"

Harry smiled back shyly. He supposed it would be odd if Mr. Goyle was still here in the morning like he was last night. He wondered if this was Mrs. Goyle. Didn't Mr. Goyle say he lived in his trunk in the backroom? "Hello. I brought this backpack last night and I had some more questions."

"Okay Mr. Potter. My husband's out getting breakfast for the little ones but I am able to answer most basic questions."

"Okay. Thank you Mrs. Goyle. Uh can anyone outside the backpack hear anything happening inside the backpack?"

"No. You could have a full band playing in there for all anyone outside would notice."

Harry smiled. Excellent he could sing the parseltongue songs to the eggs then. "Uh I put my trunk inside there. My trunk was bigger than the opening but it slid in just fine. How big...I mean is there a limit?"

“Well you don’t want to put something in it bigger than you have room for it to go. That’s just common sense. But as larger things go in they will squeeze together and come out intact on the other side. There is a limit but I forget the exact measurements. You couldn’t swallow a whole house for instance but you could probably drive a carriage into one.”

“Wow. Okay.” Harry glanced around. “Can I look around? Mr. Goyle gave me a list of things I could add and I already have some ideas.”

“Very well dear. Just don’t go adding anything without my husband here to guide you.”

“I won’t. Thank you ma’am.”

She smiled at him and returning looking through a catalog of some sort on the counter.

Harry headed towards the section of the store that held various cold boxes, which he assumed was like the wizard equivalent of a refrigerator. He noted a nice light blue one and found that it came with a number of options. Apparently with the turn of a dial it could be a cold box, an oven, a dishwasher, or a washer/dryer. Apparently the stove options were over in the same section as the potion labs which Harry figured made sense in a wizard kind of way.

The bell had jingled a few times while Harry looked around but he couldn’t see the door from where he was deep in the shop. As one might expect in a shop that dealt in expansion charms there was a rather extensive one on the shop itself.

He had wandered over to the sleeping options when Mr. Goyle appeared around a corner. “There you are Mr. Potter. You’ve been back here an hour. Find anything interesting?”

“Yes sir.” Harry smiled. He walked back over to the cold box section. “How much for this with all the options?” He asked pointing the light blue one he’d liked. It was about a meter tall.

“All the options?” Mr. Goyle smiled at him questioningly.

“Uh. The cold box, oven, washer/dryer, and dishwasher sir.”

“Oh well that’s not all the options then.”

“What else is there?”

Mr. Goyle laughed. “The sky’s the limit my boy.”

“Well until I figure out where the sky is how much for those things. I need all those things. I’ll look into wants later.”

“Ah. Very wise.” He paused. “I’ll be honest with you Mr. Potter I don’t like that you’re going to be on your own almost all summer. I don’t like that you don’t appear to have any wizarding adults in your life that are telling you basic things.” He frowned and fidgeted. “But the runes advised against me being a mentor. Truthfully I’m too busy to be what you really need but that doesn’t mean I can’t show you some basic decency that seems to be lacking in your life.”

“Okay.” Harry was leery. It usually didn’t turn out good for him when people started talking about how they were adults and he was a child.

“This unit with the enchantments you want costs 400 galleons. That’s 100 for each enchantment. You can have up to ten on this unit. Before I sell it to you though I want you to go to the bank. I want you to make sure you know exactly how much gold you have and if you’re going to get any more. I know James Potter was rich but that was eleven years ago and who knows how your accounts have been managed since then. Go to the bank first okay?”

Harry nodded. That was a lot of money. He remembered the Weasley’s vault with its single galleon. Their house didn’t seem to have any of the multiple enchantments he’d seen here today though with such a large family the expansion charm seems like something they’d use. “Thank you sir. I will. That’s a really good idea actually. Thank you.”

Mr. Goyle reached out and squeezed his shoulder.

Harry went up to the teller and waited for the goblin to acknowledge him.

It finally looked up and deigned to make eye contact with the boy.

“Hello, sir. I’d like to know how much gold I have in my account.”

“Name?”

“Harry Potter.”

The goblin didn’t jump and do a double take at all at Harry’s name which was rather nice of him really. Harry hoped none of the other wizards and witches in the bank had noticed either.

“Which vault?”

“What?”

“Of which vault did you want to know the balance of?”

“Uh? I didn’t know I had multiple vaults.”

The goblin sighed before ringing a bell. “Wait over there.” One long bony finger pointed to a small section of couches. Harry had just sat down gingerly on the ornate sofa noting as he did that it seemed to be hand embroidered with gold, when another goblin walked up to him.

“Follow me.” The goblin jerked his squat head towards a tunnel behind the tellers.

Harry followed with some trepidation.

The goblin led him to a nice office with a goblin sized desk. It was inlaid with gold and mother of pearl. A large purple plant with spiky leaves sat in one corner. There were two chairs in front of the desk. Both were goblin sized Harry noticed and he was thankful that he was small for his age he lowered himself down in one while sitting his backpack down in the other.

The goblin blew out a disgusted breath before pointing to the runes on the back of the chair. "Press Thuraz for a human sized chair."

"Uh which one is that?" Harry blushed.

The goblin glared at him. "The one that looks like a thorn."

Harry pressed it and the chair resized itself. He sat down and pressed his hands between his knees to keep from fidgeting. Despite sitting taller than the goblin he'd felt very much like a small, ignorant child at the moment.

"You wish to know the balance of your vaults?"

"Yes sir."

"You were unaware you had more than one vault?"

"Yes sir."

"There are four vaults in total under your name. There is the main Potter family vault, your father's trust vault, your mother's private vault, and your own trust vault. The inventory for each." As the goblin spoke he pulled four scrolls out of the box on his desk.

Harry grabbed the first scroll and unrolled it to see it was his mother's vault. Besides gold there were things like her wedding dress, a few pieces of furniture, and a trunk. Of gold she had some 8,000 galleons give or take a sickle in it.

Picking up the next scroll showed his own trust vault. He'd taken out 458 galleons last night but it hadn't made a dent in the overall amount of around 110,000 galleons. Harry sighed a bit relieved. He could definitely get the enchantments he wanted that was for sure. He seemed to get a deposit of around 10,000 galleons each birthday. There were some markings near the galleon number indicating percentage but Harry wasn't sure what they were or what they meant.

The next scroll was the Potter family vault and Harry was glad the amount was at the top because there seemed to be a ton of stuff in the vault. Clothes, artwork, jewelry, weapons, armor, books, and those were just the things Harry recognized. He noticed there was a marking noting the Potter family vault had been established in the 1200's and held all the flotsam and jetsam a family vault might accumulate in almost 800 years. There was an amount at the top that made Harry goggle a bit. Roughly 30 million galleons. That was a lot. Harry tried to do the conversion to pounds in his head but quickly lost the thread. Those same percentage markings were on this scroll.

Finally he picked up the scroll with his father's trust vault. This one was a surprise after the family vault. He had about 100 galleons. That was all. There was nothing else listed.

He lowered the scroll to see the goblin working on something else while he waited for Harry to read the scrolls.

"Yes Mr. Potter?"

"That's... It's a lot more than I thought it would be."

"Yes well your grandfather, Fleamont, invented Sleekeazy's Hair Potion. That bolstered your family vaults quite a bit."

"There's very little in my father's vault."

"Yes. I recommend closing your parent's accounts and rolling them into the family vault. That's usually how it's done with deceased family members."

That explained a lot about the huge list of items in the family vault. "Do that with my father's but leave my mother's alone for now. I want to look through her trunk and I'm afraid it'd get lost in the Potter vault."

"Very well."

"What's these markings up at the top?"

"That's how much interest the vault earns. The total times the percentage gets added annually."

"So..." Harry frowned down at his hands and tried to count on his fingers to keep it straight but quickly lost it. He was good in math but the sheer size of the number made it difficult. He could have done it with some paper and a pencil but in his head it was a bit much.

"Don't strain yourself Mr. Potter." The goblin sneered. "The Potter family vault is in what we call the 4 percent. It earns approximately 12 hundred thousand a year in interest." The goblin gave him a speculative glance before continuing. "The Potter family has stock in the company that makes and distributes the Sleekeazy Hair Potion which deposits a typical dividend of about 1 million a year as well. There used to be regular withdrawals of about a million each year for the upkeep of the Potter family home in London but a muggle construction company destroyed it about eight years ago. The Ministry ordered all wizarding households at the time to reverse all enchantments, and empty the houses of all magical items. The accounting firm who handles your family account hired a goblin team at great expense to empty the house and tear down all the wards. Everything was then placed in the family vault."

"Is that why everything looks like a big jumble?"

"Yes. While care was taken when putting the items away so that nothing was broken nothing is in order either. Until you get a home of your own I don't recommend digging through it all either. Otherwise you have your yearly taxes to the government to consider. Since your

father's death you have not had to pay taxes due to your youth but upon your seventeenth birthday you can expect that will be withdrawn annually as well."

Harry nodded mutely. The list was more than a little overwhelming. To think that this morning he'd been shooed out of a café for looking like a homeless person which he supposed he might be aside from the Dursley's. "Do I own any property?"

"How would I know that? This is a bank Mr. Potter. You do not have any outstanding mortgages or loans with us. That's all I can tell you. Sign here to move the funds from your father's vault into the family vault. The empty vault can be shut down until you have heirs of your own or sold back to the bank. If you decide to keep it there is an upkeep fee of a galleon a year."

Harry tried to read over the document before he signed it but his eyes swam from all the legalese in front of him. He felt leery of signing anything without reading all of it though. He'd heard his uncle grumble about such enough to know that. Finally he got to the bottom of the document. It appeared to use a bunch of big and contrary words to say the bank would move the gold to the family vault for a small fee of 3% of the gold moved. In this case 3 galleons and Harry tentatively signed his name at the bottom.

"Just shut the vault down for now."

"Very well. Mr. Potter."

"Where would I go to see if I own any property?"

"Records at the Ministry."

"Okay."

"Will there be anything else Mr. Potter?"

Harry shook his head. He was still trying to get his head around that amount of money. Then he nodded. "I want to make a withdrawal."

"Of course. Please see a teller outside for that."

"Right. Sorry. Thank you for showing me my accounts." He stood up.

"These are your copies Mr. Potter."

"Oh thank you." Harry scooped up three of the scrolls and opened the smaller magical pouch to drop them inside. Harry shifted awkwardly in front of the goblin. "Thank you Mr. ..."
Harry blushed embarrassed that he hadn't caught the goblin's name.

"Hookshot." The goblin gave him a displeased look over his glasses.

"Mr. Hookshot." Harry bowed a bit. "Thank you."

Harry awkwardly walked out of the office as the goblin returned to his work dismissing Harry with a wave of his hand.

Back out front the bank was busier and Harry queued up behind an impatient witch who tapped her boot toe at the wait.

When Harry got up to the goblin he followed the procedure he'd seen done so far. "I'd like to make a withdrawal." And handed the key to the goblin promptly after they'd asked for it. Handing it over early seemed to be the wrong thing to do.

Finally a goblin Harry recognized came around the counter to guide him. Harry greeted Griphook. "Hello Mr. Griphook."

The goblin waited until they were at the carts and out of earshot before replying. "Good day Mr. Potter."

One roller coaster ride later Harry opened his vault and hesitated. This was his second withdrawal in as many days and he was only two purchases in. Maybe he should take more this time? "Uh can you give me a minute? I'm gonna fill up my pouch with gold so I don't have to keep coming back down."

"You could do that or you could simply ask if the shop accepts checks."

"Checks? But I don't have a checkbook."

"The shop has the paperwork if they have an account with the bank. You simply write down your account number and the amount to be withdrawn. For those shops that do not have an account with the bank you can use the gold."

"What if you write down a number that isn't yours?"

"The books and quills are enchanted to identify the signer. If we get a request in a hand that doesn't match the owner of the vault we refuse the transaction and the book will turn red to identify a thief."

"Okay. That makes much more sense. Thanks Mr. Griphook."

"You're welcome Mr. Potter."

Harry moved the paperwork over before returning to face the mound of gold, silver and copper. He should get a bit of each he thought. He couldn't keep paying for everything with galleons. How would that look in front of Ron? "How can you tell how much I took out without me even knowing how much I took out?"

"We have counting spells."

"Could you help me then? I want to take out uh, 1,000 galleons, 1,000 sickles and 1,000 knuts." He looked down at his bag. "If this will hold all that."

“We’ll see.” Griphook snapped his fingers and the said amount of gold, silver and copper flew through the air in a steady stream. Once it was done the pouch looked no fuller than it had and the bottom was still just in reach of Harry’s hand.

“Good bag. Where’d you get it?” Griphook asked as he closed the vault with another negligent wave of his hand.

“Enchanting Expansions.”

“Ah yes. He does very well despite not being on the main alley.”

“I’m gonna get a cold box, oven, washer/dryer, dishwasher combo. And a potions lab. And a bed.” Harry told the goblin in an excited tone.

“All in that pack?”

“Yes.”

“Why not a trunk?”

“I don’t plan to spend much time at home this summer.”

“I see.”

Back at Exchanting Expansion, the luggage shop

Harry returned to the luggage shop after stopping off and getting another sandwich and crisps at the same shop he’d stopped at last night. He wondered where he went to get groceries.

Mr. Goyle came out when the bell rang. “Back Mr. Potter?”

“Yes sir.”

“Still want the combo unit?”

“Yes sir.”

“Talking about money is rude so I won’t ask but...”

“I’m okay to get what I need.” Harry looked away and shuffled his feet. “I’m tired of being a burden. I want to be independent. I think outfitting my bag properly is the first big step in the right direction when it comes to that.”

Mr. Goyle gave him a kind of half smile. “You’re only twelve Mr. Potter.” He said gently.

“I’ll be thirteen in a month. A hundred years ago kids like me were already working.” That had been a frequent reminder. If it had been a hundred years ago Vernon could have put

Harry to work in his factory then maybe he wouldn't have been as much of a burden.

"I know the wizarding world may seem outdated but child labor wasn't a problem here." Mr. Goyle reached under the counter and Harry heard what sounded like stones clinking. He looked down and sighed. "Well now what all would you like today?"

"I want that combo unit and a potions lab so I can cook and clean. A sink, cause you always need a sink for things, a bed, and...I guess that's it."

Mr. Goyle smiled. Harry's enthusiasm was charming especially after that burden conversation. He was still a child despite his seriousness. "What about a bathroom?"

"Oh! Yes please." Harry blushed.

"Okay. Let's go get everything in the bag then I'll set it up for you inside."

Getting everything in the bag proved to be a problem though because the tiny room was filled. Then Mr. Goyle showed Harry the true magic of expansion charms. With the addition of another crystal to stabilize it the room expanded out from the small entrance to a much bigger room. Now the size of a studio apartment the room's interior was cave like and dark.

Harry loved it. He declared it cozy much to Mr. Goyle's confusion. He had no idea Harry had grown up in a small dark place. While they worked though he told Harry about James and the Marauders. Harry regretted insisting on the tale. He wasn't sure what was worst. Knowing his Dad was a bully or not knowing anything about him at all.

Once everything was installed and they had climbed out Harry looked outside to see the sun setting. He pouted. There was still so much he wanted to do. While productive going to the bank had really eaten into his day.

"The total is 2,200 Galleons, 7 sickles, and 3 knuts." Mr. Goyle looked at him seriously. "Are you okay with that Mr. Potter?"

"Do you take checks?"

"Yes."

"The goblins told me about it. It's kind of troublesome to keep going down there when you're buying a lot."

"Indeed." He brought out the paperwork and showed Harry where to sign and how to fill it out.

"Where do I go for groceries? I mean I could go to the muggle world but I wanna know where to go in the wizarding world."

"There's a farmer's bazaar a few streets over. If you run you might get something before it closes but the best time to shop there is in the morning. Maybe get muggle tonight then head there first thing in the morning."

“Okay. What about bedding? Sheets and blankets for my bed?” And stuff to make a nest for my snakes.

“Agatha’s Linens is three stores down. Tell her I sent you.”

“Thank you again Mr. Goyle.”

“Thank you for your business Mr. Potter.”

“I’m definitely sending Hermione here when I see her. I know she’s gonna want one of those bags with the library inside.”

“I look forward to meeting her.”

At Agatha’s Linens Harry had a great time picking out lots of colorful and soft fabrics. Agatha was an ancient woman who sat near the door crocheting while her much younger great great granddaughter actually helped Harry find and purchase everything. Once again Harry didn’t need to introduce himself. After talking to Mr. Goyle Harry was getting really tired of the “you look just like your father” routine. The granddaughter had hair in a dozen different colours and Harry found himself asking where she’d gotten it done.

Before Harry left Agatha waved him over to press a piece of cinnamon candy into his hand and pat his cheek with a soft cool hand. She called him James.

Harry stopped off at a wizarding diner for dinner and afterwards had the Knight Bus drop him off near the Poundland store. There he brought all the snacks and junk food he’d never been allowed to eat growing up. Cold soda and water. Even one of those freezer pizzas Petunia made for Dudley that smelt so good and that Dudley had always eaten a whole one of himself.

After putting everything away in the alley behind the store and letting Hedwig out Harry took his time going back to Privet Drive. It was late but he wasn’t sure just how late yet. He should get a watch. Lights were still on in Privet Drive so he tucked his backpack into the shed and climbed inside. He didn’t come out until the next morning.

Chapter End Notes

I'm an adult and I don't know as much about finances as Harry does in some fanfictions. He's not quite 13. In reality there are entire companies that do nothing but manage money for the super rich.

Also as someone who grew up poor and dressed almost entirely in hand me downs...yeah the fact that you don't have to once you have your own money as an adult is very very hard to break. And people don't have to be evil to be judgement. The

Poundland (UK) (to my internet research) is like the Dollar General (US) and is the place where I bought clothes for myself for the first time.

Mr. Goyle wants to help Harry but he is a believer in Divination and his divining is telling him that he's not the person to guide Harry so he's trying his best to limit himself. As for telling Harry about his parents? Well there is a dearth of that in canon. And it's important to remember that Severus wasn't the Marauders only target. And bullying DOES stick with you for years. Sure people have nice things to say about James now that he's dead but I seriously doubt Severus is the only one walking around remembering James Potter with feelings of pain, embarrassment, and shame. That's reflected here.

Also friendly reminder that Harry is 12 and his first desire once he had his own money was to buy as many Mars Bars as he could. He's finally getting to now.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Hair cuts?

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 4 - June 27th, 1993

Harry walked up to the salon with a bit of trepidation and gathering his Gryffindor bravery he finally walked in.

“Hello Dear. Here for your mum?” The woman looked up at him and blushed. “I guess not. How can we help you Mr. Potter?”

“That. I don’t wanna look like me anymore. I don’t wanna look like James Potter.”

“Never knew what Lily saw in that man to be honest.” A woman walked up behind the receptionist. “Hey Harry. I can take care of you.”

“You knew my mum?”

“Spend seven years in a dorm room with her. I ought to know her. Hop up here.”

“Can you tell me about her?”

“Sure.”

Harry hoped this would result in better stories than the ones Mr. Goyle had told him of his father. Mr. Goyle had been a Ravenclaw but since his family was associated with the Dark he’d been the target of pranks from a group called the Marauders that his father and three others had been a part of in school. Apparently they’d styled themselves as pranksters but they only targeted students they believed Dark and their pranks always went just a tad too far and in the case of Professor Snape way too far. Not that Professor Snape hadn’t fought back just as viciously but still it painted his father as a bully favored and protected by the Headmaster. Harry hated bullies.

“Not James Potter...” The woman whipped out her wand and began casting charms at Harry’s hair. His hair went through a kaleidoscope of colours before settling on a green that matched his eyes. He smiled. It was great but.... “I live with muggles so maybe not right now.”

“Muggles? Oh no Harry. Tell me Petunia wasn’t the one to raise you.”

Harry nodded miserably.

“You poor thing.” The woman who still hadn’t introduced herself hugged Harry to her breast. “I remember those hateful bitchy letters she used to send Lily. Why would anyone leave you with her? And you were just a baby!”

Harry shrugged. “She’s my last blood relative.”

“Bullshit. Potter may have been a menace but he was a pureblood. We’re all interrelated. Hell I’m your like 5 th cousin twice removed.”

“What’s your name?”

“Oh sorry Sweetie. I babysat you once but you’d hardly remember that. My name is Chelsea Moldavite.”

“Nice to meet you.” Harry noticed his hair had settled on a dark auburn the same color as his mum’s in the photos he had of her. He smiled.

“This color I think. Now what style?”

Suddenly he was bald or at least it looked like he was bald in the mirror. He could still feel his hair brushing against his ears. In the mirror he cycled through a variety of hairstyles from Draco Malfoy’s slicked back hair to a Mohawk. Finally his hair lengthen to elbow length wavy locks that reminded Harry of the snakes in the Chamber of Secrets. “I like this one.”

Chelsea smiled. “So did your mum.”

“Was she a good person? Not a bully?”

“I see someone’s been telling you about James.”

Harry nodded miserably. “He didn’t want to speak ill of the dead but I begged him. I know so little.”

“Growing up with Petunia I don’t doubt that. Your mum was a great girl. Smart, beautiful. Funny, clever. Super nice. Always smiling. Friends with everyone.”

Harry smiled brightly. “Details?”

“You’re asking a hairdresser for the dets. I hope you’re prepared.” She swung a cape around his shoulders and got to work washing his hair first. “Lily was this skinny little freckled thing with long dark red hair. You could tell she was a muggleborn from the way she was asking questions constantly and she had the biggest bottle green eyes. Her family wasn’t well off. While her robes were generally new her dresses were all hand me downs from her sister. Her best friend when she came into Hogwarts was Severus Snape. He’d been her neighbor growing up and the one to first tell her she was a witch. Even after Lily went into Gryffindor and Sev went into Slytherin they maintained their friendship.”

Harry noticed his hair seemed longer now which made no sense as she was waving scissors around his head.

“She came to school with a pet toad. They were the style then. Ricky was his name and he went everywhere with her. Used to sit on her shoulder and she’d croak to him at night.”

“Croak to him?”

“Yes. She could speak to toads. Not frogs though. Anyway she flew through our classes. Got nearly every spell the first try. It’d be so easy to be jealous of her but she was so sweet. She’d get it then immediately help everyone else. So charming.”

She sounded like Hermione minus the charming part though Hermione was always helping people she wasn’t very sweet about it.

“James apparently fell in love with her on the train in first year and gave her puppy dog eyes every time she got anywhere near him. Lily had his number though and ignored him. He’d been mean to Sev right off the bat you see. Together those two ran the potions classroom. Old Slughorn would crow to anyone who’d listen that he had two Potions masters in his class. Then Lily excelled in Charms as well while Sev excelled in Defense. Sorry to chat about your potions professor as well but the two were inseparable. It’s impossible to talk about one without mentioning the other.”

She shook her head. “I always thought they’d end up together. But Severus fell in with a bad crowd and they had a falling out there at the end of fifth year. They made up over the summer but there was always this distance between them that hadn’t been there before. Potter saw his chance and cleaned up his act. At least he did where Lily could see him. Charmed her he did. We could hardly believe it. Tested her for every love potion we could think of.”

Chelsea had started a cauldron brewing earlier that she now set to cooling. “Anyway she was Head Girl, James was Head Boy though I don’t see how. Trust the head of the Marauders to be Head Boy? Should have been Sev. He and Lily had the best grades. She graduated with full honors. She wanted to work at the Potion shop down the way but she got married and pregnant right out of Hogwarts. What with the war on we all thought they’d leave the country. So many parents did in those days.”

She fell silent as she pulled on a slim pair of gloves and began using a wide stiff brush to paint the potion on his hair. “I’ve rambled on and on. I warned you though. Do you have any questions?”

Harry thought for a few minutes as he watched the blurry figure in the mirror’s head slowly turn red as she’d removed his glasses when she washed his hair. “What was her favorite food?”

“Treacle Tart.”

“Mine too. What was her favorite colour?”

“This bright blue-green color. Aquamarine, that’s it. Not the bottle green your eyes are but pretty nonetheless.”

“Did she like Quidditch?”

“She loved to fly but she wasn’t much for the sport.”

“Why did she name me Harry?”

“I think it was your great grandfather’s name on her father’s side.”

“Did she have any hobbies?”

“She loved to cook. Reading of course she was so smart. She’d muddle through her tarot cards when she was bored.”

“Tarot cards?”

“Are you taking divination?”

“Yes.”

“You’ll learn about them next year then. She liked to sew. She made her own wedding dress in fact.”

“It’s in her vault. I’ll have to go look at it.” Harry smiled.

“She made all your baby clothes. Called you her Harry Munch-Munch and she’d nibble your fingers and toes. You were such a pretty happy baby. Lily was a great mummy. She loved you so much.”

Harry swallowed hard. “Did she sing to me?”

“Yes. Brahms Lullaby.”

Harry sniffled a bit.

Chelsea quickly changed the subject. She didn’t want any of these nosey biddies to see him crying. Twelve year old boy’s egos were so fragile at this age. “And we’re done.” She handed him his glasses back.

Harry smiled. He now had long wavy red hair. Too dark to be mistaken for a Weasley in addition to the fact the he lacked freckles. “I love it. Thank you.”

“No problem Dear. Next thing I’d do is go see the Eye Emporium a couple of streets over. Either get new glasses or if you think you can take the itch get your eyes fixed. If you need an adult to sign let me know.”

“I will. Thank you.” Harry felt the oddest urge to hug this woman and she pulled him in before he could decide against it.

“Thank you for telling me about her. Thank you so much.”

Chapter End Notes

Seriously if Lily was this wonderful vivid woman why do we never see or even hear about any of her friends but Severus?

The hair cutting scene is inspired by the scene in the movie Stardust where we flash to his super short hair then away then back to find his hair is suddenly much longer with Tristan looking very confused as to how that came about.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

New eyes, proper floo technique, basic medical needs, and new job opportunities

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 5 - June 28th – 29th , 1993

Harry did need an adult to sign for him and got his eyes fixed the next day then spent the day after in his bag recovering from it. It had required a potion and a spell cast on both his eyes. Then he was very firmly told not to touch his eyes for the next week. He couldn't take any other potions, such as a sleeping potion or a pain relief potion. He had to wear special goggles when he did sleep for the next week. His eyes were going to itch and hurt something fierce the first 24 hours.

Harry got to know each of his eggs very well over the next 24 hours as he sat there rocking back and forth with tearing eyes while he sang the parselsongs loudly to distract himself. Once he got as far as touching his cheek but quickly pulled his hand back down.

He didn't think he'd ever have to thank the Dursleys for anything but thanks to long hours alone, hurt and hungry Harry managed to get through the process with his eyes intact. He returned to the Eye Emporium the next day. The healer was surprised to see him.

“Wow. I don't normally see children manage to get through the process. Did your relatives strap you down?”

“No.”

“Huh. Impressive willpower kid. You know this was discovered after being initially used as a torture technique.”

“I believe it.”

The healer laughed as Harry grumbled at him. Harry was convinced healers were all secretly sadists.

“Go show Chelsea your new eyes.”

Harry obediently trotted down the street. One thing that made the whole horrible process worth it was the clarity with which he could see everything now. An owl sat on top of a

building and Harry could see its individual feathers. He wondered how much better he was going to be at seeing the snitch now.

He met Chelsea outside the salon. She had her purse on her shoulder and greeted him with a smile and a hug. "Hi Sweetie. I got to thinking. Have you had your vaccinations?"

"My what?"

"Well that answers that question. Come on. I'm taking you to St. Mungo's. You should have a checkup every year and you need to get all your vaccinations. We don't want you coming down with dragon pox now do we? That's what took James' parents you know."

"I didn't know that actually." Harry furrowed his brow. It was really irritating that everyone knew more about his family than he did. At least in Chelsea and Mr. Goyle's case he understood. They had attended Hogwarts with his parents which in his opinion made quite a bit of difference than Hermione reading about him in books.

She muttered something unkind about Petunia under her breath. "Let's go through the floo in the salon."

"I wound up at the wrong place last time I traveled by floo. How do you say anything with all that ash in your mouth?"

"Ash in your mouth? You must have been using cheap floo powder. This will be better I promise." She let him take a hand full of the silken powder. It was certainly much smoother than the grainy sand the Weasley's used. "Throw the powder with one hand, take one step, say St. Mungo's, then take the next step to step out of the fire there." She demonstrated the timing in front of the fireplace. "Just like that."

"Okay." Harry slipped an arm into his robe to hold his eggs to his body tightly. Throwing the powder in with one hand he stepped in, called "St. Mungo's" and stepped out all with his eyes closed. When he opened them he was quite surprised to find himself in a well addressed foyer with a sign saying "Welcome to St. Mungo's. Step forward for the next traveler." Harry quickly hopped forward so Chelsea could come through which she did within a few moments.

"There. Did you have any trouble?"

"No ma'am. I didn't even go flying or fall down."

"Who taught you to floo?" Chelsea seemed surprised.

"Mrs. Weasley."

"Really? You'd think a woman with that many children would know how to teach proper floo technique. No matter you know now. Let's get you registered." Chelsea strode forward to the desk where a busy woman in soft pink robes was writing something down on a piece of paper. "Good morning. I owled earlier. I'd like to see a healer about getting my friend's son a checkup. He needs all his vaccinations as well."

The woman looked up and smiled at them. “Yes ma’am. Go on back. Take the lift to the 3 rd floor then the door on the left to the waiting room. They’ll call you when they’re ready for you.”

“Thank you. Come along Sweetie.” Chelsea reached out for Harry’s shoulder and guided him through the door to the lift.

Once in the waiting room Harry fidgeted for a moment. “Will I have to get any shots?”

“Any what?” Chelsea looked confused and Harry assumed she must be a pureblood.

“The muggle doctors suck up medicine in a thin tube with a needle then use the needle to pierce your skin and push the medicine in. I had to get some before I went to school.”

Chelsea shuddered. “That sounds unpleasant. No you’ll spit into a cup then they’ll test it and give you a series of potions based on the results.”

“Oh.” Harry thought about his eggs and asked to be excused to the restroom to quickly put them in his backpack.

A mediwitch in the same soft pink robes came in. “Chelsea Moldavite?”

“Here we are.” Chelsea waved him forward and cupped his shoulder again. She was a very touchy person Harry noticed.

A Healer in red robes with white trim greeted them. “Ello, ello. I’m Healer Gurumarra. This is Mediwitch Talia. Who do we have here?”

“Harry Potter.” Chelsea said while giving both the healer and the mediwitch a look over Harry’s head.

Both of them looked surprised. Healer Gurumarra recovered first. “Okay then hop up here young man. Now when was your last check up?”

“Well Madame Pomfrey checked me over after the basilisk bit me but she said the phoenix tears had taken care of almost everything.”

The healer, mediwitch, and Chelsea all chuckled at such a wild story until they saw how straight faced and serious Harry was. “Excuse me? Are you serious?”

“Yeah. Why would I make that up? Didn’t you hear about the petrifications that happened at the school? It was a basilisk. It was attacking muggleborns but everyone kept seeing only its reflection and getting petrified. This book had possessed someone you see and was setting it free. Only then the possessed person got trapped down there and I went to get them.”

“Why didn’t you get the Professors?” Chelsea asked.

“We did. Ron and me got Professor Lockhart to come with us. He was the Defense Professor so we figured he’d be enough. He was a fraud though. We had to force him to come with us, then he got Ron’s wand but it was broken and when he tried to obilivate us it backfired. He

hit the ceiling and caused a cave in. Ron and him were on one side and I was on the other. So I went on and they went back for more help.”

“And you fought the basilisk alone?” The healer had a look of realization on his face.

“I had help. Fawkes, the Headmaster’s phoenix, brought me the Sorting Hat and the Sword of Gryffindor was in it and then he blinded the basilisk and then I pushed the sword up into its mouth and that’s when it bit me.” Harry shrugged his robe off and showed the huge scar on his arm. “Then I pulled the fang out of my arm and stabbed the book and that ended the possession and then Fawkes cried on my arm and knee and carried us to the infirmary. Madame Pomfrey kept me for a few hours but said Fawkes had pretty much healed me up.”

The three adults all looked stunned. Chelsea looked faint and quickly sat down in the waiting chair. The healer raised his wand and cast it at the scar looking at the results with some befuddlement. The mediwitch just continued to stare at him.

“What? I thought everyone already knew what happened. I thought there was a call for the Ministry to do something and that’s why they arrested Hagrid.”

“No Mr. Potter. Until what you just told me we didn’t even know why Mr. Lockhart was gibbering mad down in the Janus Thickey ward. Now that I know it was a backfired obilivate we might be able to help the poor man.”

“All his stories are fake you know. He told us. Told us it was all bald old men and witches with warty chins and he got their stories then obilivated them so he could take credit.”

“It’s not real?” The mediwitch finally asked looking sad. She appeared to be trying to ignore Harry’s fantastic story by latching on something she could actually think about.

“Nope. Maybe that’s why he was so proud of that Witch Weekly prize for best smile. At least he earned that one.”

She sighed and nodded. “Well at least he’s still good looking.”

Harry chuckled.

“Are you a parselmouth Mr. Potter or was that a rumor?”

“No it’s true.” Harry looked at the snake and staff on the healer’s robe and hissed. “Why do they use a snake for doctors? And healers?”

The healer started and looked down at his robe at the snake. “Excuse me. What did you say?”

“Why do they use snakes for healers?” Harry asked again looking at the healer’s face and hoping it came out in English.

“Oh well. This is the staff of Asclepius. The son of Apollo and the human princess Coronis. Asclepius was the Greek demigod of [medicine](#). According to mythology, he was able to restore the health of the sick and bring the dead back to life. After he died, Zeus placed Asclepius among the stars as the constellation Ophiuchus, or ‘the serpent bearer.’ Which you

may have learned about in Astrology class. The Greeks regarded snakes as sacred and used them in healing rituals to honor Asclepius. Their skin-shedding was viewed as a symbol of rebirth and renewal. Snake venom, fangs, skin, etc. are used in many healing potions. Healers the world over adopt this symbol as a sign of their profession.”

As the healer talked he cast various spells at Harry and the mediwitch dutifully recorded the results. He asked Harry to stand up and stand on one foot, then the other as well as perform various other motions before asking him to lay back on the table where he pulled up his shirt and pressed on his belly. Finally he stood back and took the clipboard from the mediwitch to look at the results. Harry sat up and pulled his shirt down.

“Well I have good news and bad news.” The Healer began. “The good news is that you are in perfect health for a boy your age. No evidence of broken bones, malnutrition or nerve damage like Mrs. Moldavite thought might be present given the description of your guardians. I suspect the phoenix tears personally. The venom would have spread throughout your body very quickly so the tears would have had to hit your whole body to properly heal you.”

Harry gave Chelsea a confused look.

“You were raised by Petunia. I was taking no chances so I asked them to look.” Chelsea gave him a dry look. Harry thought that Chelsea might have a better opinion of dirt than she did of his aunt. “What’s the bad news?”

The Healer sighed and gave him a bemused look. “Well it’s also mostly good news but umm...parselmouths get bit all the time. Usually on purpose. They have a special ability to grow more resistance to snake venom the more often they’re bit. Provided they survive it. Most start off with a low venom snake and then take years to build up a tolerance. You, Mr. Potter, survived a bite by the most venomous snake in the world. You are now immune to any and all snake venoms.”

“Still not hearing the bad news.” Harry said a bit cheekily.

The healer chuckled at him. “Remember when I said snake venom is used in a lot of healing potions? Well guess how many won’t work for you anymore? Including all but one vaccine.” The healer shook his head and said to the mediwitch. “Get me a silver chain from the stockroom please.” He turned back to Harry. “You’ll need to wear a chain with the medical information on it. That way in an emergency the healer will know not to try certain things that have no effect.”

“What about the rest of the ingredients?” Chelsea asked. “Wouldn’t they still affect Harry?”

“It depends on the potion hence the chain but because of the way parselmagic interacts with the snake venom I don’t think he’ll have much to worry about.”

“How do you know so much about parselmouths? I thought we were really rare.”

“Oh they are rare here in England. They’re more common on the continent especially around Greece. Asclepius was thought to be a parselmouth. They’re extremely common in South

America and the First Peoples in Australia. More than a few in Africa as well. I'm from Australia originally and my grandda was a parselmouth. He tested each of us when we were little but so far no one else has inherited it. My wife's currently pregnant but my grandda died last year. Perhaps when the kid's old enough you could come by and speak to him? See if he's got it."

"Sure." Harry agreed happily. He was glad to hear anyone not bad mouthing the trait. "My mum could speak to toads. Do you think it's related? Did I get it from her?"

"Good chance. My sister can speak to frogs." The healer turned to accept the chain from the mediwitch and pointed his wand towards the small metal plate on it chanting lightly under his breath.

The mediwitch came forward with a single potion. "Here you go Harry. This will protect you from a pretty broad variety of diseases. I think the snake venom might protect you from the rest." She looked over her shoulder at the healer who continued to chant. "You know you could make some good money with parseltongue. The potion masters, the apothecaries, even the hospital would pay hand over fist for magical snake venom. Most of it has to be imported. Many of the snakes are so rare that they dare not kill them for the venom but it takes a very experienced snake handler or a parselmouth to nurse it from them."

"If it's so important why all the hatred for parselmouths and snakes? Everyone called me evil and thought I was turning Dark."

"The Dark Lord mostly. You have to understand Harry while it only became all out warfare towards the end of the seventies The Dark Lord was a figure of fear from around the forties onward. That's almost forty years and two generations of witches and wizards growing up fearing snakes. He would command them to sneak into people's houses, disguise extremely dangerous snakes as common adders." Chelsea gave a small shudder.

"It's like with any other magic though. It really depends on the user. As a mediwitch I know so much about the body and how it works. There have been healers that have turned Dark in the past and their knowledge made them that much more terrifying. The good healers outnumber the bad but there are still some witches and wizards out there who won't come see the healers because of the Dark Lady Lanfrey from the 1800s."

"Maybe you'll be the one to redeem the good name of parselmouths everywhere." The healer said with a smile as he handed the chain to Harry. "You can put it around your wrist or your neck. Personally I recommend the neck so it's clearly visible to anyone trying to tip a potion down your throat."

Obligingly Harry put it around his neck and felt the links instantly seal together. "How do I take it off?"

"Why would you want to? It's for your safety."

"What if it gets caught or someone grabs it to choke me?"

"The links are charmed against that."

“Oh.” Harry looked worried.

“A healer can remove it if need be. I wouldn’t worry about it Mr. Potter. I’ve never heard of anyone having a problem with one in the history of the hospital.”

“Okay.” Harry relaxed minutely.

“Well that’s you done. Remember to eat right and exercise. Drop back by yearly for a checkup and if you decide to go into the snake venom business drop me an owl.” The healer helped him down from the table and clapped him on the back.

“And me. My father is a potion master and he is forever complaining about the lack of fresh snake venom. By the time it gets through customs it’s almost ruined.” The mediwitch chimed in.

“And me.” Chelsea said with a laugh. “Some of it gets used in the potions the salon uses as well.”

Harry smiled. Ideas churned in his head already. He might be adding a menagerie to his backpack after all.

Chapter End Notes

Fun fact the aftercare for Harry is the same aftercare for Lasik surgery. Which I have had. Seriously go get Lasik. It's life-changing.

Maybe the muggleborns get these at Hogwarts in canon and we're just never told but I have a hard time believing they don't have vaccines.

With all the hatred of snakes and parselmouths in the UK in canon I have no problem believing there's an embargo on the stuff BUT all that stuff about snakes and healing is true in the real world and we muggles have created medicines based on snake venom.

I also have trouble thinking that the UK, which doesn't have a lot of snakes, is the only place to produce parselmouths and that's gonna be explored here.

Also no slur on Mrs. Weasley here but after teaching 7 children who have probably been going through the floo regularly their whole lives her explanation is rather lacking simply because she's assuming a lot of knowledge on Harry's part. Remember Harry goes from not knowing what floo means at all to being giving a handful of powder and a destination and that's it cause she assumes he knows what's going on when he doesn't.

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

So the library. *drools a bit* I wanna go too.

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 6 - June 30th – July 1st, 1993

After the busy first few days of summer spent setting up his backpack, getting his hair styled and eyes fixed as well as the enlightening trip to the hospital Harry finally had an opportunity to just relax. He spent a couple of days in his backpack in the Dursley's shed.

His egg's shells were getting thinner and thinner. If he held them up to the light he could see the tiny snakes inside wiggling. They weren't fond of that generally speaking. They liked it best nestled against his skin under his shirt. According to the notes he'd made from the scroll in Salazar's library they should be ready to hatch in another week or so. He hadn't wanted to remove the scroll from the library in case the preservation charms failed.

Used to summers filled with tons of chores and little food he felt super lazy. He tried to sleep in but always seemed to get up at six regardless. He had stocked his little kitchenette with lots of good things to eat. He remade meals he'd always coveted from the Dursley's table but never been allowed to eat. He did eat all the Mars Bars he could before becoming decidedly sick.

He'd set up his potions equipment then and, to what would have been Professor Snape's great shock, made a perfectly passable stomach soother. The simple potion used no snake ingredients so Harry figured it was safe enough for him to take. After that he spent some time with his potions textbook and a red crayon going through and underlining all the potions that wouldn't work for him anymore but also writing down all the snake ingredients that he could get from live snakes and sell.

The report of his family vault with its 30 million galleons kind of got shuffled to the back of his mind. It was such a big number that he had a hard time thinking about it. His vault of 100,000 and his Mum's of 8,000 was much easier for him to understand. Especially as that understanding was that if no more came in eventually he'd run out. Just look how much he'd spend in two weeks already!

As someone who'd never had any pocket money, who'd never worn clothes bought for him, who'd spend his entire childhood hearing about how expensive he was and being made to work for his keep since he was old enough to push a broom Harry couldn't just sit idle and

live off his inheritance the way someone like Malfoy might be able to. So the idea he could make money using something as easy for him as speaking to snakes was pretty cool.

It was when he got a letter from Hermione that he finally got started on his homework and remembered Mr. Goyle telling him about a public library. He wrote the address down in his letter to Hermione almost sad that he wouldn't be there to see her reaction. So for the first time in three days he ventured back to Diagon Alley on the Knight Bus.

He stopped by the green grocer and the butcher on his way to the library. A small pet store on a back alley also got a visit. They didn't have any snakes though. Just rodents really. He had a sneaking suspicion he'd be making several visits here in the near future. Maybe he'd need to setup another part of his bag for raising prey animals for the snakes to eat. He made a note to write that down on his list of things to do for his little business.

Once he found the right street the library was immediately obvious just for the sheer size of it. It looked like an open book on its side but at what looked to be three stories tall he doubted even a giant could have picked it up. The huge building completely dominated the street which ended in a dead end at the library. On either side of the street leading up to the library were fenced in parks marked by the many benches and pagodas for convenient outdoor reading. Hermione would love it here.

Harry walked inside the immense and naturally quiet building. The only sounds to be heard were the quiet rustling of pages not all by human hands. He walked up to the desk where a young woman in a blue robe was reading.

"Hello." Harry whispered.

The woman looked up with a small smile. "Hello. Can I help you?" She returned his whisper.

"This is my first time here."

"Oh then you need a library card before we go any further." She opened a drawer soundlessly and withdrew a form. "Name?"

"Harry James Potter."

She quickly looked up surprised. Her eyes flew to his forehead and Harry sighed as he moved his hair away to confirm his identity. How did normal witches and wizard confirm who they were?

She apparently took notice of his discomfort and returned to the form. "Date of birth?"

"July 31 st , 1980."

"Completed year of Hogwarts?"

"Second."

"Electives chosen?"

“Divination, Runes, and Care of Magical Creatures.” He’d written to Professor McGonagall a few days ago to change his electives. Working with Mr. Goyle and his bag had convinced him of the importance of runes.

“Good choices.” She smiled at him. “Eye color? Green. Hair color? Red.”

“It’s black. I changed it cause I didn’t like how everyone just knew who I was cause I look like my father.”

“Black (currently red). Height?”

“Uh, I don’t know.”

She cast a spell at him. “155.6 cm and width is 156.3 cm”

“Why do you need to know that?”

She gave him a secretive smile. “Librarian’s secret. Any medical issues?”

Harry hooked a thumb in the metal plate around his neck.

She shot a spell at it and blanched. “My goodness!” For the first time her voice rose above a whisper. Not loud though in fact she was still well below normal speaking range.

Harry blushed. “I’m a parselmouth. I got bit by a basilisk and now I’m immune to all snake venom.”

She nodded mutely before blushing. “I’m sorry. You didn’t have to tell me. I didn’t mean to embarrass you. That is really interesting though. I’ll put it on your card that you’re a parselmouth. We have some parselscript books here.”

Harry’s eyes lit up. “Really?”

“Yup. As you might imagine we don’t have many visitors checking those out. The final question is any special abilities? Parseltongue falls under that but any others?”

Harry shrugged. “None that I know about.” He thought for a moment. “My mum could speak to toads but I don’t think I can.” He’d never heard Trevor speaking. He wondered what happened to Ricky his mother’s toad. Maybe Chelsea knew.

“Okay then.” She cast a spell at the form and it shuddered before shrinking into a small metal tag on a chain. She handed it to him. “Please wear this whenever you’re in the library. You’ll have to update it every summer until you graduate. Once you’ve taken your OWLs and NEWTS bring the results here and we’ll update you appropriately. Do not enter the marked rooms or aisles without a librarian present. Those are like the restricted section at Hogwarts. We’re not trying to keep knowledge from you but some books can be dangerous without the proper precautions taken.”

“When I bring my friend Hermione here please remember to emphasize that warning.” Harry told her seriously. “Where did you say the parselscript books were?”

She smiled at his eagerness and rang a tiny bell. A burly man came out of the back with a huge pair of glasses perched on his nose as he read while he walked to the desk. Not glancing at either Harry or the other librarian he took her place at the desk without ever interrupting his reading.

She placed a hand on his back to lead him forward. "I'm Cynthia by the way. Cynthia LeStrange."

"Pleased to meet you."

She smiled brightly. "I'm pleased to meet you too."

Chapter End Notes

Miss LeStrange is a perfectly nice woman.

added note as there was a lot of confusion:

Width refers to his arm span. It's a human body ratio. Notice how they're almost the same? That's generally true of humans. That our arm span is a very similar length to our heights. It's a kewl thing I learned in grade school and a lot of artists and mathematicians find it fascinating. Math=Magic so I thought it an appropriate thing for the librarian to want to measure and probably something Ollivander's measuring tape was measuring as well as the human body is full of weird ratios.

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

History scrolls, snake habitats, and magic oh my

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 7 - July 1 st , 1993

Harry spent that first day absorbed in the five parselscript scrolls the library had. He took notes not noticing that he was writing them in parselscript at first. The scrolls covered some of the more ancient history of parselmouths in England. After the Roman invasion the snake cult either died out or were converted. They'd practiced pretty intensive inbreeding out of necessity as many of them were hunted down and had to hide their communities for generations in some cases. The last scroll was written by the last remaining parselmouth. He detailed the dying clan's last days. Not that they were all dead but that the last two generations had lost first their parseltongue and the following had lost their magic. The last of the magicals were using everything at their disposal to reintegrate their children back into greater society rather than doom them to a life of isolation with no more reason to hide.

The author spoke passingly of Salazar Slytherin, a child of rape by a muggle that had grown in such power as to be able to practice his parselmagic freely, who was working to build a school. He had hopes of placing the squib children there as labourers. As well as entrusting all the cult's texts to the Founder.

Harry sighed as he put down the pencil he'd stolen from Dudley's room. The muggle part of his bag contained an old notebook missing half its pages to spitballs and a handful of young adult books Dudley had barely looked at before tossing them into the junk room/Harry's room. A return to Poundland had added a colouring book and a big pack of crayons. Harry had been embarrassed to buy such and hoped no one ever saw them but coloring had been one of his only joys as a child. Now with the uninterrupted privacy of his backpack he was free to lay in the floor and colour to his heart's content.

Well this explained what happened to the Parselmouths before Slytherin and why Slytherin had all those texts in Parselscript. Harry sighed. It didn't however explain what had happened to Slytherin's descendants. He wondered if a copy of these scrolls were in Salazar's collection. For that matter he wondered when this library had been established. Why did they have these scrolls?

Harry carefully put them away and packed up his writing materials. His watch said four in the afternoon. He'd missed tea but he figured he probably had time to finish at least one

homework assignment before he had to go home. He went hunting for the Transfiguration section.

July 2nd , 1993

Harry returned the next day and asked for the section about magical snakes. He figured he'd spend the first part of the day reading for pleasure and the second part doing homework. Today he wanted to take note of the different habitats of the snakes he'd be adopting as well as what the baby basilisks would prefer. He imagined they wouldn't be keen to share his bed once they were hatched.

He filled the rest of his notebook with notes about the various magical snakes and their preferred habitat. Ashwinders for instances would require he kept two fires burning at all times. Multiple runespoor would need to be kept together so the different heads could all talk to other heads with similar points of view to avoid the other two from killing the venomous head. He wasn't sure if he could talk to ocammy being that they were a hybrid type creature. The Swooping Evil was also reptilian and therefore also a possibility. So were wyverns and even a dragon called the Vipertooth from Peru.

Harry heaved a sigh. While he'd probably be able to get most of the common snakes through pet stores some were illegal in Great Britain. That probably didn't help the whole lack of snake venom thing the country had going on. He closed the last book and put it away. Since he was here he better work on his Care of Magical Creatures homework.

July 8th , 1993

Mr. Goyle gave him a bemused smile as Harry chattered excitedly about his plans. "You know it's summer and that's some pretty intensive wand work you're talking about."

Harry stuttered to a stop. He hadn't really considered that. Muggleraised and used to hard work Harry didn't use his wand for every little thing the way he saw a lot of adult wizards doing. As such he hadn't even considered that he wouldn't be able to cast the various charms needed because it was the summer time.

Mr. Goyle waved him closer and looked away as he mentioned in a pseudo nonchalant tone, "good thing no one can pick up your wand work behind all the protection wards on your bag."

Harry allowed himself a small smile before nodding. "Good thing."

"Not that'd you'd abuse that loophole."

"Of course not."

“Now let’s go see about the enclosures you need. You’ll want a separate place entirely for the prey animals I imagine.”

July 8th , 1993 Evening

Harry was in his room at Number 4. This was becoming more and more unusual as he was much more inclined to hang the bag up on a hook in the back of the tool shed that actually risk creeping up the stairs to his room. He was rifling through some of the junk in the room to see if he might be able to use any of it.

He’d gotten permission soon after being moved to the room that anything he could fix he could keep. The caveat of that being that if Dudley wanted it he’d have to give it back without an argument.

Most of the things Dudley broke that ended up in Harry’s room were very much unfixable. Bent, broken and squished was the order of the day. Harry used most of them to prop up other things. There was a box of discarded clothing in the corner. A wardrobe with a broken door. That broken door having been used by Harry as a desk for a year or so now.

What interested Harry the most however was the bookshelves. They’d never held more than a paltry amount of books. Well-meaning gifts from Vernon’s co-workers that hadn’t even been looked at before Dudley had snorted in disgust and thrown them at Harry. There was no danger of Dudley wanting them back and instead Harry had tucked them into the muggle pouch of his backpack. He read most of them in boredom the year before.

Most of the time the bookshelves held smaller toys that had been broken. Various clocks which Harry had taken apart and put back together until he managed to fix one. Puzzle boxes and the remains of fancy model cars. They would be perfect to hold various small terrariums though. So Harry was trying to puzzle out how to get the shelves into his bag. While he had no doubt he could the problem was doing it silently.

Having cleared the foyer of his bag he was currently tossing the broken beyond repair toys and the old clothes down into the hole. He’d scrolled around inside a couple of display models Mr. Goyle had and knowing he could now use his magic inside his bag was itching to make some adjustments. He needed raw materials for transfiguration first though. Conjunction was a sixth and seventh year thing and well beyond his reach at the moment. His transfiguration textbook was getting a work out as he puzzled out how to transfigure things into building materials best.

The first thing he’d have to transfigure would be a screwdriver and hammer. Most plastics weren’t transfigurable. Their origins were too muddled. Those Harry would have to remove from the metal bits of the toys he if wanted to do anything with them.

Hedwig landed on the sill with a whoosh of silent feathers. Harry quickly retrieved the letter from her claw. “Your perch’s water and treats is refilled girl if you wanna fly on down. Watch out for falling objects.”

Hedwig cooed softly and flew as Harry indicated down into the open backpack.

He finished tossing down everything else in the room before finally deciding to just shove the bookshelves inside and then closing the flap. If there was a big noise he'd hop out the open window with his prize. With a great shove he pushed the bookshelves inside and quickly closed the flap listening with bated breath to the steady rhythm of the snores for the male Dursleys. After over a minute with no change he opened the flap of his backpack and descended into chaos.

The bookshelves had fallen inside and broken apart when they landed and several of the more fragile toys were now even more broken than they were before. Harry sighed gustily. He closed the flap of the backpack and pulled his wand out. "Reparo!" he declared strongly as he cast it at the bookshelf. The wooden structure quickly reformed to a previous state of strength unknown to Harry.

Harry shrugged and went to push and pull it out into the main room when he stopped and hit himself in the forehead with an open palm. "Wingardium Leviosa." He levitated the bookshelf into place with a smile. Magic was wonderful.

Chapter End Notes

And this is how my Harry is getting around that pesty trace.

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Snakelings!

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 8 - July 9th, 1993

Harry was asleep when his snakes hatched. As he was curled around them protectively in the nest of blankets and pillows on his fluffy mattress he awoke to find six little snakes in his hair, around his fingers and one even trying to get inside his mouth. Six tiny hissing voices greeted his opened eyes and hissed joyfully when he started singing the hatching song to them.

Harry carefully gathered them all up and carried them to the sink. He was surprised by the variety of colours the baby snakes all were. The largest was a dark red and already somewhat bossy. She, he knew they were genderless but she sounded like Hermione in a scolding mood, kept nudging the smaller snakes to wash.

“Now now. They can take their time if they want.” Harry slipped her into the cool water.

He hissed sweetly to the two blue green snaklings that were shyly eying the water. “It’s okay. The temperature is just right and I’m right here if you get into trouble.” Finally the shy little ones slipped into the water. They stayed close to each other though.

The tiniest snakes was a bright red and darted around the sink happily singing the cool water song. She was only about 4 cm long and Harry worried about her slipping in-between and around her larger siblings.

A sullen white snake had slipped into the water briefly before crawling out clean and climbing up to Harry’s shoulder where he hooked his tail around Harry’s collar before curling into a ball on his shoulder just under his collar. He settled with a quiet hiss under Harry’s hair.

Finally there was the second largest snake who was a soft purple color who seemed more inclined to float lazily than the others. She was clean but quiet. Her eyes were different from the other snakes too. They looked like opals. The others had bright eyes that matched their scales.

Harry admired their bright eyes for now. At this age their sight wasn’t deadly. Not something that was common knowledge. Their venom however should be able to kill a grown man

already. Not that Harry had to worry about that. Still he wouldn't be attempting to nurse them for a couple of weeks.

Finally bath time was over and Harry took them over to their new home. A dark, damp stone lined pond with several large ledges and piles of rocks for hiding. Harry had some very rudimentary runes written on paper and had thought about sticking them to the dry rocks to help maintain a warm temperature. He'd struggled over them at the library for hours before finally taking them to Mr. Goyle for approval. The man had tried mightily to contain his laughter before very firmly charging Harry not to try anything of the sort until at least Yule after his teacher would have went over all the safety protocols.

Until then he'd directed him to a pet store that catered to reptiles. Harry was and was not looking forward to revisiting the dark, forbidding shop. On one hand it had been full of cool things for his snakes and lots of snakes in general. On the other hand it reminded Harry of Borgin and Burkes, dark with a creepy hovering proprietor.

Putting his basilisks in their carefully prepared spot proved easier said than done however. They hissed their displeasure and wiggled fiercely. The white snake disappeared down his shirt while the big red and purple snakes twined around his shoulders and armpits resting a head each under his ears. The two shy blue snakes wound themselves firmly around his forearms. The tiny red snake wrapped herself around his right middle finger. Harry sighed. He'd read about this but he had been hoping since he had so many snakes they'd prefer their own home.

Sometimes baby basilisks imprinted. Like baby ducks. Which meant until they were about a year old they were unlikely to want to be anywhere but right next to Harry. He crawled back in his own nest trying to be careful and not crush anybody but fortunately the snakelings easily adjusted themselves. With a call for the sleep song Harry hissed to them until everyone was asleep.

Chapter End Notes

I'm late and this is a short chapter. I'll put a longer one up later tonight

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

walking around with snakes and finally opening Lily's vault

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 9 - July 11th, 1993

Harry was grateful for the large black hoodie he'd grabbed at Poundland during a rainy day a few days ago. With the hood pulled up and his robe on he'd successfully hidden all the snakes he was now carrying around. Madonna, the motherly red snake, and Delphi, the mystic purple snake, insisted on being able to see out of his hood but luckily pulling his long red locks out allowed their distinctive crested heads to be covered. Kipling, the sullen white snake, was more inclined to hook himself through Harry's belt loops and sleep. Aqua and Marine, the shy blue green snakes, stayed wrapped around his forearms. Sang, the tiny red snake, insisted on staying on his finger but as long as he kept his hands in his hoodie pocket she was so tiny he could believe most people wouldn't notice her. Maybe if he went down into one of his vaults and found an old ring for her to hide behind?

That was where he was on his way to now. He'd been meaning to go down to his mother's vault anyway. Now seemed like as good a time as any. He walked up to the goblin clerk and carefully presented his key to the goblin. "Vault 9907 please." Different goblin came around the counter to lead Harry to the carts. The goblin jumped and pulled a hidden knife out when he heard the hissing however.

"Oh sorry. They didn't mean to scare you. My snakes just hatched a few days ago. They'd never seen a goblin before."

"I see Sir. You are a parselmouth?"

"Yessss." Harry hissed quietly to his snakes. "This is a goblin. They're fierce warriors. They own and run the bank where all wizards keep their gold."

The goblin frowned at him fiercely. "There was a rumor Mr. Potter that you slew Slytherin's monster with the Sword of Gryffindor. Is this true?"

"Yess." Harry winced. Not hissing when he spoke English after just having spoken parseltongue wasn't easy.

"And is it true that Slytherin's monster was a basilisk?"

“Yes.”

The goblin eyed him speculatively. “Where is the sword now?”

“I don’t know. I guess Professor Dumbledore has it?”

“Hmmm....Did you know goblins made the sword?”

“No I didn’t. But that wouldn’t surprise me. I’ve not seen much of goblin metal working but I’ve heard it’s the best in the world. The Sword was beautiful.”

“Yes. It was made by Ragnuk the First. A goblin king and one of the best silversmiths. Did you know that goblin silver imbibes only that which makes it stronger? It throws off tarnish but would have absorbed the basilisk’s venom to become even stronger than before.”

“Really? That’s so cool.” Harry grinned at the goblin as they came to a halt in front of his mother’s vault.

“Yes. It is.” The goblin accepted Harry’s key to open the vault. Harry wondered how this key could work for both vaults but surmised it was goblin magic he was better off not knowing. He was sure Hermione would disapprove of such a thought.

The vault was small. The pile of gold, silver, and copper against the wall while not insignificant paled in comparison to the pile in his trust vault. A small trunk, red with tarnished silver trim that looked older than it should but well cared for. There was an old bureau, desk, and vanity with a large round mirror sitting in front of the disassembled frame of a four post bed all with the same kind of wood. It appeared to be muggle as the mirror didn’t say anything when Harry approached it. In a clear plastic bag clearly of muggle make hung his mother’s wedding dress.

Harry slowly approached the bag and cautiously unzipped it. The white embroidered silk was exquisitely beautiful but it was the smell that hit him. She had worn a flowery perfume that had mixed with her own natural musk and left a lingering scent. He closed his eyes and breathed in deeply. He remembered warmth, flushed skin, red hair and a slightly off-key voice singing. Tears came to his eyes and he leaned forward to bury his face in the sweet smelling gown. Kisses and snuggles and memories that were less pictures and more just sensations from his time as a baby. “Mummy.” Harry sniffled and pulled away abruptly hoping he hadn’t hurt the delicate gown.

There was a couple of wet spots from his tears but otherwise the dress was fine. Harry reverently zipped the dress back up. He wanted to open his bag and bring the dress with him but thought it better if it stayed here safe in the goblin vault. He might change his mind later. Right now his own clothes were folded in the old trunk. It sat open by his bed with a few books he was reading before bed and his coloring books. Maybe if he got a nice wardrobe to hang the precious dress in. One with charms that would protect the delicate fabric and hold on to the precious smell of his mother.

He could use the old muggle furniture in here too. He wondered where it had come from. He knew his mum’s parents had died around and after her seventh year because Aunt Petunia had

told Dudley as much. Maybe she'd inherited the bedroom suite then. He'd spent enough time polishing Aunt Petunia's inherited dining room table and china cabinet to know that while his grandparents hadn't been well off they'd had a few nice things.

He turned with difficulty to his mother's trunk. Opening it he was unsurprised to find steps down inside it. Going inside revealed a tiny room. His mother clearly hadn't tried to update hers. Maybe she simply hadn't had the funds. One wall was a floor to ceiling bookshelf packed with books. Another was a shelf with a variety of school supplies. Quills, parchments, dried up ink wells and old assignments. There was an old telescope and some star charts. A soft satin pouch held a deck of weird cards while another pouch made of velvet were filled with what Harry recognized as runes carved into many small stones.

Another shelf held carefully folded school uniforms as well as a variety of other clothes. They too smelt subtly of his mother. There was a small jewelry box as well. It held a few necklaces and bracelets as well as a few rings. Harry picked one out that looked like it might fit on his middle finger. One with inlaid rubies and delicate gold leaves. Sang twined around it quite happily.

The final shelf held old cauldrons, scales, stirring rods amongst other potion bottles and ingredients. There were what looked like old school projects as well. A singing picture frame, a tap dancing teacup and other things like that.

Harry considered the trunk carefully for a few minutes. He'd need to make a return trip to Mr. Goyle or Chelsea to ask some questions but he thought he could probably put his mother's whole vault into his bag with little trouble.

He'd need to set some things up though. He wanted to preserve as much of her memory as he possibly could. Maybe a big beautiful wardrobe with all her things inside. He'd wanted these things close. So he could come and reminisce whenever he wanted.

"Thank you." Harry told the goblin as he left. "I'll probably be back in a few days to clean the vault out now that I know what's in here."

"Very well Mr. Potter."

It took advice from both Mr. Goyle and Chelsea and visits to more than half a dozen different shops before Harry was finally directed to a shop not in Diagon Alley but a small secret magic shop in London's Japanese community. There Harry finally got the help he needed to setup a shrine to his mother with a plethora of preservation spells to keep the precious scents of her unspoiled. Instead of a wardrobe he bought a special cabinet specifically designed to honor his dearly departed mother. The old woman even gave him a scroll with a series of prayers and meditations.

By the time Harry was finished he had a beautiful cherry wood cabinet that when opened breathed out the scent of his mother. An enlarged picture of her smiling caught at a perfect moment of laughter in her sparkling green eyes was prominently displayed. Behind the picture hung her carefully preserved wedding dress. The trunk's bookshelf had revealed several diaries that were now in a small side shelf as was her jewelry box. Other personal

items such as her clothes were stored in other little cabinets inside the main cabinet. Everything he had of his mother was in this cabinet including his beloved photo album.

The basilisks watched everything he did while questioning everything. The concept of a mother was completely foreign to them but they did understand the concept of Creator and Egglayer. Once Harry had taken care of his mother's things and began the daily prayers suggested by Japanese lady the snakes would quietly hiss their one Parselsong of remembering. They referred to Lily as their Creator's Creator. As far as they were concerned Harry had only one parent which made perfect sense to them. Not so much to Harry but he wasn't sure how to feel about his Dad just yet.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for delay
2 chapters today to make up for it.

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Leaving the Dursleys

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 10 - July 13th, 1993

As hard as it was to deal with the basilisk eggs at the Dursleys it was impossible to deal with six live basilisks. They insisted on being carried everywhere and Harry made a few more trips to the Poundland for clothes to layer on and slowly transfigure into pouches for them. The extra-large hoodie covered most of the lumps.

Harry had finally shifted them around to where they all were comfortable but Harry regretted he was back to looking like a hoodlum. He'd been forced to remove the sleeves of the hoodie as it was just far too hot otherwise. Aqua and Marine had complained mightily about it and sulked in pouches along his sides.

Every snake had to have a way to look out or they just weren't satisfied. Aqua and Marine preferred his arms. Kipling poked his head out of the front pouch of the hoodie while Delphi and Madonna held pride of place in his hood. Sang hid herself in the multiple rings Harry now wore.

Most of the rings were his mother's. Harry figured if he wore a lot of rings then Sang wouldn't look quite so obvious. Harry had taken the idea from a man he'd seen one morning in the Alley. He'd been barefoot but for ringed toes and anklets that jangled when he walked. He wore dozens of bracelets and necklaces and earrings and brow rings and long hair with braids of black and gold that clinked and jingled as he walked. He was all together an unforgettable individual but later Harry couldn't remember his face nor any one piece of jewelry. The very distraction of it all was a glowing recommendation of style to Harry.

Between his mother's jewelry and some other trinkets he'd found when he'd finally dared venture into the muddle of the Potter family vault Harry was fairly certain no one would notice his snakes. Especially when Mr. Goyle explained that some of his mother's jewelry was charmed and he found several family pieces with tiny inscribed runes. He looked those up before putting them on after a warning from Mr. Goyle.

Harry was finally happy with his look the night he crept back into the Dursley's house one windy rainy night to find a note on his door.

Marge will be coming July 31st to stay a week.

Don't be here.

Harry frowned mightily before going on into his room. Where else could he go? Aunt Petunia was right though he couldn't keep up his sneaking in and out with Marge or her dog here. The woman got up at dawn and her dog Ripper would raise the roof if he heard Harry creeping around. He couldn't stay in the shed either. There was too much of a chance of that vicious mutt sniffing out his pack.

Harry climbed down into his pack as he pondered the problem. Once inside his pack his snakes finally left his body and headed over to their nest to frolic in the water. When he went to sleep he knew he'd get six little visitors curling up around him.

He himself went over to fire up the burner in his little kitchen area. He'd gotten some fresh fish at the farmer's market this morning and was going to have some fish tacos for dinner. He got distracted by that and by a book he'd found on ashwinders at the second hand book store until after dinner when he was washing his few dishes up in the sink.

He remembered the sink in Salazar Slytherin's kitchen in the chamber and it made him chuckle. One doesn't think about great witches and wizards in domestic terms but presumably Dumbledore and Grindewald had washed dishes at some point in their lives. Even Voldemort had probably made himself a cup of tea in a kitchen somewhere at some time.

Harry smiled suddenly. He knew where he was going to spend the rest of the summer.

Chapter End Notes

You always need a sink for things whether you're a Lord or a lad

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 11 - July 14th, 1993

Getting back to Hogwarts was easier said than done. The Knight Bus he'd been taking to and from London didn't run up to Scotland. Apparently that was another bus and they didn't cross paths. From the disdain in Stan and Ernie's voice he had a feeling there was some sort of rivalry between the two buses.

He ended up asking Miss LeStrange at the library who gave him the train schedule of the Hogwarts Express. Apparently the train made twice daily trips between Hogsmeade and London every day of the year except September 1st and June 25th when it took a longer winding path for the Hogwarts tradition. She explained that not everyone could get their apparition license and then there were those who could not or would not use the floo system and so those who lived further away used the buses and trains to get to work as most of the British Wizarding population worked in and around London at the Ministry, alley, or hospital. He could buy a ticket at the counter behind Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$.

Sure enough once he was through the barrier he found a sleeping man behind a ticket counter. Once roused he sold him a one way ticket to Hogsmeade. Train would arrive at 5 PM and so Harry headed back to Diagon Alley to spend the day picking up any and all supplies he thought he might need. He closed his mother's vault out now that it was empty.

He also stocked up on rodents for his snakes. That had been tricky. His snakes were smart enough to not get into their food but their food was literally deathly afraid of his snakes. Luckily it was enough to not see the predators. Harry had transfigured the broken pieces of his old wardrobe for the Dursley's into a lean-to and keep the mice and rats in there in a couple of massive enclosures with auto feed and water spells on them. Hopefully the little beasts would procreate enough that he didn't have to keep buying them. He wasn't sure what he was going to feed the snakes once they grew beyond rats.

Although he knew he'd probably be learning about them in the coming school year Harry also snagged a couple of books about tarot cards and runes. He kept his mother's cards and stones in his smaller pouch with his gold and found himself taking them out just to study the pictures. Just to handle them and know that his mother had done the same.

He got back to King's Cross at 4:30 PM and joined the small crowd of people waiting for the train. He was doubly glad for his hood as well as the long red locks as no one gave his lean form a second glance. He slid down the wall to sit on the floor with his bag in front of him and pulled out the tarot cards again.

He was flipping through them when a lady near him commented with a friendly voice. “Oh that’s a nice set.”

Harry looked up at her warily but she was just a friendly lady making conversation. Her plain brown robe had a ministry seal on it like Mr. Weasley’s did and Harry wondered briefly what department she worked in.

“Thank you. They were my mother’s..and her mother’s...and her mother’s.” Harry had been surprised to find that out. Especially considering how much Aunt Petunia hated magic that his grandmother and great grandmother had both used these tarot cards. His mother’s diaries had told of how she’d been given them before her third year after they’d been listed as a school supply for her Divination class. He didn’t know where his great grandmother had gotten them though. The diary didn’t say.

“My goodness that’s quite a lineage. Inherited items like that work better too you know. Gathering up power from each generation. Quite special. Mind you take good care of them now.”

Harry doubted they’d gathered much power from his grandmother or great grandmother but the thought that they could still hold a bit of his mother’s magic was nice. Harry smiled fondly down at the cards. “I will.”

The train chugged to a stop and Harry hopped up to his feet. The woman commented wishing she was still as spry. A small crowd of late night workers exited the train and Harry and the people recently off work boarded. Rather than many small compartments the train was filled with bench seats. Harry found a seat and waited as the conductor came through and punched everyone’s ticket with his wand. The woman from earlier sat down beside him with a smile before she pulled out a copy of Witch Weekly to read.

The whistle blew and the train started moving. Once it cleared the station however it began to move very fast indeed. Much faster than it did during the start or end of the school year. That trip took several hours this one however seemed to be ignoring things like rails, mountains, rivers, roads, or even other trains. Fortunately everyone wasn’t thrown about like they were in the Knight Bus. Harry pulled out a book on Transfiguration he’d picked up from the store after seeing it at the library and read on the way there.

When they arrived at Hogsmeade an hour later Harry exited with the rest and with the help of a corner and his invisibility cloak disappeared from sight. He’d given some thought to it and realized there was no way he could get into the chamber through Hogwarts. The chances of running into Filch or Snape were just too high.

He figured the Egglayer, as his snakes called the basilisk he’d slew, had to have been getting out of Hogwarts somehow though. There was nothing in or around Hogwarts big enough for her to have eaten except humans. So she had to have been getting out either into the Forbidden Forest or into Black Lake and wherever she’d been getting out had to have an entrance big enough for Harry to go through as well.

He went into his pack and reattached the sleeves of his hoodie. July or not evening in Scotland was quite cool. Aqua and Marine happily wound their way among his bracelets to

stick their heads out of his cuffs. He came back up and shouldered his backpack. He kept his invisibility cloak on and started the hike up to Hogwarts.

In the middle of summer the castle was huge, dark and forbidding. There was a single light shining. Harry wondered if anyone but the house elves were in there at all. Still he didn't chance going up and trying the doors. Instead he walked around the lake towards the forest. He avoided Hagrid's stack as well even though it was as dark as Hogwarts.

His snakes flicked their tongues trying and failing to catch a whiff of Egglayer's scent. Finally Harry was forced to call a halt to the search. It was almost midnight and they still hadn't found anything. Harry made a very small shelter for his pack before entering it and locking it up for the night from inside. He made a mental note to ask Mr. Goyle for a notice me not charm on the pack for when he was inside it.

Once inside his snakes assured him that they'd do better tomorrow but Harry just laughed and reminded them they were only five days old and he wasn't expecting miracles. He'd already figured it'd take them a few days to find a way inside.

Harry went to sleep that night completely unaware that Hogwarts was considered the safest place in Great Britain because it was nearly impenetrable which Hermione would have been quick to point out if she was here. Luckily she wasn't and Harry slept soundly oblivious to impossibilities.

Chapter End Notes

Sometimes the strangers you met are just strangers you meet.

If the Hogwarts Express only runs a few times a year that just seems a waste. Besides not everyone can get their apparation license and portkeys seems to be regulated and/or expensive. So regular use of the knight bus or the train just makes sense.

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 12 - July 15th, 1993

Harry finished a nice hearty breakfast of sweetened oatmeal and a tall glass of milk while his snakes played among the folds and tangle of blankets on his bed. Finally he layered on his clothing and let the snakes climb aboard before grabbing his invisibility cloak and climbing outside.

It was warmer outside and Harry removed his sleeves and tossed them back down into his trunk without a second thought.

“But we want to ride your wrists!” Aqua cried.

Marine turned big pretty blue eyes toward him.

Harry chuckled at the ridiculousness of a snake, especially a basilisk giving him puppy dog eyes. “And we’ll all be under an invisibility cloak all day. So you can all ride wherever you want. In fact,” Harry pulled the hoodie off entirely leaving him in a dark green t-shirt with a thin white undershirt under it. He pulled his hair up into a ponytail like Chelsea had taught him. “Now everyone can see easier.”

He shouldered the pack and whipped the cloak around his shoulders before pulling up the hood. “Let’s hunt.”

It was Kip that finally spotted something a little after noon. Near the edge of the lake there was a rocky outcropping where the lake met the sea. “I see an odd green glow over there.”

“Over where?” Harry asked.

Kip’s tail pointed to the sheer rock face. “Over there.” He blinked and Harry noticed his eyes had an odd green tint to them. “The other side of this rock. There’s something glowing.”

“I’ll go look.” Madonna hissed as she lowered herself to the ground and slipped into the water before Harry could stop her.

“Be careful. Who knows what sorts of creatures might be in the lake or sea.”

“Yes. They should be very careful I don’t bite them.” She hissed back before disappearing under the water. Harry could make out her red form for only a moment before she disappeared.

Harry shifted nervously from foot to foot. His right shoulder felt too light without Madonna there. Her siblings writhed in a worried fashion as well.

A few minutes later she slithered out of the water. “The Egglayer! Her scent is on a rock out there.”

Harry quickly collected the biggest red snake. “Okay thank you. Now how to get the rest of us over there.”

“Swim.”

Harry frowned. His only memories of swimming, if it could be called that, was Dudley throwing him into the deep end of the community center pool. He’d floundered and flayed around helplessly before the lifeguard had snagged him and pulled him to the edge. He’d gotten a quick lesson on the doggie paddle and an admonishment to stay out of the deep end.

He sighed and carefully removed his shoes and socks and put them and his cloak into his pack. “Anyone want to ride inside the pack? Sang? I’ll be moving my hands like crazy.”

“I’ll ride in your hair.” The tiny snake, full name Sanguis for her blood red color, unwound herself from Harry’s fingers and slithered up into his hair. Aqua, Marine, and Kip moved to his shoulders and head as well. Madonna and Delphi making room for them.

Finally Harry strapped his pack on firmly and stepped down into the bitterly cold water. He sucked in a breath through his teeth but figured the sooner he got in the sooner he could get out. He struck out with bravery he did not feel and frantically kicked his feet and paddled his cupped hands. Swimming through the incoming waves from the sea into the lake wasn’t easy nor was trying to keep himself from getting bashed up against the rocks. Fortunately it was a very short swim until he found he could pull himself up on the rocks and walk the extremely narrow and rocky path right next to the cliff bottom.

Madonna and Kip both hissed when they saw the rock they’d seen and smelt. To Harry’s eyes the most stand out feature was the S-shaped crack in the rock. To the casual onlooker it probably didn’t look any different from any other rocks in the area. To Harry it was parselscript. Salazar’s Secret entrance.

Harry rolled his eyes. Salazar was not what one would call a subtle founder. Well at least not once you got past all the other layers of security surrounding his things. “Open.” Harry hissed.

The rock cracked open revealing a staircase down into the depths. Harry recognized the stone and mosaic of the staircase matched those he’d seen in the Chamber. He carefully descended down into the depths. His wand popped into his hand with a thought as his snakes returned to their usual perches. “Lumos.” Harry called and orbs evenly spaced along the staircase lit up.

Harry turned and ordered the rock to close with another hiss.

Why couldn't Harry just ride his broom?

It doesn't occur to him at that moment. A thing which has him kicking himself later. But the snakes suggested swimming cause flying wouldn't occur to them and he just goes with it.

Fun fact: I based the waterways under Hogwarts on the Garamsythe Waterway from Final Fantasy XII

Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Finally reaching the Chamber....WHAT'S THAT SMELL!?!?

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 13 - July 15th -16th , 1993

It took Harry the rest of the day and part of the next to find his way back to the Chamber of Secrets. Fortunately his pack allowed him to stop for a well-deserved break. The waterways were a vast maze and the direct path taken by a massive snake was not the same one a twelve year old boy could take despite the talents of his snakes. The Egglayer could use her length and mass to cross chasms Harry had to cross with magic. Even riding his broom wasn't enough at times as he did a lot of riding then having to get off, put his broom away and crawl then ride again.

The old passage ways weren't at all empty either. There were massive rats. Strange large frogs. Huge bats. Those were just the creatures Harry recognized. He had to use the few offensive spells he knew extensively before pulling out his cloak and trying to just sneak past the various monsters instead.

He was extremely thankful he had a shower in his pack as he was more than a little filthy by the time he finally found the Chamber. He'd had likely been completely and helplessly lost if it wasn't for his snake's senses guiding him. Harry had no idea how Hogwarts waterways were still working at all. There were many, many collapsed tunnels, leaky pipes, and broken bridges to say nothing of the creatures.

Harry felt a need to fix and clean everything as he went but was more than a little leery of making it worse. When he hissed this to his snakes Madonna suggested he find some books on the subject and promised to remind him later.

Finally reaching the Chamber Harry was forcefully reminded that the Egglayer's corpse was still laying in the middle of the Chamber floor and cringed. Would his snakes be upset that their Egglayer was dead? The worry was only momentary however as his snakes were delighted to see the Egglayer was dead because and here Harry was more than a little disturbed and reminded that as cute and friendly as his snakes were they were still snakes.

"I have no idea how you plan to eat her. She's huge."

"You will cut her up for us. We will absorb her strength and become stronger." Sang said from where she was wiggling into the ruined eye socket. She climbed up to the top of the

skull where the sword had left a gaping hole and disappeared into the Egglayer's skull.

Harry walked over to look down at where she'd disappeared into worried about her.

"This is the natural order of things." Madonna told him.

"Could you open the mouth for us?" Aqua asked as he and Marine tried and failed to follow Sang. Kip, long and narrower than the two of them managed to slip through with a great deal of effort.

Harry went into his pack and got a transfigured crowbar and a small metal screw from a broken toy. Manually removing the plastic from the toys was a tedious job but he had plenty of little bits of pieces of metal that he could transfigure now. He hoped Professor McGonagall would be impressed with him this coming year. He knew he was into some fourth year material by now though there had been a lot of trial and error.

He wedged the Egglayer's mouth open and placed the screw inside before casting an engorgement charm. He fell back and scrambled away from the stink of rot that had been going on inside the dead snake. Despite the chill and the basilisk's hide which had resisted the efforts of the waterway rats inside the snake was still dead and had been breaking down.

The stink soon reached Harry from his scrambled back position and he exhaled roughly before opening his pack and diving in headfirst while shouting the command to close the opening. He took a deep breath of fresher air and hurried over to his book shelf. He remembered reading about an air refreshing charm but couldn't remember the incantation. Finding it and casting it successfully inside the sack he took a deep breath and ventured outside to cast the strongest charm ever pushing as much of his magic behind it as he could.

When he took a breath again the air was clear and he had two curious snakes looking at him as to what all the fuss was about. Harry sighed. He went back inside the sack to look through his mother's school books for a preservation charm. They could eat the beast if they wanted but he was not putting up with that smell. After an hour of searching he finally found a spell to rejuvenate rotten flesh in Lily's Care of Magical Creatures book.

Calling his snakelings out of the corpse he took a deep breath of air that already seemed to be refilling with the stink of rotting flesh and cast the rejuvenate spell. The spell was designed to make the meat of animals that had been languishing in traps new again. It was explicitly not to be used on living things. Apparently it was extremely painful.

The basilisk was again dripping with fresh blood and amazingly even some of the ruined eyes had grown back. Harry was exhausted however and told his snakes they could eat to their heart's content. He'd cast the preservation charm tomorrow.

He went back into his pack for a shower, a meal that was distinctly not bloody at all, before calling his snakelings in to sleep. They were engorged and covered in sticky blood but refused to bathe immediately as they were still eating the blood off each other. Harry refused to let them sleep with him until they bathed and went to sleep watching them clean each other of blood. He had some disturbing nightmares as a result.

Chapter End Notes

A little longer chapter this time. Harry's exhausted. Good thing he's got all summer, and a shower, and a strong stomach. As cute as they are the snakes are still snakes.

Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 14 - July 17th, 1993

Harry crawled out of bed careful of the clean baby snakes cuddled around him. Sang was in his hair somewhere apparently because he could hear her sleepy hisses as she grumbled about being moved. Harry went to make breakfast but was somewhat alarmed whenever his snakelings still weren't moving around by the time he was finished.

"Are you all alright?" He hissed.

Madonna sleepily raised her head. "We ate a lot. We sleep now."

"Oh okay."

"Creator?" Delphi looked up at him with her opal eyes.

"Yes?"

"Can you fix the Egglayer's eyes? I want to eat them. They will help me see."

"Uh I can try." Harry wondered and figured if anyone knew it was probably his snakes. "If they're fully reformed won't they kill me if I look at them?"

Delphi smiled softly. It was an odd thing to see a snake smile. Harry didn't think he could have explained it to anyone but another parselmouth. The way they tilted their head and tightened the muscles around their mouth was only part of it. There was a long slow hiss just below a normal human's hearing that accompanied a snake smile. "The Egglayer is dead. Her eyes were only a conduit of her power. That power is dormant now. I want it."

"Okay. I'll try the rejuvenate spell on her eyes." Delphi laid back down on his pillow.

"Sang do you want to stay with the others or come with me?"

Sang didn't reply but tightened her coil around a lock of Harry's hair somewhere behind his left ear. She was completely invisible in his red hair.

Harry headed out of the pack. He was dressed in his simplest clothing today. Just his Poundland pants and an undershirt. There was no need to hide down here in the Chamber. No one to impress. He carried a book of household cleaning and repair spells. While he wasn't prepared to take on repairing the waterways he was definitely going to clean up the Chamber and the surrounding area. Call it a leave over from his aunt's obsessive cleaning and working Harry like her indentured servant since he was two but Harry couldn't stand being in a filthy environment. An attitude that his dorm mates frequently found frustrating.

First things first he cast the rejuvenate spell at the Egglayer's ruined eyes. While some of them had been repaired from yesterday's big spell today's spell did a bit more. While still not really fully formed they were at least partially filled with a jelly like substance now. Harry's stomach lurched uneasily looking at them and he quickly moved on. He cast the preservation spell and had to take a break after a sweat broke out on his forehead.

He sighed. He knew different spells required different levels of power but he didn't think the rejuvenation spell or the preservation charm was supposed to take it out of you like that. Wasn't the rejuvenation charm just transfiguration? He'd been doing that for weeks without feeling the strain. Harry had no way of knowing that Lily had taken her NEWT in Care of Magical Creatures and the spell was far beyond what he was supposed to be attempting at this age. Nor that casting the spell on such a massive, ancient creature was decidedly more difficult. As it stood it was only because the Chamber was quite cold and had slowed the rotting progress and that Harry did in fact know a tremendous amount about basilisks at this point that the spell worked at all.

The preservation spell was being helped by the cool environment as well but the sheer size of the snake was a mammoth undertaking. He'd been casting it on his food just as a matter of course, especially after watching them doing it at the Farmer's Bazaar this summer. There was a world of difference between casting it on a fresh fish he was going to eat later that day and a massive, dead, magical snake that had been slowly rotting for a month and that had just been rejuvenated twice.

Harry got a drink from his pack and continued up the stairs to Salazar's former chambers. While he loved his pack it'd be nice to wander around outside of it especially in such an ancient and fascinating place as Salazar's Chamber. First things first he cleaned out the old grate and set a fire to burn. A quick cleaning charm on the old kettle and he was surprised but delighted to find the pump on the sink still worked and pumped out a sink full of clean cool water. He filled the kettle and set it on the arm to hang near the fire.

The cleaning charm book he had was newish. He found it in a secondhand book store after asking for a suggestion from Miss LeStrange. Rather than check books out he preferred to buy his own. Some of the more esoteric books were one thing but he was going to get some serious mileage out of a book like this and he would prefer to not have to worry about damaging it. He sat down at the single chair to read.

Once the kettle was hot enough he got up and washed the old cups and saucers Salazar had after a few charms to heat the wash water and another that mimicked soap. He cleaned the shelves and pulled his tea things out of his pack to sit on the shelf. He smiled to see them there. After a cuppa he headed upstairs blasting away spider webs and dust as he went.

He finally put away the book left by the chair and ran the glass back down to the sink. He refreshed the linens on the bed and dusted the tapestries and upholstery. He was completely unsurprised to find there was a very specific spell for tapestry cleaning given how many were in the castle and magical world in general.

The bathroom facilities in the bedroom were still working. Though he couldn't fathom how the plumbing in the rest of the castle worked he wasn't surprised that here in the center everything was still working. It was old, of course, but everything was rune carved stone and

iron with what Harry assumed were rust proof spells. There was no shower but Harry was definitely looking forward to a nice long soak after he was done cleaning.

Cleaning the potions lab, a frequent detention, nonetheless went fairly quickly simply because Harry had practice and there wasn't a Snape looming over him. He skipped the next two rooms simply because he was still clueless as to what they were used for. He was hoping there was something in the library about them.

Finally Harry got to the library and put away the normal cleaning book for the very specific book Miss LeStrange had recommended. Books and magic were synonymous in not just Hermione's world and the care taking of books was finely honed craft. Honestly Harry was more than a little terrified. This was probably the largest repository of parselmouth knowledge in the Northern Hemisphere with the exception of whatever might be in Greece or Egypt. It had sat undisturbed and unharmed for a thousand years. Who knows how badly Harry could damage anything in here if he wasn't careful.

He desperately needed this knowledge however. He had six baby basilisks to care for. A snake venom business he was planning. A vague resolution to clean up the reputation of parselmouths in England. By that same token though he couldn't bring anyone else down here and he was the only person in England who could read anything in here.

Now that he knew what to look for and how to recognize them he noticed that the whole library was covered in runes. The bookshelves themselves seemed to form a runic script for all that made them look as if they were falling down. The diagonal pieces held scrolls while the horizontal pieces held books. There was a wall dedicated to the stone tablets Harry had read a few weeks ago. Had it really only been a few weeks?

Harry cleaned the dust from a table and chair and sat down to read his book on the care of ancient libraries. He cast a spell to determine how many languages were in the library and was surprised to find there were seven. The spell stated he could only read two of them however. Parselscript and Middle English. The others were Ancient Greek, Ancient Egyptian, Latin, Elder Futhark, and Old English. What was Middle and Old English? English was English wasn't it?

Hunting around for said books revealed that Old and Middle English were not the English he was used to at all. In fact he was more than a little surprised that the spell thought he was okay to read Middle English. Sure he recognized most of the letters and he could even read most of the words for all that they looked like they'd been spelt by Dudley. He found three different spellings of the word snake on the same page.

Old English however was completely incomprehensible. The letters if they could be called that looked much more like runes than the letters he was used to though he did recognize a few here and there. The fact that everything in the library was hand written didn't help matters. Parselscript was one thing. Being a magical and innate talent for Harry he had absolutely no trouble speaking, reading or writing it but this? He carefully closed the antique book and placed it back on the shelf.

He got a notebook and pencil from his bag and smiled to himself at the juxtaposition of the modern wirebound lined notebook and bright yellow pencil next to the literally thousand year

old wooden table and yellowing books and scrolls which according to the book weren't even paper but finely tanned animal skins carefully bound. He wrote down the languages he didn't know and the Middle English as well. He'd need some dictionaries just to see what was in here.

He did the spell for the age of the contents of the library and was unsurprised to find nothing in there was younger than a thousand years but he was surprised to find a few things were well over three thousand years old. Namely the stone tablets. They were by far the oldest things in the room and not just because they were stone. The spell specifically looked for the age of the writing not the medium it was written on. He didn't really need to know the age of everything but he read about the spell and thought it'd be a pretty cool thing to know.

Carefully casting the spells that would prevent him from damaging anything he read Harry got the scrolls and books on basilisks down and started reading where he'd left off a few weeks ago. He broke briefly for lunch before returning. He wanted to know everything about his new children.

Chapter End Notes

Old English is exactly as described but Middle English does look similar enough to new/modern English to be semi-readable. Shakespearean English (which people tend to think is Old English) is actually referred to as New English and what we speak today is called Modern English. You may remember back in Chapter 1 with the mirror saying something but Harry only understanding the words bird and nest? That mirror speaks Old English and yes I looked up bird and nest in Old English to make sure it was right. I won't mess too much with other languages besides mentioning them and maybe a single word here or there. I don't speak anything but English and a smattering of Spanish and Gaelic and I don't feel comfortable translating sentences at all.

As for the cleaning...Harry was raised by Petunia and if anything stuck it was probably the need to clean. Harry probably doesn't feel comfortable in a dirty environment because something being dirty meant he would get punished. So yeah headcanon is that Harry's a neatnik.

Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Settling in and a pissed off owl

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 15 - July 18th - July 30th, 1993

Harry spent days in Salazar's library learning more and more about basilisks then parselmouths then all sorts of other magical snakes some he wasn't sure even still existed. Meanwhile his snakelings slowly but surely devoured their massive Egglayer from the inside out. Even Harry partook of the big snake after finding a strange recipe in one book. It was an odd dish. Rather tasteless with crude spices but Harry noticed the meat was rather fish like and once he knew the trick of preparing the meat safely he substituted basilisk meat in many of his favorite dishes.

He grew stronger both magically and physically from the regular meals. Perhaps more than he realized despite the magical connotations the recipe listed. He especially didn't realize what he was doing eating meat he'd cast so many spells on. From a creature he defeated in epic combat. A creature whose venom reinforced his parselmagic. Once his snakes found the heart they even insisted he eat it as well. This time he at least knew some of the reasons why and he did feel stronger and healthier afterwards and the feeling lingered and lingered until Harry no longer noticed. Everything that happened deep in the Chamber of Secrets under the castle between Harry and the snakes and magic was somewhat unconscious and lost on the young man it was happening to as most of the changes were so gradual. He was keeping himself so busy he just didn't notice.

He found a diagram of the Hogwarts waterway. What it was supposed to look like when first built. Specifically he found what appeared to be Salazar's copy since the notations were written in parselscript and included the Chamber of Secrets. Whenever he needed a break from reading he'd cautiously crept through the waterways killing those things he felt comfortable killing, hiding from the rest and fixing passages. He also cleaned and replaced the lights and discovered long beautiful mosaics. The legend of Salazar leaving appeared to be only partially true. From what Harry could tell he'd returned and lived out the rest of his days in the Chamber and, like Harry, cared for the waterways.

Harry was enjoying himself so much in fact that he was more than a little shocked when Hedwig came in one day with a couple of letters from Hermione and Hogwarts. Hedwig had hooted disdainfully at the Chamber and had given Harry a very hard nip for bringing her down into its depths without her knowledge or permission. Then she'd flown off. Harry had

been greatly worried at first but every morning she returned. For the first week she looked increasingly upset at him but then she apparently discovered a way out because she returned smelling of the crisp air of the upper atmosphere. Harry had then asked to know where this way out was in hopes that he could use it instead of having to use the bottom of the cliff entrance. He could but only after he repaired the broken doorway she'd been using. This doorway sat at the top of a lot of seemingly meaningless stairs for a waterway except for the fact that it opened out on to the top of a cliff. There Harry found a bench worn into the mountain that faced Hogwarts some distance away.

There was however no way down. What looked like it might have been a path at one point was crumbled and destroyed after a thousand years. Reparo failed to work on a natural structure that had suffered nature's erosion. Harry added yet another thing to his list of things to learn. He wasn't sure just where you'd look for earthmoving spells though. Transfiguration maybe? Besides after his spell failed he realized the work would be visible from Hogwarts. What's more he wasn't sure if he was even still on Hogwarts property and that his wand work wouldn't be detectable. He waited for a Ministry owl with bated breath but none ever came.

He surmised the Hogwarts letter was his supply list and opened Hermione's letter first.

He was shocked then greatly amused. While he regretted not being there to see Hermione learn about the library he was still gratified to see her reaction displayed in her letter.

THERE'S A LIBRARY IN DIAGON!!!! Why didn't anyone tell me? Why haven't I heard about this? Harry! I get back from France on the 30 th of July. You come here and take me to this library right this instance! Please Harry Mum and Dad can't take me and I can't get to Diagon on my own. Whatever method you're using is worth it if I can go to a real magical library. Please Harry!

Harry laughed out loud. This was so unlike Hermione. She didn't even mention homework once. There was no salutation, no closing, not even a signature. She must have read his letter, grabbed a piece of paper and immediately began writing. The paper was a piece of hotel stationery from somewhere in France folded into an envelope and then likely flung at a retreating Hedwig. Luckily his clever owl made the rounds visiting each of his friends looking for letters since Hermione did not have an owl and Ron's family owl, Errol, was long past retirement.

He didn't know how Hedwig got the Hogwarts letter though. Harry was completely unaware that the Chamber was unplotable and if it wasn't for the fact that Hedwig was his owl and could find him anywhere he wouldn't have gotten any mail. As it was Hedwig had been swinging by the Dursley's house to check for mail because she suspected no one else in the world quite knew where her young master was staying. There she'd found the Hogwarts letter laying in the middle of the smallest room and picked it up as well as Hermione's. Ron was still in Egypt and while Hedwig was clever and considerate but that was a bit out of the way.

Harry cast the spell to tell him the time and date and was surprised to find it had been almost two weeks since he'd been in the Chamber. It was July 30 th and he'd pulled it up just in time. In 5 minutes he'd be thirteen. He counted it down while he finished his dinner of batter

fried basilisk and chips with a snake blood sauce. He treated himself with one of his last butterbeers. "Happy Birthday Harry."

Chapter End Notes

Vague enough on what's happening in the Chamber to Harry?

Yes Harry's eating the snake too. In reality snake is rather tasteless but Harry is a fairly talented cook and in real life you add a ton of spices to make snake meat taste like anything. Do yourself a favor and DON'T google eating snake hearts. It's pretty gruesome but it is one of those myth and legend type things only here in the wizarding world it actually works.

I couldn't work out how to get an in person reaction from Hermione so here's what you got.

I'm just channeling my inner bookworm with Hermione in this story. So please enjoy.

Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

New clothes and Hermione!

Chapter Notes

For those who complained the chapters were too short?
lol sink your teeth into this one.

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

Chapter 16 - July 31 st , 1993

It was almost evening by the time Harry got to Hermione's house in Crawley. Between the walk out of the Chamber, the train to London, stopping by the farmer's bazaar to refill his supplies and then making yet another stop at a tailor for his growth spurt he was much later than he wanted to be.

The stop at the tailor had taken the longest time. Madam Malkins just wasn't going to cut it this time. He needed too many special modifications to his clothes for his snakes and someone who wasn't going to run screaming down the street when they saw them.

He found the snake specialty pet shop again and decided to start there. He figured he couldn't be the only wizard walking around with a snake on him. Not with as many Slytherins as there were. "Hello."

"Ah the boy who was going to raise pet snakes. Back to actually purchase a snake?" The proprietor walked around the counter and peered at him with interest.

"No. My snakelings hatched a couple of weeks ago but they imprinted on me and want to stay with me at all times." Harry pulled the right side of his hoodie back to show Madonna's large red head. She was growing far faster than her siblings. Which made sense. She would grow to be an Egglayer herself. She was a traditional basilisk.

The proprietor jumped and nearly climbed backwards over the desk. "That's a basilisk!"

"Yes. I found a clutch of eggs."

"Found?" The proprietor took a deep breath. "She is tamed? She knows to keep her eyes covered."

“Yes. They all know how to do that.”

“They?” A sweat broke out on the proprietor’s forehead.

“Yes. I have six of them.”

The proprietor was speechless. His mouth hung open and he no longer looked at Harry as if he was an entrée but with a thin veneer of respect overlaying a massive amount of fear.

Harry would be lying if he didn’t acknowledge that it pleased him how frightened the man seemed from the creepy hanging too close person he’d been the last time Harry was in here. Before Harry was a twelve year old long haired pretty boy with some eggs in his pocket. Now he was a thirteen year old long hair pretty boy bangled with a dozen charms and six extremely deadly pets. Sang had even gleefully informed him that she was so small because she was explicitly bred to kill quietly. She could almost wrap herself twice around Harry’s be ringed fingers now. A single drop or look from her was an instant death sentence as she was much more potent than her siblings. Of course she was also a thousand times more fragile.

“I imagine I’m not the only one with pet snakes and was hoping you could recommend a tailor to help me accommodate my pets. Someone who won’t run screaming.”

“Yes. Of course. Miss Chai. Three shops down there’s a narrow alley. The door on the left. Tell the woman inside you need a sssinamon dressss.” He empathized the sibilant sounds like a parselmouth.

Harry thought his accent needed work. “Thank you. I want to spend more time with just these snakes for now but I will be back.” There was a hiss under his right ear. “Ah yes they love the water feature with the heated stones.”

“You understand them?” The proprietor asked in a shocked manner.

Harry licked his lips and smiled before leaving.

Behind him the proprietor’s hand ventured to his left arm and glanced at Harry’s back with a question in his eyes that he dare not ask.

Harry found the door easily enough. Knocking had the door opening only a sliver though. “I need a sssinamon dresssss.” Harry said allowing the parselmouth tongue lisp to slip into his words.

The door closed and he heard some muttered incantations before it opened to let him inside. He was in the backroom of a tailoring shop apparently. He glanced at the woman to find a tall blonde with eyeshadow that twisted out from her eyes like butterfly wings and blue lips to match. “A sssinamon dressss. You look at little young for that.”

“I have several pet snakes who insist on going everywhere with me. I need both a set of Hogwarts robes and a casual robe to accommodate them.”

“Ahhh that’s different then.”

“I figure the ssssinnamon dressss part was a password. What is that?”

“You’re a little young to learn that yet. Ask me again when you’re seventeen cutie.” She smiled. “First things first I need to see your snakes, where they like to ride, are they babies or adults?”

Harry pulled his robe and the huge hoodie off. The hoodie, brought extra-large originally was the only thing he hadn’t outgrown over the last two weeks. That was one nice thing about living with a ton of other lads. Harry knew his sudden growth spurt wasn’t unusual. He’d felt naked without a undershirt on but it no longer met his pants which could no longer be buttoned and which showed several inches of ankle and shin. His shoes where very tight as well. Harry had discovered a rather extreme downside to shopping for muggle clothes. A lot of them weren’t made of natural materials but listed things like polyester and nylon. They were therefore resistant to the transfiguration spells for resizing.

The women arched one eyebrow up when she saw the two large snakes wrapped around his shoulders, the two wrapped around his arms and finally Kip who’d threaded himself through Harry’s belt loops. “Five snakes?”

“Six actually.” Harry smiled glad that his plan to hide Sang was working. He held up a hand to let the tiny snake lift her head from under a ruby.

“Awww she’s so cute.” The woman cooed as she got closer to Sang to admire her. She didn’t seem to recognize the snake’s breed like the pet shop owner had.

Harry smiled. He liked this woman already. “They’re only a few weeks old but they’ll all grow at different rates to different sizes.”

“Okay and you hit a growth spurt obviously. How old are you?”

“Today’s my thirteenth birthday.”

“Well happy birthday. You can call me Butterfly by the way.”

“Uh you can call me-“

“I don’t need to know your name sweetie. Probably better that I don’t really. Word of advice. If you’re gonna start hanging out in the back alleys you need a nickname.” She urged him up on the podium and flicked her wand removing his shirt completely. “Could you move out of the belt loops?” She asked Kip who moved obligingly to coil himself around Harry’s waist instead.

Harry had a sneaking suspicion what was coming but had no time to stop her before she flicked her wand and removed his pants. She left his underwear thankfully.

“Don’t pick anything ridiculous either. I know how teenage boys are. My little brother tried to go by ‘The Dragon’.” She enunciated dramatically and rolled her eyes. “Chose something simple. Something that’s not related to your true name at all. Something that means you however. And if possible nothing anyone else is already using.”

Harry frowned trying to puzzle out an appropriate name as black fabric flew about him and formed a standard Hogwarts robe from the outside but had numerous inner pockets for his snakes.

“You don’t need one right this second. Take some time. Imagine if a first year came up to you with an attitude and told you this name. Would you laugh in his face? Then don’t choose that name. Now names that others give to you well that’s different.”

Harry blushed. He’d been feeling full of himself after scaring the pet shop owner. Nothing like a pretty girl to remind him he was still just a thirteen year kid to her. “Was your name given to you?”

“Yes and no. I raise butterflies. I wear decorative butterflies. You’ve seen my eyes of course. My friends called me the Butterfly Girl and it stuck. I kinda of love it though. Later I added Chai because I love that kind of tea. So my nickname is Butterfly Chai.”

Butterfly Girl. Basilisk Boy? He imagined some kid strutting up to him and asking to be called Basilisk and snorted. But maybe.... “Call me Bas.”

“Bas?”

“It’s short for something I hope to grow into.” Harry admitted.

“Ooo good plan.”

Harry chuckled wondered about adding anything. He loved Mars Bars...and hey didn’t the centaurs always have something to say about Mars every time they met him? “Bas Mars?”

“Mars? The Roman God of War?”

Harry blushed. He was standing in his underwear again as she whisked the robe off again to modify it. “That’s not what I was going for. I love the muggle candy Mars Bars and every time I run into a centaur they make some kind of comment on Mars.”

“Ah I see. Bas Mars? I don’t know it doesn’t really roll off the tongue. What’s Bas short for?”

Harry’s hand went to Kip who was slipping and let the thin white snake twin around his left hand opposite of Sang. “Basilisk. That’s what these snakes are. I killed their Egglayer and found their clutch afterwards.”

Behind him he didn’t see Butterfly freeze for a second before continuing to move flicking a dark blue bolt of fabric into the air to encircle him. “You have control over them?”

“Yeah. I’m a parselmouth. They consider me their Creator. They’re good little snakelings. Very intelligent.”

Butterfly relaxed and moved out in front of Harry again. “So Basilisk Mars. Hmmm...yeah...That sounds good. And you can let people assume Bas is short for Bastian. Nice name to give the aurors if they come sniffing around.” She talked like that was an extremely common thing to happen.

“HMMMM Bastian Mars...Bastian Marcum?” The couple in Number 8 were named Marcum.

“That anything like your true name?”

“Not at all.”

“Sounds like you’re set then Bas.”

Bas smiled. “Yeah. Thanks for the advice. Do you take check? I have gold but I prefer not to use it.”

“Yeah vault numbers are pretty anonymous. It isn’t like the goblins are gonna reveal you.” Butterfly appeared done with the robes but eyed Bas’ muggle clothing disdainfully. “You want some muggle mock ups too?”

“Yes please. I didn’t realize I wouldn’t be able to transfigure them when I grew.”

Some denim fabric and cotton flew through the air to wrap around him. “I can make you some simple cloth boots with leather soles too. If you want something more sturdy you’ll find a good deal down the street at Peg’s.”

“Peg’s?”

“Three doors down.”

“Do I need a passcode?”

Butterfly laughed. “Not for what you’re after. You don’t have any snakes down in your boots do you?”

“No. They like to be up where they can see.” Bas petted Aqua and Marine fondly.

“There we go. Three Hogwarts robes. Two casual robes. Two sets of muggle mockups. One pair of cloth boots.” She spun her wand letting him see the colors and cuts of each before a quick twist had everything but the new muggle clothes and a matching casual robe wrapped in brown paper. “That comes to 40 galleons and 15 sickles for the clothes with 55 galleons, 7 sickles and 20 knuts extra for the mods. I put in some disillusionments just above your shoulders and there’s an expansion charm under your hood for the snakes to conceal the rest of their bodies. Sleeve holsters for your wand and the expansion charm pockets are standard in all my clothes. The casual robes have a feature that allows them to change from robes to a long muggle coat depending on the ambient magic of your environment.”

“How big are the expansion charms?”

“They’re weight based only, nothing fancy inside them. The pockets are 50 kilos each but I put a metric ton in the one on your back. Basilisks get really big don’t they?”

“They can. Their Egglayer was probably about that but she was very very old. So that’s...” Bas mated to himself. 95 galleons and 22 sickles and 20 knuts but 17 sickles were a galleon so, “96 galleons, 5 sickles and 20 knuts right?”

“Yup.” Butterfly handed him the checkbook to fill out.

Bas slipped into the clothes gratefully. They were soft and supple. Blue jeans for the muggle mockups along with a long sleeved green henley. The soft cloth boots were a dark purple. The casual clothes were all in muted shades of green, purple, and blue. Later when putting the clothes away in his trunk inside his pack he found she’d also included a few pairs of underwear and socks as well. He was glad she hadn’t pointed them out. That would have been more than awkward.

“Thank you. This is really great. I’ll definitely be back.” He thought of Hermione who he was going to see next. The huge books she checked out for “light reading”. “Can I bring a friend with me? I think she’d love it here.”

“Sure. If she’d doesn’t need anything special like with your snakes you can bring her in the front door too.” Butterfly said with a smirk.

“Sorry about that. I know the snakes freak people out. That’s why I asked the snake shop owner for a recommendation. I figure I can’t be the only person walking around with snakes or any other pets they’re prefer to conceal.”

“Indeed you’re not. Remember discreet is the by word here. No talking about the extras hmmm?” Butterfly tapped the side of her nose.

Bas nodded. He didn’t think he really needed to be told that. “Ditto I’m sure about my basilisks.”

“You got it. Alright then Bas check cleared. You’re good to go. Hit me up after your next growth spurt.”

“Do I need to come in this way or?”

“Now that I know what you need just come in the front.”

“Gotcha. I got to go see a friend now. I might bring her by in the next few days. She’s an extreme bookworm. Those standard pockets would be great for her.”

“Ravenclaw?”

“You’d think so.” Bas smiled and tapped the side of his nose in mimic of Butterfly’s motion for secrets.

Butterfly laughed. “Away with you Bas. Till next time.”

Sure enough once Harry stepped from the knight bus his long green robe turned into a something like a peacoat with a hood. Even with the hood down Madonna and Delphi could hide in the overlapping folds. Harry put his hands in his coat pockets and headed up the street

to a large house. Crawley seemed like a nice place. The street was clean though fairly busy. This was a good size city unlike the suburb of Little Whinging.

Harry pressed the doorbell and waited unaware that through the peephole he looked rather like some young hood with his dark clothing, long hair, and crazy jewelry. Finally a gruff male voice came from the other side of the door. "We don't want any. Now get out of here before I call the coppers."

Harry looked up and gave the door an insulted look. "My name is Harry. I'm Hermione's friend from school. She should be expecting me."

There was some talk on the other side of the door before Harry heard something that sounded very much like Hermione's "Honestly." That she was apt to blow at Ron and him. The door opened and Harry opened his arms anticipating an armful of bushy hair but Hermione pulled up sharply.

"Who are you?" She asked puzzled.

"Hermione? It's me Harry." He gave her a crooked little smile. "Wow losing my glasses and changing my hair must have really made a difference if even you can't tell it's me."

Hermione frowned. "Where did we find the answer in first year?"

"Chocolate frog card then a book bigger than you that you'd checked out for light reading."

Now Harry got the armful of bushy hair he'd been expecting. "Harry!"

"Hey Hermione." Harry wasn't the only one to hit a growth spurt this year. Hermione was still just as tall as him but she was growing out in other interesting ways.

"Come in, come in, we were just about to order something for dinner. We're not quite back in the groove from vacation. We only got back yesterday. How's your vacation been?"

"It's been awesome. I made a deal with the Dursleys. I make myself completely scarce, leaving before they get up and returning after they go to bed and they don't lock me up and work me like a slave."

"Harry."

"What? It's true. Instead I've been taking the Knight Bus to Diagon all summer."

"Isn't that expensive?"

"Oh I was still sleeping at the Dursleys until a few weeks ago. I'll tell you all about it after dinner. I'm sure your parents don't wanna hear this."

Indeed Hermione's parents, a swarthy skinned man and a woman who looked like her sunburn was slowly fading into a tan, looked extremely wary of the vagabond looking young man their daughter had brought in.

“Mom, Dad this is Harry Potter, my best friend.” Hermione especially empathized the word friend. Whether to reassure them that they were just friends and their daughter wasn’t dating the disreputable looking young man or because like Harry Hermione had been friendless before Hogwarts and she wanted to stress the importance of her friendship with Harry. Either way Harry resolved to be on his best behavior. While he loved the eccentric way he looked now he acknowledged to these straitlaced dentists he probably looked like no one they wanted their daughter around. Granted the thin bespectacled kid in hand me downs probably wasn’t either.

“Harry. My parents. Dr. Marcus and Dr. Helen.”

“Pleased to meet you Doctors Grangers.” Harry smiled charmingly. He held out a hand to Dr. Marcus and winced worriedly as he saw Sang wiggle under the crush of the man’s hand. Luckily she was hidden under several prominent gemstones and escaped unharmed. Still Harry brought his other hand up to pet her soothingly and felt Madonna tighten her hold on his shoulder in worry.

He missed the disappointed look Hermione gave her father. “We were thinking pizza. What do you want on yours?”

Harry looked up with a furrowed brow over his smiles. “I’ve never really had pizza before.” Did the Poundland frozen pizzas count? “I’ll eat whatever.”

Hermione went to grab the phone to order with leaving Harry with her parents. “Hermione said you went to France this summer. Never been myself. Was it nice?” Harry asked pleasantly.

The dentists looked at each other. “It was fine. We rented a chateau for a month.”

Harry recognized this behavior. They were subtly bragging. They were better at it than the Dursleys but Harry could still tell. These were people the Dursleys would schmooze up to because they were richer.

“That sounds nice. I might have to try that next year. I’ve spent the last few weeks up in Scotland myself. Been exploring some underground caves.” Harry remarked off hand. He was a wizard. He was rich. He had six basilisks and a back alley nickname. He was through letting people make him feel like he was less than he was.

“I heard something about Scotland?” Hermione asked as she got off the phone.

“I’ll tell you later. Tell me about France. I’ve never been.”

Hermione chatted about France using numerous French names for them and revealing to Harry that she actually spoke French fluently due to years of language tutors as a child. She also spoke Greek and Italian which just blew Harry’s mind.

“I’m teaching myself Old English. I found some old scrolls, some of which are in Greek. Maybe you can help me translate them this year.”

Hermione's eyes brightened. "I would love to! Where did you find them?"

"I'll tell you later. It has to do with parselmagic and such. Parselmouths are rare here in England. Not so much in Greece. Did you know? Well you're you so you probably did but the snake emblems on doctors and healers comes from a guy called Asclepius. Who, get this, was supposed to be a parselmouth. Snakes are hugely important in healing. So calling me Dark for speaking to snakes makes even less sense then it did before."

"It was always ridiculous." Hermione rolled her eyes. "I knew Asclepius was supposed to be a wizard but I didn't know about the parseltongue. It wasn't in the book I read."

"Yeah the healer I saw this summer told me about it. His family--"

"You saw a healer this summer? For what? Are you okay?"

"I'm fine. Chelsea wanted to make sure I got my vaccines." Harry eyed Hermione. She was muggleborn. He'd bet she didn't have those vaccines either.

"Who's Chelsea?"

"The lady who did my hair. She was dorm mates with my mum. Told me loads about her. Hermione do you have your wizarding vaccinations?"

Now Hermione's parents who'd been talking to each other rather than interrupt the children's conversation turned to pay attention. "What vaccinations?" Dr. Helen asked in a worried voice.

Harry nodded grimly. "Yeah I didn't have them either. There's these potions you have to take to protect you against dragon pox and splattgrot and stuff."

"Besides the mandrake potion I've not had any potions from Madame Pomfrey."

"I'll take you to see Chelsea tomorrow. She can get us an appointment at St. Mungos and we'll go see Healer Gurumarra and get you your potions."

"Tomorrow. Where will you be staying until then?" Dr. Helen asked.

Harry smiled. "I was hoping you'd loan me a coat hook for the night."

"A coat hook?" Hermione asked.

"I've been busy this summer." Harry picked up his bag from beside the chair. "First thing I got was this. Since I was gonna be away from the Dursleys I wanted a way to carry some of my most precious stuff like my photo album with me. Well..." Harry opened the pack as set to mug. "Set to muggle it's just an ordinary backpack." Harry turned the dial and set the pack on the floor. "Set to mag and..." He flipped open the top and climbed down the ladder facing forward with practiced ease much to the astonishment of Hermione and her parents.

Hermione was quick to follow. Her parents less so. The ladder lead down to a small room with a mud rug and a coat rack. Further in it opened to a large room featuring what appeared

to be a small kitchen/potions lab with a shelf holding a variety of fresh food and potion ingredients. A dining area with a small square table for four only lacking a vase with a fresh sprig of flowers to complete it. In the center was a largish stone fountain that was merrily trickling along creating a pleasant ambience. There was a living area with a couple of bookshelves, a desk, a soft grey sofa with several pillows and a blanket and coffee table with a small tea set surrounding a currently empty fireplace. A large ornate cabinet sat in the corner covered in a delicate lily pattern.

The back wall held a few doors one of which Harry had disappeared into with his brown paper package of clothes but which they could see a bed through. The other doors presumably led to a bathroom or some such.

“Harry this is amazing.”

“I know right? Even better.” Harry flicked his wand at the fireplace. It lit up with a merry flame.

“Harry weren’t not allow to do magic during the summer!”

“No we can’t let them catch us doing magic during the summer. In areas of high magical saturation like this pack, Diagon Alley, Hogwarts, or say Malfoy Manor they can’t determine individual wand signatures. The Weasleys are unusual in enforcing it but with Fred and George I doubt Mrs. Weasley wants to take a chance. I guarantee you Malfoy spends all summer using his wand.”

“That’s not fair!” Hermione cried outraged over the lost time spend practicing.

“No it’s not.”

“How much for a pack like this?”

Harry smiled. “I’m taking you to the shop tomorrow. You might want something different. I figure the one with a library already built in is the one you’ll want. It’s my treat.”

She spun around from where she was looking at his book shelf. “Harry! You can’t-“

“I missed your birthday first year and didn’t know when it was last year. Consider this your three year birthday present.”

“Still it must be expensive.”

“It’s okay. Turns out my grandfather invented this really popular hair crème. I’m rich. Like really rich. All this and I haven’t even put a dent into my trust fund yet.” Harry saw Hermione’s parents share a look before looking at him with slightly more approving eyes.

“We’ll leave you guys down here to talk. As long as Harry stays in his...pack I don’t see that it’ll be a problem. Hermione I want you out of here before bedtime though okay. You two figure out your itinerary then come tell us before bed so I can set out the money you’ll need.” Dr. Marcus told his daughter before he and his wife climbed out of the pack.

Hermione sat down on the sofa. "Tell me everything."

Harry flicked his wand to fill the copper tea kettle before moving it over the fire. "Well it all started when I went down into the Chamber right before we left."

It didn't even occur to Harry to conceal his basilisks from Hermione. Unfortunately it also didn't occur to him that as a victim she'd would be quite upset about them either.

"Wait they're here? Right now!" Hermione squeaked as she pulled her feet up off the floor and looked around frantically before covering her eyes.

"It's okay Hermione. I'm their Creator. Not Slytherin. Not Voldemort. Me. Do you really think I'd let them hurt you?" Harry reached out to hug her to him. "I'm sorry Hermione. I didn't think you'd be upset."

"Not be upset? Harry I nearly died!"

"I know. I know. Trust me. I know. I fought their Egglayer with a sword and have the scars to prove it but Hermione they're were eggs. Babies. If you got bit by a dog would you fear puppies?"

"Puppies are not baby snakes. Baby basilisks are...well I don't actually know if they're as dangerous as adults but still." Her hands were still firmly over her eyes.

"Baby basilisks are just as venomous if not more so than adults. Their venom can be more concentrated actually. Their eyes are harmless for the first few years however."

"How do you know so much? I barely found any information about them at all."

"Remember I told you about those old scrolls I found? I know all about basilisks."

"Oh."

"Yeah."

"I need to think about this Harry."

"I understand."

"Where are they now?"

"Uh..." Harry doubted Hermione would take the news that Sang was on the hand he had in her hair or that Aqua and Marine were on his arms around her, that Kip was at his waist and therefore her waist and especially not that her head was currently resting on one of Madonna's coils. "You don't want to know."

Hermione sighed. "Tell me something else about this summer. Something that has nothing to do with snakes."

Harry thought quickly. "I've decided to start my own business selling....nevermind. Uh I found two new entrances outside of Hogwarts leading to....hmmm...." He thought for a moment. "I got new clothes today. I want to take you there tomorrow."

Hermione giggled. "You have a lot of places you want to take me. Though the first better be the library." They'd spent a solid hour talking about the library earlier. Hermione was delighted that Harry had finished his homework but now wanted to redo hers after she'd been to the library.

"The library is going to be the last place I take you. I may never get you to leave if I take you there first."

"Fair enough." Hermione remained with her eyes covered and her head on Harry's firm shoulder. She was mostly calm now but had decided she rather liked being held and was loath to move at the moment. "Where are we going first?"

"Chelsea's salon. Getting you to St. Mungos is the highest priority. I want her to sign my Hogsmeade form too."

"Can she do that?"

"I don't see why not. She signed for me at the hospital and the eye healer."

"Okay. Then?"

"To the shop to get your birthday present then to the robe place which might take a while actually?"

"Harry! The library!" Hermione finally sat up and opened her eyes. She was much closer to Harry's green eyes than she ever got normally. They were amazing. A solid bright bottle green that almost seemed to shine from within.

"We'll go there last and stay as late as you want okay?" Harry smiled and slowly let his arms leave her.

"Okay. Oh I need to get my school supplies as well. Mum and Dad said I can get a pet this year as well."

"Excellent. Maybe we should swing by the pet store first. You might want to get some extras in your bag to help take care of it. What are you thinking? An owl?"

"Maybe but I've always wanted a cat."

"Sounds good." Harry casted tempus. "When's bedtime?"

Hermione epped and hopped up. "Thirty minutes ago! See you tomorrow for breakfast." She hurried to the ladder and climbed out.

Harry stretched and finally removed his robe. His snakes deserted him for their fountain. He flung his robe towards the coat rack with a negligent hand ignoring the way it floated the rest

of the way. He flicked his wand at the tea things sending them towards the dishwasher and stripped down on the way to the bedroom carefully putting his new clothes away in his mother's cleaned and repair bureau before crawling into bed. He was joined by six cool, wet bodies a little later.

Chapter End Notes

Yes the pet store shopkeep is VERY creepy.

In case you're wondering not even I, the author, know if Butterfly is Draco's big sister or not. I hope the development of Harry's alias was organic if a bit unoriginal on his part.

Yes the Grangers are a tiny bit snooty. Not to an extreme degree though. Fortunately from living with the Dursleys Harry knows just what to say. They're not bad people

Seriously big fucking snake going around petrifying things and NO ONE had any lasting trauma from that? wtf jkr?

Now Harry, thanks to his fucky upbringing, processes trauma differently. Hermione's gonna need some time but it's perfectly normal to be afraid of puppies after a vicious dog attack. There are techniques to get over that though that Hermoine's quietly gonna do in the background. I'll try to point it out in the author note's later if I can. Please if you've had trauma please seek profession help. Therapists are wonderful wonderful people.

Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 17 - August 1 st , 1993

After breakfast Harry introduced Hermione to the joys and pains of the Knight Bus. Hermione found she didn't mind if it meant Harry kept his arm firmly around her the entire ride.

Their first stop was the salon to see Chelsea. Harry walked in with a smile to the receptionist and headed back to see Chelsea who was just finishing up with a curly haired lady. She turned around and let out a little scream. "Oh Morgana! Who ruined your hair child?"

Harry stopped and glanced at his own long red locks. He'd cared for them as Chelsea had instructed and they were looking rather nice in his opinion. He felt Hermione tense at his back and realize Chelsea wasn't talking to him.

"Oh my dear Lad you brought your friend to the right place. Sit Lass." The lady in Chelsea's chair had turned, spotted Hermione and gave her a sympathetic look before hopping out of the chair. "She's a wonder with curls Lassie. I mean just look at mine. Used to be in as much of a fuzz as yours. Don't worry you're in good hands."

Hermione gave Harry an alarmed look but at his encouraging look and perhaps a very deeply hidden desire to be pretty for him let herself be put in the chair.

The other lady pulled her smock off and laid it over Hermione before fluffing her own hair in the mirror and giving Chelsea a buss on the cheek. "Thanks Lass. Give my love to the littles."

"Now who is this?" Chelsea looked at Harry for introductions.

"This is my friend Hermione. Hermione this is Chelsea my mum's friend."

"Well Hermione your hair is a right mess isn't it. Muggleborn right? And I bet you wash and brush it every day." Chelsea shook her head. "Your mother was the same way Harry. We'll get you set straight though."

"I don't want straight hair." Hermione interjected. "or a cut." She didn't object to maybe some minor changes to her hair. It did give her a lot of trouble. Now that she was in the chair she was having numerous second thoughts too. Who was this girl who wanted to be pretty all of a sudden? Books and cleverness had always been enough but...she looked at the woman with gorgeously defined curls who was leaving. That would be so nice.

"Of course not love I wouldn't dream of straightening these gorgeous locks. You've got a good head of hair but you've washed all the natural oils out of it resulting in this bushy mess."

First things first we get your hair healthy again and give you a nice regiment of care. You won't need much styling to my thinking just a revival."

Hermione relaxed a bit and let the woman get to work. Her hair was washed first ironically enough but by the tingle on her scalp she had a feeling that whatever Chelsea was using it wasn't shampoo.

Chelsea looked over at Harry pointedly. "Has Petunia actually been exercising caution and keeping you home in light of Black's escape from Azkaban?"

Harry gave her a confused look. "What? I haven't seen my aunt all summer. I haven't been back to her house since like the 13th or so."

"Then where have you been?"

"Uh...I'd rather not say. I've not heard about any escape from Azkaban though. I thought that was impossible."

"So did everyone else. Sirius Black, James' best friend, your godfather, escaped about a week ago. You've not seen a paper I take it?"

"Nope. What did he do?"

Chelsea sighed and cursed Petunia mentally yet again. "He betrayed the secret of the Potter's location to He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. Then afterwards he hunted down Peter Pettigrew, one of your father's other friends and murdered him along with a bunch of muggles. The Aurors caught him then and dragged him off to prison."

Harry paled. "Oh." He swallowed hard. He didn't really know many details about his parent's death. Voldemort showed up. They died. He survived. That's all really. "And he escaped?"

"Yes. Apparently he borrowed a paper from Minister Fudge during the yearly prison review and escaped a few days later. The guards say he was muttering something about Hogwarts."

"Wow. You don't think he's after me do you? I mean I was a baby."

"I think the Black insanity finally caught up with him honestly. Who knows what he wants or what he'll do." Chelsea sat Hermione up and dried her hair with a slow working charm.

"Now I want you to go home and throw out every bottle of shampoo you own. Short of getting something absolutely disgusting on your hair you should never use soap on it. Condition, Condition, Condition you hear me? Once or twice a week wet it, condition, rinse, condition, rinse. Give it a brush while the conditioner is on it to remove the tangles and loose hairs. Run some more conditioner through it like this and some styler like this. You can buy the potions here but experiment with a basic recipe till you find what your own hair likes best. Let it air dry overnight in a plop. There's a book up front for curly girls that goes into detail. Do that for the next two weeks then come back. We'll go over things specific to Scotland weather then hmm?"

“Yes ma’am.” Hermione said respectfully. She was staring at her hair. The water dark strands were already curling gently. The heavy mass hung down her back drying relatively rapidly from a slow working spell cast by Chelsea. The difference was remarkable though. Was her hair still big? Yes. Still curly? Yes. Was she, in fact, still her? Oh yes. But it looked so much better now. Lovely defined curls framed her face. It looked soft and bouncy and wonderful. The hair she’d only dreamed of. She looked over at Harry. “What do you think?”

Harry looked her over carefully. “Wow.”

Hermione’s smile just made her look all the more lovely.

“Chelsea. Hermione’s doesn’t have her vaccinations either. Could you set up an appointment for her at St. Mungos?”

Chelsea smiled. “Of course.”

“And sign my Hogsmeade form?” Harry gave her a winning smile.

Chelsea looked at the offered form and frowned. “With Black’s escape I worry about you going to Hogsmeade but the Ministry says there’ll be guards posted everywhere around you children so I guess it’s okay.” She used the quill at the desk to sign the form. “Come by tomorrow and I’ll take you both to St Mungos.”

“Thanks Chelsea.” Harry grinned at her and slipped the form into his bag.

“Yes thank you ma’am.” Hermione patted the now dry curls in amazement. She pulled one down and watched it bounce back with a smile.

“Getting your supplies next?”

“Pet store next then I’m taking Hermione to Enchanting Expansions for her birthday present.”

“Tell the Goyles I said hi.” Chelsea accepted the money for Hermione’s hair from Harry while Hermione picked out the potions and the book which she tried to pay off with muggle money before exchanging it with Harry for wizarding money.

Harry strolled through the rodent aisle listening to the hissing suggestions of his hungry snakes. The mice he’d gotten would still work for Sang, Aqua, Marine, and Kip but Delphi and Madonna had graduated to rats. Having an idea of just how much his snakes could eat from the rate at which they devoured the Egglayer Harry asked for four breeding pairs and left his pack with Hermione while he was inside arranging them in the special sealed room he had made for snake food.

When he came out Hermione was sitting in front of the pet shop cooing to an enormous ginger cat with a smashed face and bangy legs. Its wary orange eyes met Harry’s and then quickly glanced at either shoulder, either arm, his waist and his right hand.

“He’s gorgeous isn’t he? The shop owner said his name was Crookshanks. He’s been in the pet shop a long time. The owner said nobody wanted him.” Hermione petted the big cat scratching behind his ears.

“Poor guy. I got some mice for him to chase if he wants any exercise.” Harry smiled winningly at the lion maned cat but it didn’t change the wary look the cat was giving him or rather his hidden snakes.

“That sounds fun. I suppose you have them for your...”

“Yeah.”

Crookshanks subtly relaxed.

“Is Crookshanks part-kneazle?”

“Yeah. How’d you guess?”

“The way he was looking at me until you mentioned my...pets. I think he was worried I was concealing them from you.”

“What a smart kitty.” Hermione hauled the massive cat up in her arms and nuzzled the top of his head.

The cat allowed this.

“Let’s get your bag. Then we’ll get some lunch.”

“Then the library.” Hermione glared at him over Crookshank’s head.

“Then the library.”

“Let me get the hang of the Knight Bus and I’ll be here every day I can.”

“Definitely put Crookshanks inside your bag during that.”

The cat glared at Harry at the mention of putting him inside a bag.

“Hello Mr. Goyle.”

“Hello there.”

Harry had noticed that people on the alley had started avoiding calling him by name. It drew a lot of attention otherwise. “This is my friend Hermione I told you about.”

“The one you said would find a bag with a library inside a dream come true.”

Hermione smiled happily.

“They’re right over here. Take your pick.”

Harry whispered to Mr. Goyle as Hermione went over to check out the bags. “Don’t mention prices and just bill it to my account. It’s to be her birthday present for the last three years.”

Mr. Goyle nodded and walked over to extol the virtues of a number of different styles and features. Hermione settled on a model with a room the size of Harry’s but surrounded by bookshelves except for one small fireplace. Harry suggested some amenities and bathrooms for both Crookshanks and his mistress were added. Harry also convinced her to add a potions lab after obliquely referencing last year’s adventures with potions. After that Hermione flatly refused to let Harry buy anything more for her.

Harry smiled. “Happy birthday Hermione.”

“Thank you Harry.” Hermione gave him a hug. She got a messenger type bag in a muted blue with an embroidered book and quill on the flap. Depending on what letters the quill wrote on the book it was set for muggle or magical. “Don’t think you’re getting through this without a birthday present as well. It’s at home actually. I was just flustered this morning or I’d have already given it to you.”

“Is it a book?”

“No.”

“Really?” Harry was somewhat shocked. “What is it then?”

“You’ll just have to wait until we get home.”

“Think your parents are going to let me spend the night again?”

“Yes I do.”

“Oh. They seemed less than...”

“They’re snobs Harry. You can say it.”

“They’re not as bad as the Dursleys.”

“Thank you for that I guess but I know they’ll let you stay once I explain that I want to move my entire book collection into my bag. They either let you stay or they have to help.”

“Oh my aching back.” Harry laughed as he stirred them into a little Mongolian Bar BQ place. Crookshanks clearly approved and being a wizarding establishment even had a stool brought out for him.

Finally they reached the library and Harry had to tightly hold Hermione’s hand to keep her from immediately running off. Today the large quiet man was manning the desk and greeted

them quietly.

“Welcome to Alexandria Adjunct. How may I help you?”

“This is my first time here.” Hermione squeaked as her eyes took in the enormous shelves. She was practically vibrating in place she was so excited.

“Ah you need a card.” He pulled out a sheet of parchment. “Name?”

“Hermione Jean Granger.”

“Date of birth?”

“September 19th, 1979.”

“Completed year of Hogwarts?”

“Second.”

“Electives chosen?”

“Runes, Arithmancy, Divination, Muggles studies, and Care of Magical Creatures.”

Both Harry and the man stared at her in shock.

“Hermione that’s 12 courses.”

“Percy did it.”

“How? There isn’t enough time.”

“Professor McGonagall said there was a way. I have to talk to her about it first thing.”

“Okay.” Harry held up his hands.

“Eye color? Brown. Hair color? Brown.”

“Height?”

“155 cm.”

“Width?”

“Excuse me?”

"He means your arm span." Harry told her helpfully.

The man cast a spell at her carelessly and corrected the previous notation. “Height is 155.5 cm and width is 156.4 cm. Any medical issues?”

“No.”

“Special abilities?”

“No.”

“Let’s us know if this changes.” He handed her the tag and chain and returned to his book.

Harry chased after Hermione as she raced to one shelf and then the next. He shot a glare over his shoulder. He’d been hoping for a firm warning from the librarian. “Hermione? Hermione.” Whispering at her was doing no good at all. He chased her down and grabbed her from behind. “Hermione. Listen to me.”

“Harry there’s so many books.” Her brown eyes were alight and sparkling like winds on waves of ripe wheat.

Harry smiled at her fondly. “Yes but not all of them are safe. He was supposed to warn you. There are roped off portions and restricted areas here. You have to pay attention to the signs.”

Hermione pouted which was an expression he’d never seen on her face before and he had to chuckle at her.

“As we get older and go through school more and more of the library will open up for us. For now please be careful okay?”

She sighed. “Okay.” She struggled out of his grip and continued skipping down the aisles and Harry sighed and lightly jogged after her with Crookshanks by his side.

At nine pm the summer sky was darkening and Harry finally had to place a piece of parchment in the book Hermione was reading and close it in her face. “It’s nine Hermione. Your parents are going to kill me if I don’t get you home. You can read more tomorrow. Weren’t you gonna have me pack your library into your new bag tonight?” He slipped the book under his arm intending to check it out for her.

Hermione looked up at him dazed still lost in the distant past detailed in the book. “Right. Curfew. Parents. Bag.” She let him take her arm and lead her through the twisting maze to the entrance.

She came back to herself long enough to go through the checkout process and solemnly swear to return the book in the same condition to a stern man with blazing eyes. She placed it into the small pouch of her magic bag and then set the lock to mug as they ventured through the Leaky Cauldron and hailed the Knight Bus back to Crawley.

Once home Hermione suddenly came alive again. She chattered and extorted all about her adventures that day to her parents while Harry slipped into their kitchen to make dinner.

Her mother was impressed and amazed at her hair and questioned her about that while her father’s eyes grew fever bright as he listened with rapt attention to Hermione’s descriptions of the magnificent library. Once dinner was done Harry went in the living room to find it

empty of anything but Hermione's open bag. He smiled and chuckled under his breath. He knelt and put his head inside. "Dinner's ready!"

"What?" Hermione appeared at the bottom of the stairs followed by her parents.

"Oh you didn't have to make us dinner Harry." Dr. Helen said somewhat confused.

"No problem. I cooked for my family all the time. Since I was four in fact. I saw you had a nice bit of fish on the counter and set to work. My own recipe. It's rather tasty if you'd like come on up and eat." He leaned back as the Grangers clambered up the stairs.

Harry led the way back into the dining room where the table was set and the foods was steaming on platters and bowls. "Sorry if it was intended for something else but I didn't want to interrupt and I was hoping to beg a coat hook for another night. Figured I better earn my keep." He smiled at them. He'd shed his coat and rolled up his sleeves while cooking. Madonna and Delphi had retreated into his pack but Aqua and Marine were still hiding in the folds on his upper arms while Sang had tangled herself in his necklaces. Kip continued to sleep unnoticed around his waist.

They sat at the table and soon the family was enjoying the lightly fried and seasoned fish Harry had prepared with herbed and baked sweet potato fries. They were doubly surprised when Harry brought out strawberry shortcake for dessert.

"I didn't think we had strawberries." Mr. Granger said before digging in.

"They didn't. The market was out." They stopped together on the way home every day.

"I grabbed some from the Farmer's Bazaar in the Wizarding world yesterday." Harry mentioned in between bites. While not his favorite, treacle tart would always hold that position, strawberry shortcake was a frequent dish at the Dursley's house but not one Harry ever got to enjoy. Especially not with a scoop of vanilla ice cream like now.

"This is delicious Harry." Hermione patted her mouth clean before smiling at him.

"Thank you. After dinner I guess I get to haul all your books down into your bag? I don't suppose you'd let me just toss them down there then use reparo on any that are damaged?"

Hermione gave him a cold glare.

"I guess not." Harry laughed. He'd been teasing her. Of course he would never dream of harming a book in Hermione's presence.

It took several hours to carefully move Hermione's books into her pack. She used her recently emptied suitcases as well as her parent's suitcases to carefully move the books into the pack, unpack them as tall shaky towers and then return to pack more. Harry was impressed Hermione had accumulated this many books in only thirteen, nearly fourteen years.

On Harry's last journey down the steps he grabbed a couple of pillows from Hermione's bed and tossed them to the floor of the bag before transfiguring them into a couple of large mattress-like pillows. Before he could fall into one however Crookshanks immediately placed himself in the center of the one Harry intended to use.

Hermione turned around looking at the towering stacks of books with a small smile. "How should I arrange them? By subject? Author? Fiction and non-fiction? Magic and not magic?" She ran a hand through her wild curls and plopped down on the other mattress. "Oh thank you Harry." She said in a distracted fashion as she picked up a paperback from a nearby short tower. "Oh I've not read this one in years." She read the back and then flipped to the first page.

"I'm gonna go to bed Hermione. You want me to make you some tea before I go."

"Mmmm oh yes thank you Harry."

Harry smiled fondly and left a full pot of tea next to the fire. "Good night."

"Mmmhmmm night." She waved carelessly as she was consumed by the book.

Harry grabbed a couple more pillows and blankets from her room as well and brought them down. "Don't let her stay up too late Crookshanks. We have to go back to the alley tomorrow for her checkup and we'll be visiting the bookstore then as well." Harry gave the small tiger a scratch behind the ears to a welcome purr and then left for his own pack downstairs.

Chapter End Notes

Okay. I know the hair segment was huge.

I'm not a hair dresser but I do have calf length hair so as you might imagine hair is a huge area of interest for me. Writing this story actually led me to discover the Curly Girl Method and like three curly girl beauty gurus on youtube.

India Batson: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCufRrUeKGwD7JYv5NnoEFRA>

Penny Tovar (Also known as Curly Penny):

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD0XqR_pfjolXudnjkeHgIw

Bianca Renee: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLz6kJkVS952JgaXdo4-4BA>

Please check them out if you'd like some real world advice on curly hair. I hate, hate, hate it when authors cut or straighten Hermione's hair. I'm not trying to get into a debate on whitewashing or cultural ethnicity on here. I just wanted Hermione to embrace her natural hair, her natural beauty. And hair care is going to be something of an reoccurring thing in this story. A common area of interest between Harry and Hermione.

Sirius Black. Let me go ahead and address something right now. I've gotten a lot complains that I'm James bashing. The thing is Harry knows precisely nothing about his parents and this story is from Harry's perspective and the opinions he forms are based on the information he's getting. Sure we who have read all 7 books know about James'

kindness but Harry doesn't. He's never met Remus or Sirius. Until this chapter he didn't even know Sirius' name. All he's has to go on is Hagrid saying they were wonderful people and thus far he's run into two of the Marauder's victims. Not Snape, Snape is irrelevant right now. Harry's just met two people who happen to have come from "Dark" families that James and the others tormented at school. Sure James is a war hero but he died young and what most of his schoolmates remember is an arrogant jock with a cruel streak. Sure he died for his family but so did many men during the war. Mr. Goyle didn't want to talk about James and Chelsea would rather talk about Lily. She's not trying to talk bad about James. She's just dismissive of him because she felt he was wrong for her friend. Most of my mom's friends said very similar things about my father to me and he's a good man. Just...wait. The story isn't NEAR finished.

Ah Hermione in a library. Channeling myself here. As a serious bookworm...well. It's high time she started showing a few more of the common traits.

Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Hermione meets Butterfly and gets her vaccinations. Harry lays the groundwork.

Chapter Notes

From book 4-7 I read straight through in one sitting. Book hangovers are real people.

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

Chapter 18 - August 2nd, 1993

Hermione still hadn't emerged from her pack after her parents had left for work and Harry finally climbed into her bag with a plate of waffles and a glass of milk. He'd forgotten Crookshanks but easily transfigured a temporary dish from a bit of firewood to pour him out a bit of milk as well. The cat rubbed against his leg as Harry moved over to unearth Hermione from a tangle of pillows, blankets and books.

Her hair, unbrushed and unwashed retained the curls Chelsea had created yesterday but were a wild mass that nonetheless said Hermione to him to the best way. "Hermione? Wake up. I brought you breakfast."

"Hmmm..." Hermione slowly pushed herself up and looked at him sleepily. Fortunately book hangovers were quite receptive to warm food and milk.

"Finish that then get cleaned up and dressed. I have some tea downstairs for you. We're going to St. Mungos for your check up today remember?"

Hermione nodded sleepily.

"Your hair looks great. Remember not to wash or brush it or Chelsea will get after you."

Hermione glared at him. "How am I supposed to shower without getting it wet?"

Harry knelt behind her and took an elastic from his pocket. He gathered her hair up into a rough bun. "There you go. Remember Hermione. Anything I can do you can do better." He gave her a cheeky grin and pinched her cheek.

She swatted him away with a smile.

They met Chelsea first and Hermione got to experience floo travel for the first time. Her checkup was considerably quicker than Harry's had been and she left feeling rather queasy after taking all those potions. Harry let her and Crookshanks rest inside his pack while he picked up the rest of their basic school supplies. Just as well since he'd been trying to avoid Diagon's main drag as much as possible. This inevitably led him into the shadier parts of the alley.

Chelsea would surely disapprove especially with Sirius Black on the loose but Chelsea didn't know Harry was carrying over six basilisks either. With his hood up and Madonna and Delphi's red and purple heads peeking out and occasionally flicking a long tongue at anyone who got too close Harry didn't worry overly much about anyone giving him trouble.

Besides going to a variety of apothecaries to get the various alternatives to venom he needed allowed him to drop more than a few hints that he might be able to procure actual venom for those businesses. He'd gathered there was a bit of a Ministry embargo on such things and that his venom business wasn't going to be exactly legal in Great Britain. In fact a letter from Mediwitch Talia had flat out told him as much along with the information that her father could care less for the Ministry's restriction and was still interested in any snake venom he had available.

The only venom he had right now was basilisk. He was hoping to find some on the market somewhere and then sell it for less than that but being both rare and illegal Harry was quickly coming to the conclusion that he'd have to set his own price. Finally he'd written to ask Mediwitch Talia to ask how much her father would pay for a vial of basilisk venom. He was still waiting on a reply. Unfortunately hadn't seen her at St Mungos that day.

He was in a secondhand bookshop down a side alley off Knockturn when he felt Hermione trying to climb out of his pack. He put it on the ground and helped her out. Crookshanks hopped out after her and went to prowl along the bookshelves.

"Feeling better?"

"Yes. I found some sprite in your refrigerator. I hope that was okay?"

"Mi casa es su casa."

"Where are we?"

"Brooker's Books. It's a second hand bookstore. I got our potion ingredients and such already. I figured you want to pick out your own stationary. I was just browsing."

Hermione pulled an old book from the shelf that had clearly been published during the early days of the printing press. "Mum and Dad had started to put a damper on my book buying because I was simply running out of places to store them. Thank you again for the bag."

"You're welcome." Harry took the book Hermione was clearly interested in and tucked it under his arm with the rest of his own books which he took up to the counter. "Come on. I

want to get your robes before we head back to your place.” Crookshanks came out of the book with a book in his mouth and hopped up on the counter to place it on the stack as well. Harry paid for them all.

“My place. What about the library?” Hermione looked appalled that they wouldn’t be going to the library that day. That they wouldn’t go to the library everyday they visited the alley.

“It’s nearly six Hermione. You’ve slept the day away. In fact we should get something to eat before we see the seamstress. It’ll help settle your stomach. There’s a nice café up here.”

“Where are we? I don’t recognize this street. Well I’ve not recognized most the streets you’ve taken me down. Are you trying to avoid Diagon?”

“Technically the whole magical district of London is called Diagon Alley. The street that leads up to the bank is actually called Ragnuk Drive and is what we’re used to but there’s a good size town here and I’ve been trying to explore it.” Harry steered her into a café and claimed a table near the door. “And yes I’ve been avoiding the main street because at first I didn’t want to be recognized and mobbed then after this,” he lifted a red lock of hair, “because I found the rest of the alley to be more interesting.”

“Like the library.” Hermione pulled out the chair for Crookshanks and ordered a saucer of cream and a bit of tuna fish for the cat.

“Like the bookstores, the robe shops, the charm shops, apothecaries, the numerous specialty shops. Hermione we’re always escorted down Ragnuk Drive for one day and warned to never venture out of its brightly lit path but there’s so much more to the wizarding world that Ragnuk Drive and Hogwarts.”

Hermione was silent as she munched on her crisps. “In fairness we are children.”

Harry rolled his eyes. He hadn’t been a child since he was three and got a belt across the lip for crying. “We lack protection you mean. Now I have my…pets and you have Crookshanks. Let’s do some exploring.”

“Are you ever gonna tell me just where you were in Scotland?” She gave him a pointed look. “Exploring caves?”

“It involves my pets and not here in public.”

“I’m over that now. I mean I haven’t seen them even once. Obviously you have them well trained.”

“They’re actually quite intelligent. I think their Egglayer went mad with age and loneliness.”

“How many are there?”

“Six. Want me to introduce you?”

“Uh I may need a little more time.”

“Just Sang for now. She’s tiny.” Harry placed his hand out on the table and stroked one of the red rings on his hand. A tiny crested head peeked up at Hermione and flicked her tongue out.

Hermione froze before Crookshanks nuzzled her arm and she began to pet him automatically. “Wow she’s much smaller than I expected.”

“She’s definitely the tiniest. She’ll pretty much stay this small too. Her name is Sanguis for her color. I named her after the Spanish name for Captain Blood. Have you read it?”

“It’s one of Daddy’s favorite books. He’s fond of Sabatini being that our family is Italian-English.”

“Is that why you speak Italian?”

“Yes. Mother’s family is Greek-English. Hence the Greek. We love to vacation in France. I have some cousins there as well. So French.”

“Wow your family is from all over Europe.”

Hermione laughed. “Yes. My great grandparents brought my grandparents here when they were teens and their children went to Oxford and met and became dentists but much of the older generations actually retired to Greece and Italy. Just think if my parents had followed I’d be going to Beauxbatons Academy instead of Hogwarts.”

“Beauxbatons Academy?”

“It’s the French wizarding school. Hogwarts takes in students from Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales. Beauxbatons takes most of southwestern Europe while Durmstraug Institute takes mostly northeastern Europe. They’re much larger than Hogwarts to my understanding.”

“They’d have to be. I wonder how they feel about parselmouths.”

“Don’t even think about it Ha-.” Hermione stopped mid sentence as she remembered Harry didn’t want his name mentioned in public. “You are not leaving me alone in that big castle.”

“You’d have Ron.”

“The only thing Ron and I have in common is you.” Hermione reminded him dryly.

Harry started to form a rebuttal but stopping to think about it his friends were quite different. Sure he got along with them both but he found that he tended to get along with most people who liked him for him and not Harry Potter. “You’re both brave.”

“As is the rest of Gryffindor House and we’re just one big happy family aren’t we?” She was likely remembering the division in the house over Harry’s ability last year.

“By the way I have a nickname I’m using instead if you want to use that when you’re about to yell at me.”

“Oh? And I don’t yell at you.”

“Yeah when I went to get my robes I went to say my name but she didn’t want to know it cause I wanted special modifications for my pets. She gave me her nickname and suggested I make one for myself. It’s kind of embarrassing though. She said that while I was thinking of my name I was to imagine a little kid marching up and asking to be called that. If the thought made me laugh then I shouldn’t go with that name. Apparently her baby brother wanted to be called Dragon.”

“I see. What did you come up with?”

“Bas. Short for Basilisk. I figure I could grow into it and it’s not like I haven’t earned a name like that. I mean I slayed a 20 meter basilisk with a long sword then hatched it’s young as my pets.”

“Admittedly if you asked me to call you Basilisk I probably would have snorted. Bas sounds okay though.”

“Basilisk Mars. Cause the centuars always mention Mars whenever I run into them. Always. If someone hears you call me Bas and wants like a real name I’ll tell them my name is Bastian Marcum.”

Hermione frowned at him and furrowed her brow. “Are you anticipating needing alternate names a lot?”

“Hermione if you’d just yelled out ‘don’t you even think about it Bastian Marcum’ no one would have cared. If you’d done that same thing with my real name I’d probably get asked for an autograph and have to change my look again.”

She tilted her head and nodded. “Think I need one? Anyone from Hogwarts seeing us together would naturally assume who you were based on my presence. Are you going to change your look back to what it was before school starts to protect this persona you’re creating?”

Harry stalled. He hadn’t considered that. Once everyone at Hogwarts saw the eccentrically dressed red head with green eyes the jig was up. He wouldn’t be able to walk around the alley incognito anymore. “Damn. I didn’t think about that.”

Hermione smiled rolled her eyes and sighed at him. “That’s what I’m here for. To think when you don’t.”

“We’d have to change the way you look as well.”

“Whoa. I think I’ve changed plenty thank you very much.”

“Your hair yeah but you’re not going to purposely damage your hair again once we’re at school.”

Hermione pouted. She really loved her hair now. The wild, bouncy curls. It was even less care intensive so far. She’d got out of the shower with it only slightly damp, freed it from the

elastic band and resisted the urge to grab her brush. After she had gotten dressed it had settled down and she was amazed by how tame the dark brown locks were compared to the dry bushy mess her hair had been before. To the common observer her hair was still a large, wild, fly away mess but they hadn't seen her hair before she'd started taking care of it. "Maybe Chelsea has some suggestions?"

"Yeah. I mean we'll go back to see her in a couple of days anyway."

"Until then?"

"Until then you do look rather different but we need to come up with a new name for you. You need one before we go to see Butterfly."

"The seamstress' name is Butterfly?"

"Yup."

"Okay then."

"It's cause she raises them and wears butterfly motifs all the time. And she drinks only chai tea so Butterfly Chai. That's how she explained it to me."

"Hmmm... Well something to do with books...."

"And something to do with how scary smart you are."

"Thank you for that."

"Hmmm... Radiant Bilibophile?"

"Doesn't really roll off the tongue."

"Hmmm Mione... Morgana?"

"That's pretentious."

"Still you'd fit right in with Morgana and the like. Scary but brilliant. Powerful but humble. This all-consuming need for knowledge but you still retain the ability to utilize it."

Hermione blushed.

"I don't think finding you a name is going to be simple. All the really good names are of goddesses."

"Just don't use my real name and we'll figure it out as we go along."

"Okay."

They finished dinner and linked arms as they headed for the seamstress'. The sign over the door was simply a butterfly trailing silk. A chime sounded when they entered and Butterfly came out to greet them. "Bas. Is this your friend?"

“Yes. She needs Hogwarts robes and a few casual robes with your standard adjustments.”

Butterfly fluttered forward and cupped Hermione’s face. “I love your coloring. Are you tanned or is this your normal skin tone?”

“I’m a bit tan from the summer but I’m normally only a few shades lighter. I’m of Greek-Italian descent.”

“Woo lovely. Let’s do something vivid then. Follow me. Bas stay out here.”

“No problem.” Bas took a seat on a convenient couch and pulled out a book.

Chapter End Notes

So many of you have been wondering about the reaction to Harry's new look at Hogwarts. Sorry to disappoint you. More than just a fashion statement Harry's look is to help him be incognito. One flash from Colin's camera sold to the Prophet and the jig is up.

Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

trigger warning: books are mistreatment in this chapter but off screen.

Hermione finally meets the snakings and there's a discussion about the founders

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 19 - August 3rd, 1993

Hermione flatly refused any attempt to deflect her direction once she got to the alley that day but headed straight to Flourish and Blotts for their books. Harry browsed for his own quickly enough then told her he'd meet her at the library.

The Alley was crawling with Hogwarts students and he'd really rather not be seen. He found a few books on inherited divination tools and settled down near a fountain in the park surrounding the library to wait for his book obsessed friend to get finished. A quick charm on the fountain allowed his snakes to frolic unseen or at least unnoticed. They were getting quite cranky having to stay out of sight all the time but Harry knew Hermione was still a little on edge about them.

How Ron was going to take Harry's pets was something that worried the parselmouth. He idly wondered if Ron had returned from Egypt yet. He'd gotten a letter from him before he left but very little since then. He imagined he'd get another letter once the red head returned to England.

It was past noon when Harry caught sight of Hermione's vivid purple robe marching towards the library. Her hair was loose and wild and she looked like nothing less than a furious Greek goddess. He wondered why she was so mad and hoped it wasn't him. Crookshanks stalked after her.

She spotted him and marched over to him before handing him her bag and rapidly descending inside of it. Crookshanks followed. Harry looked down into the bag for several minutes before venturing a tentative "Hermione?"

"Not now. I'm too mad. Let me calm down and then we'll go get something to eat."

"Alright." Harry carefully closed the flap and looked over at his snakes. He shrugged and returned to his book. At least Hermione wasn't mad at him.

She finally emerged nearly an hour later looking a bit calmer. "I will not be returning to that bookstore."

Harry raised his eyebrows.

"Do you know what they did?"

He shook his head.

"They shoved all of my freshly purchased books into my bag without so much as a by your leave. The poor dears hit the floor in a horrible pile, pages went everywhere. Who could work at a bookstore and have such a complete disregard for books!" She said down with a huff.

"The nerve."

"What did you do with the Monster Book of the Monsters?" Harry had received the book as a gift the morning before he left the Chamber. It had been quite ferocious for about three seconds before coming upon Aqua and Marine. Now it sat quietly terrified on his shelf.

"The bookstore owner charged extra for a belt to tie it shut with."

"Maybe the librarian's here know how to tame them."

"What did you do with yours?"

"Introduced it to Aqua and Marine. It's been exceedingly good since then."

"Are those two of your snakes?"

"Yeah. Aquamarine was my mum's favorite color and it's the color they are. They were both a little nervous about water at first but now they love it more than the others do. They like to travel wrapped around my arms. They're guard snakes apparently which is kind of funny because both of them are rather timid."

Hermione shook her head. "It's hard to think about a snake having a personality." Her tummy rumbled and she stood up. "Let's go get a bite to eat and you can tell me all about them, your business and where you were in Scotland. I think I'm ready to talk about snakes."

Harry and put his book away. "Are you ready to see them? They're in the fountain behind you right now."

Hermione tensed before taking a deep breath and nodding tightly. She turned to face the fountain and waited.

Harry held out his arms and ignored Hermione's gasp as first Madonna and Delphi's large forms climbed up his arms and disappeared down his back. Aqua and Marine slipped under his sleeves. Kip wrapped himself around Harry's waist and finally Sang slithered between his fingers. Harry turned to see Hermione was breathing slowly and deliberately as Crookshanks twined around her ankles. "You okay?"

She took a deep breath and nodded. “Yeah. You said they were babies. I didn’t expect them to be so...big.”

“Madonna will get as big as her Egglayer. She’s the big red one. Delphi’s won’t tell me what her specialty is. They all have one. Bred Basilisks get special abilities based around their Creator’s need while a created basilisk is just a really big, super venomous snake with death eyes and an impenetrable hide.”

“Oh is that all? And bred basilisks are all that plus more?”

“Yup.” Harry grinned. If Hermione was snarky to him then she must be feeling better. “Let’s go to this Chinese place I know. There’s an ice cream place next to it where we can have dessert afterwards.”

“So you’re starting a black market venom trade and you’ve spent most of the summer in the Chamber of Secrets.” Hermione stated dryly. “Bas you led an interesting life.”

“You can’t tell me you’re not curious about seeing the waterways of Hogwarts?”

“Doesn’t it smell down there?”

“A little. Mostly of algae and damp and earth. Not what you’re thinking of. The place is so huge I’m fairly sure most of the waste is disbursed.”

“You don’t drink the water do you?”

“I drink from the water pump in Salazar’s kitchen but I found a spell to detect water purity. It’s fine.”

“I suppose it wouldn’t be so bad to get a look at the library as long as a muggleborn like me won’t go up in flames from daring to trespass in Salazar’s realm.”

“Yeah about that.” Harry winced. “Salazar kind of had a point.”

Hermione leaned back and widened her eyes.

“Not like that but I read some of his journals. Imagine you as you are now in the year 1,000. You’re not a noble. You’re a commoner. You’ve probably been working since you were five or six and keep in mind that anything funny or weird happening to you could and did get you burned at the stake as a witch. As happy a picture as History of Magic tries to paint on the witch burnings these were untrained terrified children. If, IF, the Founders found you in time and brought you to the castle they were basically working with a blank slate. You wouldn’t be able to read or write. You would have just been stolen away from your family because calmly explaining to muggles that their child was magical was incredibly dangerous. Helga was nearly killed numerous times because of that. Then you’re in a new place with people doing sorcery around you which would have literally been beaten into you was the work of the devil. Every muggleborn they took in was a ticking time bomb waiting to happen. Salazar

caught a lot of flak from the other founders for forcibly mind blasting the ones in his house. He details going to their minds and removing all the religious rhetoric. He also flatly refused to let any of his muggleborn students return to their families for fear of them leading the muggles to them.”

Hermione frowned. She knew too much of muggle history to not know that Harry was right. A thousand years ago magical children like her and Lily would have been part of the unwashed masses. Her innocently summoning her soft puppy book as a child would have resulted in her death.

“Salazar himself was actually a half-blood.”

“What?”

“Salazar’s mother was part of an extremely inclusive cult of parselmouths who lived in hiding from the Christians. I mean snakes and magic? A young muggle lord rode through the forest where she was gathering herbs and raped her. She raised Salazar to hate all muggles because of that. Salazar grew to be a powerful half-blood and eventually as the cult died out or became squibs he became responsible for all those that were left. He took them in at Hogwarts and they helped build the school. Their history is actually depicted along the walls of the waterway in mosaics even if I hadn’t read their history more in depth at the library here and in Salazar’s private journals.”

“So what are you saying?”

“Salazar was a product of his time. They all were. Rowena didn’t accept students unless they could already read or write which means she didn’t take in a lot of muggleborns either. If she did they were almost exclusively nobles. She was extremely picky about the cleverness and intelligence found in her students and completely disdainful of Helga taking in just everyone. She fought with Salazar about the choice of students because they often wanted the same ones.”

Hermione looked at him strangely. “You learned all this from Salazar’s journals. Can I read them?”

“Sorry they’re all in parselscript. Which does not translate easily. Trust me. There’s nuances to it.” He wiggled his fingers in a wavy fashion.

“Tell me more about the Founders. I notice you don’t refer to them by last name anymore.”

“Nah I fell into the habit of referring to them like Salazar does. He hated Godric. For a variety of reasons. Godric was a noble, a muggleborn, with loving parents who donated the school grounds to them. He swaggered about all power but no finesse. He took in the brave, the bold, the brawlers. He was completely fearless and thereby ignorant to many of the very real fears Salazar held about their position. He’d been born and raised in privilege and when warned that the muggles might raise an army against the school laughed it off and declared he would face them all sword in one hand, wand in the other.”

“He was very noble. Heroic.”

“Yeah but he stole muggleborn children too. If they were commoners he just snatch up the child without so much as a by your leave. If they were nobles he take the time to explain using the force of his charisma and strength to bend them to his will. Salazar says he had a trick to make himself literally glow with golden light. He also caroused a lot. Salazar claims half his house were his own bastards.”

“I’m almost afraid to ask. Helga?”

“Helga was an orphan who was raised in an abbey who saw her miraculous healing abilities as a gift from God. She was to be ordained as a nun until the abbey got new leadership. Salazar doesn’t know exactly what happened because asking always made Helga start to cry and even he wasn’t so mean as to look into her mind and make her relive it. There was something about the other sisters hiding her from the new abbot until a magical child came seeking succor and finding flame. An older witch named Agnes found her purifying the water in a well and saved her before the townsfolk could stone her to death. She took her under her wing and taught her midwifery. She recognized her immense power and together they took in and raised many orphans both magical and not for years. Godric inherited a small basic castle and invited Helga and Rowena to join him to make a school. Rowena brought Salazar with her recognizing they needed more power to achieve what they wanted.”

“No downside to Helga?”

“Besides her naiveté nearly getting her killed those innumerable times I talked about? Before she and Agnes lived in a large forest that helped form a natural barrier against muggles and charmed to only let through children. Hogwarts was too isolated to attract new students to just stumble up on them. So she frequently went around visiting towns and trying to gently talk parents into letting their magical children get an education. Godric, Rowena and Salazar were constantly rushing in and saving her. Not that she wasn’t an incredibly powerful sorceress but apparently she never used her magic to harm another living being in her entire life. It just never occurred to her. Even in the face of an angry mob that had gotten so far as to tie her to a stake she was still attempting to forgive them and convince them with words to let her go. Salazar came in, grabbed her and the children and then once he’d gotten them all to safety went back and razed the town to the ground. Despite this Salazar sincerely loved Helga. She was the only one he allowed to know he was still in the castle after his and Godric’s infamous duel and states several times he would have married her if she’d have had him.”

“Wow. I loved to see the look on the current Slytherin’s face if they knew that. You should write all this down Har-Bas. People would love this insider look into the Founder’s lives and histories. I realize a direct translation would be difficult but so worth it. Hogwarts: A History talks about the founding and the building, the rules, etc but it goes into the individual histories of the founders very little.”

“I’ll try. For you.”

“Thank you. Now about that ice cream.”

Harry eventually left Hermione in the library reading with strict instructions to Crookshanks to see her home safely. For now he was off to catch the evening train back to Scotland. They

agreed to meet up at the ice cream shop in two weeks.

Chapter End Notes

Remember I said Hermione's doing some things in the background to help her get over the snakes? It's only been three days. She's not over it. She's trying to be brave and supportive.

What's she's trying to do is something called desensitization. Where as by small repeated exposure to the thing you fear in a controlled environment you can slowly overcome your fear of a thing. It's how I got over my fear of spiders and zombies. However it is an on going conscious process. Just to make this clear. Hermione is not magically over her trauma right now. I hope I showed that. She's trying to be brave and she does trust Harry has control but she's still very scared.

There will be more later about each snakling's individual specialty.

There's a lot in this story that's about perspective and Harry is getting a lot of exposure to Salazar's perspective. Doesn't mean it's right or wrong. It may look like I'm Godric bashing *rolls eyes* but remember Salazar hated Godric so of course he says bad things about him.

For Rowena I'm thinking Dr. Beverley Hofstadter. Helga I picture Jane Bennet.

One reviewer mentioned hybrid vigor. Oh yes. VERY much so. Salazar here, but canonically some of the most powerful wizards and witches we see are half-bloods. Harry, Tom, Albus, and Minerva were all half-bloods.

Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

Letters and translations

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 20 - August 4th -15th , 1993

Harry got more and more of the waterways fixed and started finding ways up into the castle proper. Hogwarts and her walls that pretended to be doors actually turned out to really be doors sometimes that were waiting on specific triggers. A hissed word and Harry could walk through the door and into the Great Hall which Salazar probably found quite convenient. Harry found it less so since it almost resulted in Hagrid and Professor Dumbledore seeing him.

He also had a way into the Slytherin common room, the Slytherin dorms and frightening enough Snape's private quarters as he was Head of Slytherin House. He also found a way into the Hufflepuff common room, dorms, and Head of House quarters. Which made sense as Salazar remained friends with Helga after everything was said and done.

For Hermione's sake Harry started trying to translate Salazar's journals starting from around the time they started work on the castle. It was as slow and arduous as he expected. Reading Parselscript and writing English gave him a splitting headache. He had trouble not writing parselscript while reading it so at first he'd copied a whole page into parselscript without realizing it. Once it was in English it was difficult to read as Harry choose to write the nuances out for each word. He sent Hermione the small amount he had been able to translate.

Hermione,

I've been working on this translation. Gives me a splitting headache to think in both English and Parseltongue at the same time. Maybe it's easier for someone like you who already knows so many languages but Parseltongue is a magical language. I didn't learn it. I just know it. So translating parselscript into English is difficult. This is a single page from early on when they were gathering students.

5th of Aprilis 1002

Ro-cold-wee-heart-na-bitch stole-mine-mine-mine Em-snakeblooded-ma-girlchild-mine-mine-mine.

6 th of Aprilis 1002

Hel-angel-ga-light created my favor-most treasured-rite sweet leaf drink to calmcalmcalm myself-Salazar. God-arrogantfool-ric-hatehimhatehim laughed-boasted-humiliated me-Salazar. Spoiled-ruined-trashed Sweet Hel-nice-ga-sweet gift. Hatehimhatehim.

9 th of Aprilis 1002

Found-mine-mine-mine slate-stone boychild quietquiet -hurtpainfear-won't speak. Boychild will be well, will be strong I'll heal-makewhole boychild. Keep-mine safesoundprotected.

Good luck. That's the best I could do. Some of the other texts are a bit easier because they're not so personal. Like this from the Care of Basilisk scroll:

Singsoftsong of hatching. Warm egg-creator near-soon the light-soon the air-tasty things-venomhot-shellsoften thinthin singsoftsong of hatching

Singsoftsong of hatching eggs soften tinysnaklings knowresonant with Creatormaker.

See that's much easier.

I continue to repair the waterways. I wonder if anyone above will notice a difference. Maybe Myrtle's toilet will stop overflowing. The system of tunnels down here connect to numerous secret passages. Too little to late but I found a way into the Slytherin house quarters and the Hufflepuffs too. Nothing into Gryffindor or Ravenclaw yet. The schematics aren't the easiest thing to read especially as I go up the levels of the castle. Hogwarts is as expansive under the ground as it is above it.

Have you been reading your Divination book? I inherited my mom's cards and runes. I can't wait for runes by the way. But the book is...less than I expected. Not to sound too much like you but I think I'll pick up so additional references when we meet up at the alley.

Is Crookshanks taking good care of you? Reminding you to go home and eat regularly? He's a good familiar. I'm sure he's keeping you safe.

Your friend,

Bas

Bas,

Crookshanks is taking excellent care of me. Somehow he can tell time and when I stay too late at the library he simply sits in the middle of my book and refuses to move. If I try to resist that he nibbles on my fingers or even my face until I start moving.

I'm still reorganizing my books but I kind of love it. Just having a room full of MY books is so soothing. When I don't go to the library I've been going through the secondhand book stores. I agree. The given text for divination is just terrible. It's misleading and barely coherent. However in the back of our runes book there are suggestions for supplementary texts one of which is reading runes for divination by Lisa Peschel A Practical Guide to Reading Runes. Do pick it up when you're in town next. It's quite the good book.

Beyond secondhand book stores I've also found a new bookstore some seven streets behind that terrible Flourish and Blotts. It's not the best location but with my hood up and Crookshanks prowling beside me no one has given me any trouble yet. There's a lot more variety there and I've made a friend in the shopkeep Mr. Iron. He makes the most wonderful tea blends that he also sells and there's these lovely little tables in back where you can sit and read and have your tea. I've met lots of elderly witches and wizards here as well and it's wonderful to just chat with them. To be honest I've not told them I'm a muggleborn. I'm worried they'll treat me differently if they knew. Mr. Iron knows. He won't tell me how only that it's not obvious. Whenever I slip up in conversation he always comes to my rescue.

I've given them the name Carmen. From the Italian Goddess of spells Carmenta. Carmen means spell or song or oracle and is also the origin of the word charm which I excel in. Mum wants me to have something Greek as well but everything Greek is so well known. I might just go with something as simple as vivlío which is Greek for book. Carmen Vivlío...Charm book...I like it. What do you think?

As for your translations I'm sorry it gives you such a headache. Maybe instead of a direct translation you could read it and then tell me a story about what you read. Then I could transcribe it into something a little more readable. The song actually sounds really nice. When next we meet I'd love to hear you sing it. It occurs to me I've not actually listened to you speak Parseltongue outside of the dueling club.

Sincerely,

Carmen Vivlío

Carmen,

I love the name Miss I scored 120 on the charms exam. It suits you. Italian goddess of spells. I've never heard of her. Which in a way makes it perfect. And Vivlío? For book. Nice although now I wonder what the Greek word for library is? I picked up an English to Greek dictionary to help me at least figure out what the title to some of these old scrolls are. It's not

really helped so far. Ancient Greek and current Greek must be as different as Modern English and Old English. Vivliothíki is Greek for library. Which I'm sure you already knew. It's kind of a mouthful. I like Vivlío much better. Honestly when I came up with Mars it wasn't cause of the centaurs. It was because I love Mars Bars. It was only afterwards I remembered the centaur thing.

What are we gonna call Ron? He wants to be a Keeper and he loves the Chudley Cannons...I don't know. Ron's world revolves around Quidditch and Chess and us and his family. What about something with Knight in it. Like how he sacrificed himself in first year? Knight Keeper? No. Oh well. We'll have to think of something later.

Good Crookshanks. Tell him I promise him a mouse when next we meet. You're out of luck Carmen. Together Crookshanks, the Red Knight and I shall pull you from your books and keep you hostage until you've eaten and drank and slept. You know we love you Hermione. If you must do our thinking for us you must at the very least let us take care of you in return. Especially with your twelve classes this year.

Sure I'll tell you all the stories about the founders you want as long as I don't have to do any more direct translations. Do you know how many headache potions have snake venom in them? Don't look it up I'll tell you. All of them. I tried to kind of alter one but let's just say my brewing results weren't drinkable and leave it at that.

I planned to talk to Snape about my mum this year anyway. I hope it goes well because I'm also going to ask him about how to brew a headache potion that doesn't use snake venom. He's a potion master surely he'll know how to do it. I'll give him a whole vial of basilisk venom for free if that's what it takes.

The mediwitch with the potion master father finally got back to me. Morgana bless Hedwig. I don't how she's getting letters for me because other owls surely can't find me at all. Apparently his exact words were "I'd give my left arm for basilisk venom." When asked to put a definite price in galleons though he was flummoxed. Apparently he's going to write some other potion masters in countries where basilisk venom is actually available to try and figure out what I should sell this for. For all the work he's doing I might give him an extra vial for free. I mean it's not like I haven't got gallons of the stuff laying around.

Love,

Bas

Chapter End Notes

Lisa Peschel A Practical Guide to Reading Runes is a real book and a excellent resource

I hope everyone likes Hermione's name.

In ancient Roman religion and myth, Carmenta was a goddess of childbirth and prophecy, associated with technological innovation as well as the protection of mothers and children, and a patron of midwives. She was also said to have invented the Latin alphabet.

Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 21 - August 16th -17th , 1993

Bas was trying and failing to teach himself knife fighting. He'd taken a dagger from the room with the tables and was trying to follow the Middle English instructions he'd found. So far it was not going well. He could kill some of the waterway rats but he could kill them just as well with a spell now. He thought about giving up a dozen times but given how much time he spent reading he figured he better follow his own advice to Carmen. If nothing else his dagger practice was good exercise. He was certainly wet with sweat after he'd gone through the routine as he read it.

He'd finally figured out from Salazar's journals just what the room with the other pentagram laden tables were for when he got to a journal detailing Salazar setting up his own chamber. One table was for alchemy. Which Harry understood to be slightly different from potions. The other was for enchanting hence all the weapons around it. Harry wasn't prepared to use either of these tables but it was nice to know what they were at least.

He thought he might have found a few books on the topic but they were written in Old English which he was still having a lot of trouble with. He only thought they had to do with Alchemy and Enchanting because he found some of the symbols on the table in a few scrolls.

The ritual room he still avoided. He knew rituals were frowned upon in the wizarding world. And that was it. That was simply all he knew about rituals. He made a mental note to try and find a history book on rituals or something and ignore the room until then besides routine cleaning.

After getting out of the big stone tub he cast a tempus with a date. Underground with no sunlight he was often surprised by how quickly the days past. He ate when he was hungry. Slept when he was tired. The days just slipped by. He was surprised to find it was just after one o'clock in the morning of August 17th and resolved to go to bed so he could go find Carmen later that day. They needed to go see Chelsea before school and hopefully see if Ron was back in England yet or not.

Bas was doubly glad of the expansion charms down the back of his robe as he climbed out on to the cliff side opening Hedwig had found. Madonna was nowhere near the size of her Egglayer but she was as big as the boa constrictor Harry had accidentally released before first year. He had no idea how much she weighed but she was bigger than all the other snakes combined. Delphi was still the next biggest snake but she was only half Madonna's size. Aqua and Marine were long and thick enough to rest their heads on the backs of his hands

and curl their bodies halfway up his arms. Kip seemed to get progressively longer but remained thin. Sang claimed she was growing but Bas couldn't tell.

Combined they were all quite heavy and would have been extremely awkward to move around if Bas hadn't spent the last month getting used to it. Still he was glad when Madonna slid the bulk of her length into the pouch at his back. He didn't mind lifting her and playing with her but carrying her was a little rough even on his surprisingly strong frame.

Bas flew to the train station without even bothering with his invisibility cloak. During his few trips to Hogsmeade he noticed a lot of people flew around on broomsticks. Being an entirely magical village there was very little worry about the statue of secrecy here.

After catching the morning train he headed into Diagon hitting up the Farmer's Bazaar and refreshing his supplies. While he could get a lot of stuff at the Eton market there were a few more unusual spices, fruits and vegetables he could only get in London. He also popped out into muggle London to get some more Mars Bars as well. Chocolate frogs were great, but the longed-for candy of his pre-Hogwarts years remained his favorite.

He debated mentally on whether to head to the library to see if Carmen was there first or to try and find this bookstore she liked. He was also on the fence about looking up rituals before or after he found Carmen. Before and he could avoid a lecture. After and he could get some help finding something.

Based on where he was in the alley he decided to try and find Carmen's bookstore. She hadn't given him the name of the establishment but seven streets behind Flourish and Blotts he looked around the dark narrow street and decided to walk in and ask someone.

He entered a shop with the incense so thick he almost started to cough. A quick air freshening charm later and he made his way deeper in. Starry veils and crystal pendants hung from the ceiling catching and concealing the candlelight. "Excuse me?"

"Come to have your fortune read?" A woman with ruby red lips and smooth black hair held up in an intricate bun by painted sticks shifted through the veils. Her makeup was upswept in a dramatic cat-eye and the rouge on her cheeks highlighted her cheekbones making her look almost snakelike in Bas's opinion. Delphi stirred on his shoulder and he felt her head along his jaw as she peeked out.

"No thank you. I'm looking for--"

"Christmas presents for your friends. A deck of tarot cards for each of them taking Divination this year. Gifting a tarot card deck is a beautiful tradition that in some cases may hold more power. It is a very thoughtful gift and not one even your frugal friend can protest." She guided him over to a table holding a variety of decks. Harry had read about the gift of cards being better when he was looking for information about his inherited set.

The bright orange deck caught his eye immediately and he picked it up to look through the cards. Sure enough it was a quidditch themed set. The coins were snitches. The Wands were broomsticks. The Swords were Beater bats and finally the cups were quaffles. This was the perfect gift for Ron.

“And may I suggest this one for your curly haired friend?” She held out a deck depicting famous witches, demi-goddesses, witches and sorceresses through the ages. The artwork was exquisite and Bas smiled to see Carmenta was the Empress card.

He nodded. “Thank you. I don’t suppose...” He waited to see if she would cut him off again but she merely smirked at him and raised one eyebrow. “..I have my mother’s cards. From reading her journals I discovered that they were her mother’s mother’s mother’s and she didn’t know if it went further back than that. Someone told me inherited cards are more powerful.”

“Indeed. Is your family known for its seers?”

“I don’t know. My mother was muggleborn. I was surprised to find the cards were that old.”

“Hmmm....follow me.” The lady led Bas further into the shop.

He wondered what her name was.

“Calypso. I do not share your friend’s humility. Now let’s see these cards.” She brought out a beautiful silver bowl and poured pure clear water into it.

Bas reached into his pocket and pulled free the satin pouch holding his mother’s deck. He loosened the drawstring and pulled them out.

“Oh beautiful. That is a very old deck indeed but it has been kept in wonderful condition. The bag I believe is enchanted?”

“I noticed some runes along the stitching. I don’t know if my mother did that or if they’ve always been in this pouch.”

She nodded. “Fan the cards then swept them through the air above the bowl so that the air disturbs the water. We shall see if we may see the owners before your great great grandmother.”

The water in the bowl swirled and Bas felt Delphi move up to lay her head against his temple level with his eyes. Then he saw the images forming in the bowl. A tiny girl waiting on her 11 th birthday for a letter that did not come. Taken to an orphanage and left with only the clothes on her back and her cards in her pocket. The cards being shuffled by her mother frowning at the result as she rubbed her pregnant tummy. A smiling woman doing a reading for frowning man. This image was repeated over and over as the woman changed only subtly as did those they were telling the fortune to. Occasionally the cards were even held by a man. Bas noticed the surroundings seemed older and older. Finally a woman with a delicate paintbrush laying all the cards out making them with careful strokes while the girl from before watched with bright green eyes. The image faded and Bas could only see his own green eyes reflected back in the pool of water.

“Impressive. That is a very old deck indeed. Your great great grandmother and the next two generations must have been dormant until your mother regained the family magic. This is not uncommon. Some families go dormant for a time before springing forth a new.”

“Wow.” Bas closed the cards neatly and put them back in their pouch. Delphi returned to her usual position on his shoulder but kept her head along his jaw.

“I dare say the deck will serve you quite well Basilisk Mars.”

He looked up at her surprised but she only smiled.

“8 galleons, 13 sickles and 24 knuts if you please.”

Bas filled out the checkbook and he slipped the decks he would give as gifts in his other pocket. “Thank you.”

“You’re quite welcome.” She caught his chin in own hand and looked into his eyes. “Come see me again next summer. We’ll talk more then.”

“Yes Ma’am.”

Bas started to leave when he remembered his original reason for coming in. As he started to turn Calypso’s voice came out to him from deeper in the shop. “Mr. Iron’s bookstore is three doors down. There are iron bars over the windows in patterns you will find familiar. Do not touch them.”

“Thank you.”

Bas did recognize the pattern of iron covering the bookstore’s windows. It resembled some of the patterns he’d seen this summer along the waterways and in Salazar’s library. He guessed this shop had been here a very long time. He was careful to only place his hand on the wooden door when he entered.

The shop looked remarkably small at first glance but Bas knew better than to assume that was so. It was warm and bright inside with the fragrant aroma of freshly brewed tea in the air. The paneling was mostly bright wood and despite the dingy light outside the lights from the enchanted windows inside was a bright yellow to the happiness of several plants placed around the shop. Walking further in he glanced down the bookshelves to see them stretch out of sight.

“Yeah this is definitely Carmen’s kind of place.” He said with a smile to the proprietor an older man with long brown hair pulled back in a ponytail with a leather strap. He was reading a magazine called The Quibbler upside down.

“You must be Bas.”

“Yes sir. Mr. Iron I presume? Is Carmen here? I lost track of the days.”

“She is. She always stops here for breakfast before heading to the library for the day. Quite the studious young woman. Ah here comes her keeper.”

Crookshanks had apparently heard Bas from the back of the shop where Bas could now see a good sized café. He hopped up on the counter and walked over to put his massive paws on Bas' chest and nuzzle his chin.

“Hey Crookshanks. Been taking good care of our girl I hear. I picked out a nice juicy mouse for you earlier. He's under a glass on my table. I didn't know whether you wanted to hunt him down yourself or not.”

Crookshanks purred audibly. He knocked his head against Bas' hand and hopped down off the counter to return to whence he came.

“I assume that means follow. Nice to meet you Mr. Iron.”

“Tea?”

“Yes please. Do you have chai? I've been wanting to try it.”

“One traditional chai coming up.”

Bas followed Crookshanks down one long aisle and around two corners before he hopped up on the table where Carmen was reading.

Her curly hair was loose and everywhere the curls catching the light with glints of bronze among the sea of rich brown curls. She was wearing her yellow sleeveless robe that Butterfly had called a stola and looked lovely.

Crookshanks pawed at his bag and he opened it up for the cat. “Try not to break the glass but if you do don't cut your feet.”

Crookshanks gave him a look resembling Hedwig went Bas said something obvious before hopping inside to hunt.

“Hmmm...?” Carmen looked up at Bas and smiled before marking her place. She stood and hugged him before stepping back to lightly whack him on the side of the head. “You were supposed to be here two days ago.”

“I lost track of the days. I'm sorry.”

She didn't seem all that mad as she packed up her books. “It's alright. I figured as much being underground as you are but do try to keep track a bit better. School starts in little over two weeks.”

Bas tilted his head to the side. “You don't sound happy about that.”

“Oh I am but it's been such a nice summer. Learning about the library and the alley. I almost don't want it to end.” She slipped some of the books into her bag and two others she stacked on top of the table. She tapped her tea cup to reheat it just as a small blonde woman brought a large clay mug of milky brown tea from which came the smell of cinnamon, ginger and star anise.

“Mmm thank you.” He took in the aroma for a moment before giving it a sip. Butterfly was on to something. This was delicious.

“Chai?”

“MmmHmm.”

“It’s good. I tried it as well. I found a book on tassomancy. That is reading tea leaves. And another with some recipes for making your own teas. It’s not as good as Mr. Iron’s but I’m working on it.”

“I love to cook. Feel free to make use of my kitchen if you want.”

“I’ll take you up on that once we’re at Hogwarts. For now I’ve been experimenting at home.”

“I found a copy of Salazar’s favorite tea. It’s delicious. You can’t even taste all the basilisk venom in it.”

“Bas!”

“He created it because Godric was notorious for stealing other people’s tea cups and drinking them. If Godric hadn’t had a phoenix the last cup he stole from Salazar might have been the last cup of tea he had ever.”

Carmen sighed. “I do hope you’re being careful with that stuff. What if you spilled some on your workspace and I cut my hand while chopping ingredients and some of it got inside. I’d be dead before you could do anything about it.”

“As if you’d ever start brewing without scouring the workspace. May I remind you I’m a neat freak as well?”

“Still.”

“I don’t own a single ounce of goblin silver I assure you though if you ever come in contact with the Sword of Gryffindor be careful.”

“Goblin silver?”

Bas looked at her surprised as he drained the cup of tea. “It always amazes me when I know anything you don’t.”

“I don’t know everything.”

“Still surprised. I suppose I do pick up odd tidbits of information in places you’re not likely to end up. Goblin silver repeals anything that might harm it like rust but absorbs anything that could make it stronger like venom.”

“Fascinating.” She considered that for a few minutes. “You’d think we’d learn that in History of Magic what with all the droning Professor Binns does about the goblin rebellions.”

“You’d think we’d learn a lot of things in History of Magic that we don’t. I think I’ve learned more history this summer than anything Binns has taught in the last two years. Think I can write my OWLs on the Founders and Parselmouths?”

“What would they grade it against?”

“True.”

They walked into the salon where Chelsea worked. Carmen explained that she’d actually made an appointment this time. “It’s been nice that she was able to see us on no notice last time but we should really be more considerate.”

“But I’m late by a couple of days. How could you make an appointment?”

“Oh I kept the original appointment and we basically just talked about Scottish weather and hair and about what we wanted done. I read in the leaves that a friend would disappoint me very soon and assumed you’d lost track of time. I made another appointment then.”

“Sounds like you’re gonna like Divination.”

“The more people I meet the more I find that nearly everyone in the world uses it constantly. Almost without thinking of it. Even my parents.”

“Really?”

“Yes. My mum counts magpies which is a kind of divination called Ornithomancy. Whenever my dad is having trouble making a decision he will pull a book from the shelf and open it to a random page and point with his eyes closed to a random line. He said his grandmother always did that and I do too because they do but it’s actually called Bibliomancy.”

“Wow. When I said get some supplemental material I didn’t think you’d go out and find every kind of divination there is but I should have known better.”

Carmen threw him an irritated glare. They were waiting until Chelsea was ready for them. They could see her with another client though she’d waved when they’d first came in.

Bas smiled at her to help remove the sting. He’d only been joking and he hoped she knew that.

She relaxed but suddenly looked around a bit alarmed. “Where’s Crookshanks?”

“In my bag. I picked out a mouse for him. I imagine he’s caught it by now and is giving himself a post victory wash. He knows how to get out of my bag when he’s done.”

“Okay. I must have been reading and missed that.”

“Mr. Iron told me he’d been taking care of you.”

“You all make me sound like an idiot who needs a keeper.”

“Not at all but you must admit you can get rather focused when reading or researching something. We get it. You love to read. There’s nothing wrong with that. It’s certainly more useful than any of my or Ron’s hobbies.” Bas frowned. She seemed awfully touchy today for some reason.

Carman seemed mollified for the moment. “Have you heard from him?”

“Nope. I assume he’s still in Egypt.”

“I sent him a letter to meet at the Ice Cream parlor on Ragnuk Dr on August 30 th .”

“What time?”

“Around noon.”

“Okay then. If I catch the morning train I should have plenty of time to get here. Then if your parents don’t mind I’ll spend the night with you and take the Express to school like usual.”

“That sounds like a plan. Look it’s our turn.”

They passed a tall elegantly dressed blonde with clear silver eyes. She reminded Bas of someone but he wasn’t quite sure who.

“Hello there chickadees.” She gave each of them a hug. “Have a seat Honey we’ll do you first. I’m thinking something sedate and practical during the school year and then during the summer you can be the goddess you are.” Chelsea smiled at Carmen and pulled out a variety of hair toys to pull Carmen’s hair back and control it. “These are basic trinkets with only a few charms on them to hold the hair in place but I have a friend that can do more intricate pieces for you. Come by next summer and we’ll make a day of it. There’s not enough time before school starts now.”

Once Chelsea was done Carmen looked, well, Greek. There were a variety of golden combs, nets and headbands to keep her hair neat around her face and contained in a confusing wrap of braids and rolls in the back. She looked much more like a prim little lady now than she did an errant young goddess reading in the sunlight this morning at the bookstore.

“Now you dear. I hate it but I suppose we’re gonna turn you back into James Potter aren’t we?”

Harry sighed. “Is there any other way? Any spell I can do that’ll keep my hair this way and just conceal it during the school year?”

“There is but you’d have to reapply it after ever wash day. It’s also a pretty advanced set of charms sweetie.”

“I’m pretty good at charms and Hermione’s amazing. If you teach it to both of us and we do our wash days in my bag then she could reapply it until I learned it.” Harry begged opening his green eyes wide.

Chelsea pursed her mouth and twisted it to the side thinking. “Okay. Basically we’re going you give you what is called a sew in or a weave. First spell will braid your hair tight to your head. Then you’ll put on the wig and the second spell will sew it into the braids. As I’ve mentioned to Carmen I’ve already got you stretching wash days but when the Scottish winter sets in you’ll be doing a lot less washing and a lot more deep conditioning to keep you hair healthy. The weave isn’t a terrible idea for this because it will protect your hair.”

“Especially during Quidditch matches I imagine. Angelica always rebraids her hair before and after a match.” Carmen commented.

“Okay. Here’s the spell. Watch closely.” Chelsea raised her wand and made two quick curves making more of an upside down pear shape than a circle then making a spiral moving inward to the center of the pear. “Succingunt Stricta.” Harry’s red hair, which he’d been surprised to find was even growing out red instead of black, lifted up to float gently about his head before tight dutch braids started forming just behind his ears. It didn’t quite hurt but felt very odd. Much quicker than Harry imagined it would take if Chelsea did it by hand the hair was braided into increasingly smaller circles close to his head. The edges of his hair were left alone, mostly small baby hairs.

Chelsea then retrieved a short black wig from the back of the salon along with a mannequin head. “It’s a crime to do this to such a good wig.” With a sigh she made several sharp flicks and slashes with her wand until the hair was sticking up in every direction. She then slipped a soft cap over Harry’s braids and then covered his head with the wig. “Last spell is “Capillum Abiciendi and you’ll need a spool of black thread. She put out a spool and held it in her other hand. She said the incantation and then made several rapid stabs with her wand directly into Harry’s head like her wand was the needle on a sewing machine. The thread lifted and spun out to sew the wig into Harry’s braids.

She then raked her hands through the hair making it stand on end even more. Even without the glasses the transformation was remarkable. Where before Basilisk Mars had sat in the chair now there was Harry Potter wearing a ridiculous amount of jewelry and a strange flaring robe. Harry noted that the messy black hair made him look sallow and pale and after having them be tucked into his long locks for over a month he now had to wonder if his ears had always been that big.

He swallowed hard. Glancing at Chelsea and Carmen didn’t help they were both looking at his reflection with a cringe. “Does it look as bad as I think it does?”

Chelsea nodded solemnly but Carmen tried to smile. “No you look...just how I remember you looking. Do you still have your glasses? We could put plain glass in them. Maybe the glasses will help.”

Chelsea transfigured some of the black hair she’d cut off the wig without being asked into the same huge coke bottle glasses Harry had walked in here with several weeks ago. The glasses at the very least hide the dark circles under his eyes brought out by the black hair.

“Okay. I’d like to change back now. We’ll practice and I’ll put everything back on before we meet Ron.”

“You’re not gonna show him?”

“I am but later. At Hogwarts during wash day. Ron won’t be alone.”

“That’s right.” Ron was rarely without a cloud of family around him.

“Okay the spells to undo this travesty are as such. Filum Secare.” She made several quick side to side flicks with her wand and pulled the wig free with the other hand. “And to undo the braids a simple Finite Incantatem with the variation Succingunt. So Finite Succingunt Incantatem.” Her wand made a zig-zag motion after the typical point of the normal spell.

Harry’s red hair unraveled rapidly leaving him with slightly closer waves than usual but otherwise he was unharmed. He pulled the black frames off and relaxed slightly when he looked in the mirror to find his green eyes warmed by the red. How the red brought out the blush in his cheeks and softened the edges of his face. Now the golden jewelry highlighted his hair and you could catch glimpses of emeralds and rubies.

“Much better.” Chelsea shook her head. “Why are you trying to hide this again?”

“Because after you did my hair the first time I’ve been anonymous all summer and I love it. Everyone knows who I am on sight because they’re looking for James Potter with green eyes. If I went to school like this then everyone would know what to look for again.”

“I suppose.” Chelsea shook her head. “Okay let’s go over the spells a few more times. Of course you can’t actually try any of them until you get to Hogwarts.” She gave them a look with a raised eyebrow. “And if you have any trouble Professor Flitwick should be more than capable of helping you out.” Using the mannequin head they both ran through the spell a few times. Carmen of course was wand and word perfect the first try but Harry had a bit of trouble with the Latin.

“It’s time for my next appointment. If you don’t get a chance to stop by and see me before you head to Hogwarts I love ya and I expect at least one letter every month or so okay?” She hugged Harry’s somewhat shocked body tightly before giving Carmen a hug as well.

Harry shook his head and smiled at her before promising to write.

“Was that...” Bas asked as they strolled down the street somewhat aimlessly.

“What?”

“She said ‘I love you’.”

“She seems like a very affectionate woman.”

“So that’s normal? Is it just a saying or does she really...?”

“Of course she does Bas. She told you about your mum, and took both of us to the hospital, and helped us both out a lot this summer. You don’t do things like that for people you don’t care about. She signed for you both times at the eye doctor and your permission slip too.” Carmen stopped and turned to face Bas. She looked at his slightly uncomfortable face and her eyes grew huge when she realized. “You know I love you right? You’re my best friend in the world. I love you more than books.”

Bas looked shocked at the declaration but smiled softly. He hugged her. “I love you too. I love you more than Mars Bars.”

She giggled before tightening her hold on him a bit. “You’ve not had a lot of people say I love you have you?”

Bas tried to imagine his aunt and uncle saying I love you but just couldn’t. “No. Chelsea says my mum loved me so much but...I don’t remember it.”

“Well I love you and Ron loves you and Chelsea loves you.” She pulled back to look into those watery green eyes. “And Crookshanks loves you. And I don’t know if snakes can love but if they can they do.”

Bas smiled at her and hissed. “I love you.” Love was a queer word in parseltongue. All emotions were queer in parseltongue because snakes don’t usually have emotions. So when you say a word like love in parselmouth the nuances are so layered, so overlapping it’s like you said ninety words in one. Love was not a word Bas had much call for in general and he’d never said in parseltongue though he’d read it in Salazar’s journals.

Six hisses replied after a moment though and Carmen tensed but didn’t pull away at the sound of them. “Love.” They said trying the word out. Feeling, knowing, understanding the layers of love before everyone gave him a bit of a squeeze. “Love Creator. I love you.”

Bas smiled brightly.

“I’m guessing snakes can love?” Carmen asked with a smile as she stepped back and took Bas’s arm as they continued walking down the street.

“Yeah. Love, any emotion really, is odd in parseltongue. It’s less the word or the emotion itself as it’s a word that encompasses everything within that emotion. Care, protection, wanting others to be happy. Then happy has layers too. Also wild snakes tend to only understand the most basic of these but snakes raised by humans are typically more capable of feeling and understanding.”

“Is this your experience or something you read?”

“I’ve not really met any wild snakes. Or spoken to them really. There was a snake in a zoo once but he was raised by humans. Even humans that didn’t speak parseltongue affected him. He thanked me as he went away. He understood gratitude.”

“That’s interesting. You should write a book. A non-parselscript book I mean.”

Bas laughed. "Eventually you're gonna make me translate all those parselscript scrolls aren't you. You just can't stand not knowing." He smiled and hip bumped her a bit as they walked.

Carmen mock glared at him before chuckling. "Where are we going?"

"I don't know. I'm following you."

Chapter End Notes

The Alchemy and Enchanting Tables are from Skyrim.

Calypso looks like Vampira in my head. As for what Bas sees in the scrying bowl...*secret smile* If I ever finish the second book it might be revealed there. It's not in this book.

Any guesses as to what Delphi's specialty is?

Mr. Iron is the Iron Druid from The Iron Druid Chronicles by Kevin Hearne.

Crookshanks is very fond of Harry in this book. That he's so honest and caring to his mistress really wins him the brownie points.

Hermione's bookworm tendencies are based on my own here. Once while reading at school I missed a FIRE DRILL. That is the fire alarm, the evacuation, the whole thing. They had to come find me. I regularly didn't hear the bell ring. I also had a cat that would decide when it was time for me to go to bed by sitting in front of my monitor and trying to bite my face until I went to bed.

This is not James bashing. Repeat not James bashing. Just Harry super liking his new look and resenting having to hide. But he has to hide because of his fame. Nothing to do with James Potter.

I had to look up how sew-ins and weaves work. I hope I did it justice.

Chelsea is a lovely person. She's based on an aunt of mine.

Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

Sorry for not posting Friday. Two Chapters today. This one is really short but the next one is SUPER long.

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

Chapter 22 - August 29th, 1993

The Granger family once again found themselves host to the vagabond looking Harry. The older Grangers were getting somewhat reconciled to this however. Despite his appearance Harry was polite, helpful, and Hermione clearly adored him. Fortunately their relationship seemed completely platonic. Which was a relief to them both as they weren't blind to their growing daughter's beauty.

Down in Harry's bag they brewed the conditioners Chelsea had given them recipes for and a few more Hermione had found in a book the hairdresser had recommended. Hermione and then Harry went through their hair routine before Harry heaved a deep sigh and sat down to let Hermione put his Harry disguise back on.

They transfigured his glasses out of something a little more sturdy than hair. Without the necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and rings and in a plain black Hogwarts robe Harry could admit that the effect wasn't so bad but he still missed his longer hair. He kept reaching up to play with it only to find the short mess of James Potter and released the strains with a sigh.

"Do you think we should bring our trunks?"

Harry frowned from where he was flipping through one of Hermione's new transfiguration books. "What? Why?"

"Well I mean are we really gonna want to go down into our bags for everything? It'll look strange if we show up to the train station without trunks as well."

"Anything we need readily like clothes we can just put in the small pocket for when we need it. I just don't see the point."

"You do still have your trunk don't you?"

"Yeah. I use it as a bedside table."

Hermione sighed. "You're not good at disguises. It's not enough to look like you again."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Okay?"

“Hey Harry! Where’s your trunk? Oh that’s a cool bag! Can I look inside? Where did all these snakes come from?” Hermione bounced around acting like Colin Creevey for a few minutes.

Harry sighed. Hermione was right. As usual. “I’ll go get my trunk.”

“Put your Hogwarts robes, this year’s books and supplies in it too.”

“But it’ll be heavy then.”

“Cast a feather light charm on it while you’re still in the bag.”

“Oh yeah.” Harry got up and headed over to where he’d left his bag by the ladder of Hermione’s bag. “You know I’m actually pretty smart but I swear my brain just turns off when I’m around you.”

Hermione laughed from where she was following her own advice.

Harry opened his bag and let Hedwig out who flew around the room before heading out the open flap of Hermione’s bag. “Is your window open?”

“Yeah. In case Ron decides to send a letter with Errod the poor thing can land on my bed.”

“Alright.” Harry headed down into his bag. His snakes crawled loose from him and headed towards their fountain. He paused to drop Sang off at the top so she could take the slide down to the bottom. Snakes typically didn’t say wheeeee but the pleased hiss she gave him was reminisce of it.

Before Harry could move the books and candles off his old trunk he spotted his Mum’s trunk under the bed as the silver edges winked at him.

“Hmmm...” It wouldn’t be too odd if he was carrying his Mum’s trunk. It’d be an easy explanation about why he had her cards, her runes, and her rings. Despite removing most of the rest of his jewelry he kept Sang’s favorites on. All but one, a large ring with a red jasper set in it that Sang could hide her head under, were his Mum’s rings and he really didn’t want to take them off.

He pulled the red and silver trunk out and opened it. He’d pretty much emptied it entirely as everything either went on his own shelves or in his mother’s shrine. He retrieved his Hogwarts robes and went into his Mum’s trunk to put the robes on the shelves. He experienced a bit of vertigo once inside. He shook his head to clear it.

He retrieved his textbooks and stationery and a change of casual clothes and put them all away in his Mum’s trunk. The sense of vertigo increased every time he entered and exited and once he came out the last time he felt the need to sit down for a moment.

“That’s weird. That’s never happened before.” He closed the trunk’s lid and blessedly the trunk had a built in charm making it as light as it would be as if it was empty. He lifted it to his shoulder and carried it out of his bag and into Hermione’s bag.

“That’s not your trunk.”

“No it’s my Mum’s. It’s not that odd. Lots of kids use their parent’s trunks. Seamus has his Mum’s trunk. Besides this way I can explain about going to her vault and finding her trunk. It’ll be an easy explanation for why I have her cards and runes too.”

“You’re right. You do have a brain.” Hermione teased. “Only I wouldn’t say you found it in her vault. Say you found it in you aunt’s attic or something.”

“There’s no way my aunt would keep something of my mum’s. Especially not something as magical as this.”

“It’s magical?”

“Yeah it’s got an expansion charm similar to ours on it only much more basic. Just one little room with a bunch of shelves.”

Hermione frowned. “You might want to have Mr. Goyle look at it before we go to Hogwarts.”

“Why?”

“Well I asked when I was getting my bag if I could bring my bag into your bag or vice versa and he said that was fine but you had to be careful about putting expansion charms inside expansion charms. Since both of our bags are from him he could guarantee there wouldn’t be an issue because of the way he built the rune schemes. You don’t know who made your Mum’s trunk. It might be dangerous to use it in here.”

Harry bit the inside of his lip in thought. “I did get really dizzy just now when I was putting things away in it. You’re right. I’ll ask Mr. Goyle about it tomorrow morning. Let’s try to get out of here early. As much as I’d like to buy Ron a bag with a Quidditch pitch inside it you know he won’t accept it.”

“We should go to bed then.” Hermione sighed and set aside her book. She cast the feather light charm on her packed trunk and handed it up to Harry who’d already exited her bag with his own bag and trunk. She looked behind her at all her books with a sigh before following him up.

Chapter End Notes

What Harry says about being smart when not with Hermione is so true. I do this. I'm smart and independent to the nth degree. I scared a lot of guys off in fact because of that. But when I with my husband I ask him to do things I'd normally do myself. It's a trust thing in my opinion. When I'm with him I relax. I don't need to be superwoman. I can count on him to do things for me.

Same here between Hermione and Harry. Harry's smart. We know he's smart. He's shown he's smart. But when he's around Hermione he can let down his defenses. He doesn't have to be hyper aware and looking for angles all the time.

Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

Finally at long last...drum roll please

drum roll

Presenting

drum roll increases in intensity

A man who needs no introduction. That outstanding exponent of clean sportsmanship, that champion of champions, your friend and mine, our own, our beloved Ronald "good to his mother" Weasley

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

Chapter 23 - August 30 th , 1993

Hermione and Harry left the house a few minutes before her parents and headed to Enchanting Expansions carrying the red and silver trunk between them. Mrs. Goyle was at the counter and the shop was much busier than they were used to seeing it. She directed them to further back in the shop where Mr. Goyle was showing some customers a suitcase.

"I don't really know that he's gonna have time today." Hermione said as she looked around the busy shop that was almost full despite the expansions.

"Yeah. I forgot how packed the Alley is right before Hogwarts."

"I'm so glad we got everything already."

"Hello you two. Think of one last thing you just had to have before Hogwarts." Mr. Goyle surprised them by exiting a wardrobe behind them.

"Kind of. I love my bag but I don't really want anyone else in it and if I show up with this really cool bag everyone's gonna want inside and I don't want to be rude." Harry ran a hand through his messy hair and gripped his hand fruitlessly when he ran out of hair much quicker than he was used to.

"So you want something a little more run of the mill for show." Mr. Goyle eyed the red and silver trunk they were carrying. It didn't look like one of his.

"Well actually I already have something. My Mum's trunk has an expansion charm on it and I was gonna use it."

"Fine thing using your Mum's trunk but it looks old." Mr. Goyle eyed the tarnished silver doubtfully.

“And we don’t know who did the rune scheme. I remember what you told me.” Hermione injected.

“I didn’t have any problem when I was doing things inside Mum’s trunk inside my bag but last night I was inside Hermione’s bag, inside my bag, inside the trunk and I got really dizzy as I went in and out of it.”

Mr. Goyle raised his eyebrows in some alarm. “Come to the back room.”

“You’re so busy. Should we come back later?” Harry asked.

Mr. Goyle paused and looked around his busy store. “Yes. Give me the trunk. I’ll put it on my workbench for now. Come back tonight around seven. Most shoppers will have gone home by then.”

“Yes sir.”

“Thank you.”

“No problem kids.”

Harry and Hermione got some breakfast and poked around a pet store and even a music shop they wished they’d found much earlier in the summer. Hermione bought a small silver sphere that played the sound of ocean waves recorded off the Irish coast to help her while she studied.

Harry found a sphere that played a strangely mournful song. The tag said Duduk Song and he wasn’t surprised to find it came from Japan. He decided to buy it and put it inside his mum’s shrine. Surprisingly the snakes were very interested in the noises and Delphi and Kip both insisted on one from the trance section.

Hermione glanced at the delicate gold watch her parents had given her for an early birthday present and saw it was almost noon. They quickly made their purchases and quickly made their way to the ice cream parlor to meet the final member of their posse.

They made it back to Ragnuk Drive just as the Leaky Cauldron spilled out the family of redheads. The tall lanky one spotted them and yelled to his mum before he disappeared into the crowd. They came together with a crash of limbs as they all hugged and tried to talk at once. This reunion gained little notice of the shoppers around them as numerous such reunions were taking place up and down the street as classmates reunited a couple of days early.

The ice cream parlor was full and talking on the street was impossible. Harry and Hermione grabbed Ron’s hands and pulled him down a side alley to a less crowded section of the alley. Ron looked around in a wary fashion but let Harry lead the way to his favorite crepe place.

“My treat.” Harry injected before Ron could protest. Hermione rolled her eyes and ordered hers as Ron looked over the options. Harry found them a small high table over near the windows.

“I didn’t know this place was here.” Ron commented. “This isn’t near Knockturn is it?” He looked around nervously but the clientele in the small restaurant were all human and pleasant looking. In the corner opposite of theirs he spotted a few Ministry workers enjoying lunch and relaxed.

“Nah. That’s like eight streets away.” Harry waved off his concern as he dug into his chocolate ice cream and caramel confection.

“How’d you know?”

“It’s been a busy summer.” Harry smiled to hide his nervousness. As much as he’d been looking forward to seeing his friend he’d somewhat forgotten as he and even Hermione became more used to his snakes that Ron was most definitely not going to like them. Especially since Marine was hungry apparently and had wiggled up to Harry’s ear to hiss about a juicy rat Ron was carrying.

He need not have worried though because Ron was much more concerned when Hermione joined them having also ordered a small crepe bowl of finely chopped chicken for Crookshanks. The cat hopped up on the spare seat to eat but was immediately distracted by Ron. Or rather Ron’s pocket where Scabbers was presumably.

“Wow where’d this cat come from? He’s huge.” Ron quickly put a hand over his pocket.

“This is Crookshanks.” Hermione scratched the cat’s ears fondly. “Relax Crookshanks. That’s just Scabbers in Ron’s pocket. Scabbers is Ron’s pet rat. You are not to chase him understand? If you want a rat to chase I’m sure Harry can find you one.”

Crookshanks bent to eat but his eyes never left Ron’s pocket.

“You think he really understands that?” Ron continued eating but he scooted away from the big cat nervously.

“Oh yes. Crookshanks is very smart. He’s part kneazle.” Hermione popped a raspberry from her own crepe in her mouth.

“Hermione you go first.”

“What?”

“Telling about your summer. You’re the oldest. Then Ron then me.” Harry suggested.

Hermione gave him a look with one raised eyebrow. “We went to France for a month. I have some cousins there. I had a great time. We went to a ton of museums. Only halfway through the trip I got a letter from Harry telling me about the library here in the alley.” Hermione glared at Ron. “Did you know there was a library here?”

Ron finished chewing and swallowed with a cringed look. "Yeah I guess. I've never been but I remember Mum let Bill, Charlie, and Percy come to the alley by themselves. You know. After you pass your OWLs most people consider you competent. If you score high enough you can even get a wand waver. Bill and Percy got one but Mum wouldn't let Charlie get one."

Hermione narrowed her eyes at him.

"I'm sorry. Even if I'd remembered to mention it it's not like your parents would let you come to the alley alone right?"

Hermione and Harry looked at each other then back to Ron.

"Your parents are okay with you going to the alley by yourself!" Ron shouted.

A few people looked over and Harry dunked his head to hide his face. Salazar he hated looking like James Potter. Why did his dad have to be so recognizable? Was it because he bullied so many people?

"Ron! You want someone to recognize him and get us mobbed?"

"Oh." Ron winced remembering the craziness with Lockhart in the alley last year. "Sorry."

"No problem." Harry lifted his head after a bit and kept eating but kept his face towards the table until Madonna hissed out it was safe.

"Not at first. But Harry came and got me and showed me where it was and after that they were okay with it. I'm nearly fourteen after all."

"Right. It's just surprising they'd be okay with you being out and alone like that."

"Well I am not alone. I have Crookshanks."

The big orange cat finished his chicken and was accepting a bit of whipped cream from Hermione's fingers. His eyes never wavered from Ron's pocket however.

Ron looked doubtful of the protection that could be provided by a housecat even one the size of Crookshanks. "So you spend the rest of the summer at the library?"

"Basically." Hermione shrugged. She thought better of telling Ron about Mr. Iron's bookshop since it was rather close to Knockturn.

"Your turn Ron. Egypt?"

"Oh yeah. Dad won a raffle at the Daily Prophet. All expense paid trip to a location of your choosing plus five hundred galleons! We chose Egypt cause that's where Bill works. I got to see a lot of really cool pyramids and tombs. Bill even took us to the site where he's working. There's a load of interesting people who work as cursebreakers. There were a lot of goblins there too. Mum spent half the time chasing Fred and George out of tombs to keep them from learning any crazy Egyptian curses. Dad got lost in muggle Cairo and Bill had to go find him.

Percy kept going to these old libraries and museums so you might ask him about that stuff when we get back to Hogwarts Hermione. Bill introduced us to his girlfriend and Mum just about flipped. She was a native and she had all these tattoos and piercings and her head was shaved. She was really pretty though and nice despite Mum looking at her weird. Oh and this is the best part. Mum and Dad are gonna use the prize money to get me my very own wand!”

“That’s great Ron.”

“Yeah the spellotape really wasn’t doing the job near the end.”

“I really wanted a broomstick but Mum and Dad agreed a wand was more important.”

Harry struggled with himself for a second but he did get Hermione a pretty big birthday present and he hadn’t gotten Ron anything for his birthday the last two years either. “Why don’t I get you a broomstick? For your birthday. I missed the last two years.”

Ron looked ready to get hot.

“I got Hermione a bag with a library in it. It’s only fair I get you something nice too.”

Ron glanced at Hermione who lifted her messenger bag to show him. Ron swallowed and just nodded. He knew those charms were expensive too because his parents were always talking about maybe getting a few on the house. They did have one on the cold box and he remembered when he was seven it being a huge deal that they got it. He struggled with himself for several minutes. “How much was Hermione’s bag?”

“220 Galleons and a bit.” Harry answered.

Now both Hermione and Ron goggled at him. “I didn’t know that!” Hermione looked almost stricken.

Harry shifted uncomfortably for a second. “Okay look I’m only gonna say this once. My grandfather invented this hair cream or something and I’m really really rich. There’s like 100,000 galleons in my trust vault.”

Both his friends looked utterly shocked.

“But it’s just me you know. I’m the last Potter. What am I gonna do with all that money? I could have fourteen kids and never spend it all. You guys though. I love you. You’re my family. I want to get you things. Nice birthday presents and Christmas presents. What else am I gonna spend it on? Please. I never had money growing up. Or friends. Barely family. You guys are all I have in the world and I want to share it with you.”

Ron and Hermione shared a look between them and finally Ron nodded. “Alright. You can get me a broomstick. For my birthday. But you can’t get me nothing else for like the next… four years. Okay?”

Harry smiled. “No more birthday presents for four years. Got it. So?”

Ron wavered a second. "The Cleansweep 8? It's a great Keeper broom. Oliver Wood has one. It costs like...250 galleons though."

"Sounds good. Hey you should ask Oliver to take you on. Like an apprentice this year or something."

"What?"

"You know. He's just as Quidditch crazy as you. He's graduating this year isn't he? You could take this year to get him to train you up to take his place next year."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. Oliver would love you. He's always got these crazy strategies and you've always got these crazy strategies ...on second thought." Harry had a horrifying thought.

"What?"

"If you get apprenticed to Oliver then you'll be a shoe in for Captain in a few years. Then it'll be you getting me up at 4 am for practice." Harry put his head down on the table.

"You really think I could be Captain?" Ron said wonderingly. Not even Bill or Charlie had made Captain. Oh Charlie had been a great player but he hadn't made Captain.

"Well yeah. Who's more Quidditch crazy than you and Oliver in Gryffindor?"

Hermione smiled at Ron. "You have to be smart and know a lot about strategy too?. Do chess and Quidditch correspond to each other?"

"Well yeah." Ron looked off into the distance with a kind of smile on his face.

"It's settled then. Ron will be Quidditch Captain. Hermione will be Head Girl. And I'm starting my own business." Harry looked pleased with himself.

"It's Percy's NEWT year do you think he'll have time for me?"

Ron shook his head and turned to Hermione. "Sure he will. Always has before hasn't he?" Ron turned to look at Harry. "Your turn mate."

"Uh..." Harry winced. "There's parts I really shouldn't mention in public like this. I'll tell you about those parts once we get to Hogwarts okay?"

"All right?"

"I made a deal with the Dursleys the first night back. As long as I wasn't there while the sun was up and they were awake I could stay gone all day. Normally Aunt Petunia makes me do all the housework and well you already know they don't feed me all that often. So I asked Percy before we left if there was any way I could get to Diagon on my own and he told me about the Knight Bus."

“Mum hates the Knight Bus. Always makes us floo. I’ve never ridden it. How is it?”

“Crazy. There’s no seat belts and the driver is insane and he flings you from one end of the bus to the other.” Hermione groused. She was even more familiar with the Knight Bus than Harry at this point.

“Yeah but it gets you where you need to go for only 11 sickles. That’s a pretty good deal right?”

“Not really mate. 11 sickles is a lot of money. That’s more than half a galleon. Mum gave me 30 sickles to get all my school supplies this year except my wand.” Ron shook his head. Harry might be rich but he sure wasn’t frugal. Good thing Ron was there to look after him. It didn’t occur to Ron that Harry probably would have been frugal in the muggle world but he had a very poor idea of how much things were in the wizarding world. Luckily he’d mostly dealt with honest shopkeepers and after his basilisks hatched walked with too much confidence to be cheated easily.

“Anyway you know I don’t have any money in the muggle world and I can’t let the Dursleys know I have wizarding money or they’d get it from me somehow. I figured I’d just hang out in the alley all day. But then I got worried but maybe Dudley messing with my stuff while I was out and I got a bag with an Undetectable Extension Charm on it.” Harry held up his bag. “I’ll show you the inside at Hogwarts but it’s basically like a flat.”

“That’s when I learned about my Dad. He was a lot like Malfoy apparently. Rich, and spoiled and this huge bully who picked on anyone he thought was dark instead of anyone he thought wasn’t pureblood. The guy who ran the shop was bullied by him.”

“He could have just been lying.”

“Nah he’s a good guy. He helped me out a lot. Told me all about the alley and...I didn’t know where the hospital was. Or the Ministry. I met this other lady. She was friends with my mum in school and she said the same thing about my dad. She also took me and Hermione to the hospital cause we’d never gotten our wizarding vaccinations.”

“Whoa really?” Ron still remembered having to take all those potions when he was younger. It never occurred to him that Harry and Hermione wouldn’t have had them.

“Yeah.” Harry winced. “But hey cause of them I went to the bank and actually asked for a balance. I found out I had four vaults. Most of it was family stuff. Apparently the ministry and the bank had to tear down my family house a few years ago cause of some muggle construction but here’s the thing my mum had a vault!”

Harry started smiling really big and his friends smiled back happy for him. “In it was her wedding dress. Which she made herself. And some furniture from her mum and dad. And her school trunk!” Harry pulled out the tarot cards. “Look at these. Apparently Mum got them from her mum who got them from her mum and so on. Mum’s great grandmother was a squib and she was adopted by muggles. The rest is history.”

“Do you know what family? Your mum was redheaded right? We might be related!”

“I don’t know. I just know these cards have been in the family for a very very long time and all my ancestors had green eyes just like mine. Even Aunt Petunia has green eyes.”

“Green eyes....” Ron shook his head. “We’ll ask Mum. She’s good at remembering all the family traits. Like Weasley’s all have red hair.”

“Cool.”

“So you just spend all summer here in Diagon and your nights at the Dursleys?”

“Not really. Around July 15th my Uncle’s sister was coming to visit and I had to leave. As bad as the Dursley’s are Aunt Marge is worst. She always brings her bulldog too and he hates me.” Harry shuddered. “So I got to thinking about...” Harry looked around but no one was paying any attention to three kids and a cat. Especially not two days before Hogwarts started. “The Chamber. You know. Remember how I told you Salazar’s private apartment was in there too? Well I figured I could just spend the summer there.”

“How’d you get in?”

“I’ll show you once we get to Hogwarts. There’s a couple of different ways. Apparently when he left he didn’t go far. Turned right back around and just spent the rest of his life in the Chamber. Helga knew he was there cause they were really good friends.”

Ron looked spooked. It was not helped by Harry whispering. “So did you like ...find his body or something?”

“Nah. There’s a library with his journals and such in it. The house elves knew he was there and after he died they moved him into the Founder’s Tomb.”

“Whoa.”

Harry grinned. He sat back up. Now that Ron knew that much he figured they could talk normally without giving too much away. “Since then I’ve only come out to see Hermione a few times. The rest of the time I’ve been down there. It’s really cool. The main chamber is even big enough to ride my broom around in.”

“Isn’t it creepy?”

“Not all lit up. It’s actually really beautiful. Like an underground cathedral. I can’t wait to show you guys.”

Ron looked less than enthused. “I’m finished. I need to get some robes. Even Bill’s hand me downs don’t fit anymore. I’m definitely gonna be the tallest Weasley brother.” Ron smirked.

“Being tall really helps Keepers though right?” Hermione said. While broomsticks would never be her favorite way to travel she had read Quidditch through the Ages twice.

The boys looked surprised at her before nodding.

“I assume you’re not gonna let me buy you robes but I do know where a good second hand robe shop is around here.” Harry led the way. While he loved his special enchanted robes when he was down in the Chamber the snakes were less likely to be all over him at the same time so he’d gotten a few old clothes to clean in and such.

Ron’s robes were a bit of a problem. Finding second hand Hogwarts robes was easy enough. Finding some big enough for Ron wasn’t. They found two at one shop while Hermione went off to buy his books. They found another secondhand robe shop and found a third that was actually too long but Ron figured he might still grow some more. He got all three for six sickles.

Hermione returned having gotten all of his books for thirteen sickles. Then they went to the apothecary to replenish Ron’s potion supplies for his final eleven sickles. Finally and with great joy they headed towards Quality Quidditch Supplies. Ragnuk Drive was still packed and after quite a bit of coaxing Harry convinced Ron to go to another store he’d found.

“How close are we to Knockturn now?” Ron asked nervously as the street grew narrower and darker as the shop canopies touched overhead.

“Still about four streets away. It’s okay Ron. Hermione and I have been coming around here all summer.”

“My favorite book store is just another street over actually. Could we stop there for tea after the broom shop? My shout this time.” Before Ron could protest she injected. “Ron gets the butterbeers first Hogsmeade.”

“Deal.” Ron said in a distracted fashion as they came to a stop in front of the broom shop. In the front window was displayed the newest, fastest broom on the market. The Firebolt. “Wow.” Ron and Harry whispered reverently.

Hermione looked over the broom in a disinterested fashion as she read the card next to it. From the buzz words and what she recalled from Quidditch through the Ages this was a Seeker type broom meant for sharp turns at high speeds and long sustained racing. It also claimed to have a number of new safety charms. More a Harry broom than a Ron broom as Keeper brooms were meant for sharp turns at odd angles and short bursts of speed.

“If something ever happened to my Nimbus this is the broom I’d want to replace it.” Harry’s eyes followed the warm red wood and darker red bristles with eyes full of longing.

“It’s gorgeous.” Ron agreed.

The bell above the door jingled. They looked over to see Hermione holding the door open for them. “I bet you can get a better look inside? Besides aren’t we here to get Ron a broom?”

The boys headed inside after one last look at the glowing broomstick. After the door closed a large mangy looking black dog crept out of the shadows across the street.

At 3 pm sharp Hermione luckily made sure they were at Ollivander's to meet Mrs. Weasley. The woman looked over Ron's purchases with a critical eye but found nothing wanting apparently as she smiled at them. "Hello Harry, Hermione. How have your summers been dears?"

"Lovely. I visited France this summer."

"And I spent a lot of time up in Scotland." Harry said with a smile.

Ron glanced to see if his mum, who always knew when he was lying, could tell that Harry was fibbing just a bit but apparently not.

"Ron what's that?"

Ron blushed turning his ears red as he slowly brought his new broom forward. "Harry got it for me."

"What?!" Mrs. Weasley also looked like her ears would turn red and Harry and Hermione no longer wondered where Ron had gotten his no charity thing.

"It's his birthday present. Cause I didn't get him anything these last two years and he says I'm not allowed to get him anything for the next four birthdays either." Harry injected.

"Harry got me a very nice bag with a library in it for my birthday. Please Ma'am. Ron didn't ask for the broom. In fact it took quite a bit of convincing for him to accept it."

"What else am I gonna use my money for if not to buy presents for my friends?"

Behind them a man in patched brown robes exiting a side alley froze and glanced over to find all too familiar messy black hair.

Mrs. Weasley's blotchy complexion faded to its normal rosy pink. "Okay children. Okay. I won't be mad at Ron's broomstick but Harry you really mustn't waste your money like this."

"It's okay Mrs. Weasley. I've been to the bank and everything. I know how much I have. Sure this was a big present but it won't always be like this. Besides we have it all planned out. Ron gets apprenticed to Wood this year and next year he can try for Keeper and from there Captain."

"Nobody's been Quidditch Captain yet Mum." Ron said tentatively.

His mother's face softened and she reached up to gently move the hair from his forehead. "I know Dear." She smiled. "My goodness. If I'd have known I was going to give birth to an entire Quidditch team I'd have created my own team and we'd have gone on the road."

Ron smiled relieved.

Behind Mrs. Weasley Ginny piped up. "I'll help you practice when we get home Ron."

"Thanks Gin."

"I do need to be getting supper on. Harry, Hermione would you and your family like to join us for supper?"

Harry and Hermione exchanged a glance with each other and Ron who widened his eyes. Ron knew his mother would hit the roof if she knew Harry and Hermione were in the alley alone.

"No thank you. Harry's staying with me tonight and my mother is planning a going away dinner for me."

"Very good then. Well now Ronald." She turned to Ron. "Are you ready to get your very own wand?"

"Yes Mum."

The five crowded into Ollivander's shop as the old wand maker emerged from the back. "Ah young Ronald. It's about time." With a wave of his wand the tape measure hopped up and started measuring Ron's long lanky frame with gusto.

"Let's see Oak I think dragon heart string, ten inches, nice for transfiguration." He handed the wand to Ron who gave it a wave and knocked everyone back against the wall.

"Nope." Ollivander ripped the wand from Ron's hand and then he was off.

Harry noticed that Ron got handed unicorn hair wands more than any others which matched his brother's old wand. Harry wondered why Charlie handed down the wand. Did wands wear out? Charlie's had nearly been showing the unicorn hair inside when Ron got it in first year. Would Harry one day have to replace his Holly and Phoenix feather wand? Finally Ron was given a 14 inch wand of willow with a unicorn hair. This time Ron's wave produced red fireworks and Harry could tell by his smile that this was the one. It was interesting to watch a wand choosing that didn't end with something ominous. Ollivander simply wrapped up the wand and handed it over to Ron in exchange for five galleons.

"Now where are Fred and George? I told them to be here at three." Mrs. Weasley looked up and down the crowded street but didn't spot her other two wayward children at all.

"What about Percy?" Hermione asked not seeing the Weasley she had more in common with anywhere.

"Percy knows when supper is. He'll come home on his own later but I'm not leaving Fred and George here to wreak who knows what havoc. Ah there they are."

The twins popped out of the flow of people with matching grins and bulging pockets.

"Hermione!"

"Harry!"

“How’ve ya been?”

“Want a piece of candy?”

“No.” the brunettes chorused.

“Stop that. Goodness. None of your tricks now. Let’s get on home. Harry, Hermione are your families nearby? Should I wait?”

“We’re meeting them in front of the library.” Hermione lied with a smile to the relief of her friends.

“Oh good. Good evening dears. See you at the station.”

Ron got a quick hug from Hermione and thanked Harry for the broom once again before following his family into the pub.

“Well he’s looking good.” Hermione mentioned as they turned and detoured away from the main drag into a much less populated side street.

“He is but he’s so tall. I’m never gonna catch up. He looks like he got hit by an engorgement charm this summer.”

“Less engorgement more elongate but still the desert seems to have agreed with him.”

“Indeed. So what now? We’re not going back to the trunk shop till seven.”

“Wanna go back to that music shop?”

“Sure.”

Crookshanks, who had watched the leaving Weasleys with great suspicion, now turned his orange gaze on the stray that had been following them all day. If cats could talk the large orange cat would have some choice words for this mutt. He growled and quickly caught up to his new mistress and her snaky friend.

Chapter End Notes

I KNOW Charlie was Quidditch Captain but damn it we're gonna leave Ron SOMETHING.

Besides I can see Charlie being a great seeker but just genuinely not giving a damn about being Captain instead preferring to frolic in the forbidden forest with Hagrid talking about Dragons.

The sounds and the Duduk Song especially can all be found at mynoise.net Go check it out.

Okay so my theory about why Crookshanks suspects Scabbers but the snake especially Kip who has mage sight doesn't. Animagus really seem to be able to slip past magical protections because they truly read as animals. Note Sirius's escape and Skeeter at the Yule Ball. So the snakes don't think anything is strange about Scabbers but Crookshanks can sense deception so Scabbers lights up like a spotlight to the kneazle.

Once again Harry only has a perception for his father as a bully and a war hero. He knows nothing of the man personally. Not James bashing.

I personally know a thirteen year boy who's like 6'2". What even are teenage boys?

Oh if Crookshanks could talk indeed

One final trip to the alley

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 24 - August 31 st 1993

They returned to the alley one more time. Hermione for one final trip to the library and Mr. Iron's bookstore. Harry thought she just wanted to say goodbye as well as make any final purchases. Her parents were extremely indulgent when it came to Hermione's book budget. Then again Harry had seen their own book collection and had been equally impressed.

Harry went to pick up his mum's repaired trunk. Mr. Goyle said it was a simple enough repair. The old rune stones were losing power having been without their owner so long. Another year and the whole thing would likely have exploded its contents all over the inside of the vault. Harry couldn't bear the thought of losing his runes and tarot cards. He was very attached to them. Mr. Goyle suggested some additional books on runes once he saw Harry had his own family set and Harry left with the trunk in his bag to meet up with Hermione at the bookstore.

He was surprised to beat her there but was soon seated with a cup of chai and a book on divination with runes which he noticed Delphi was trying to read over his shoulder. Harry ended up reading under his breath in parseltongue to her. He didn't know why it was so easy to read English in parseltongue but not the reverse. Magic was funny like that sometimes. Like how it was easier to turn a button into a beetle but not so easy to turn it back.

Hermione was surprised to find him there already and shifted nervously as she took her seat.

"What's with you?"

"Oh...I stopped off to get you and Ron your Christmas presents. Promise you won't look in my bag? I thought I'd have time to put them away before you got here."

"I promise." Harry chuckled. "I got your and Ron's present a few weeks ago. I usually don't know what to get you for Christmas."

"I think my bag is more than enough." Hermione said as she sat the bag down on the chair across from him.

"I have to get you something. Nothing big I promise. I'll never buy you a book because it's impossible to know if you have it already or not."

Hermione nodded. "That's true. Even I've picked up a few duplicates before." She turned to Mr. Irons who was bringing her a cup of tea and a croissant. "Thank you. I'm going to miss this place while I'm at Hogwarts."

“It’ll be here when you get out. You kids have a good year. Study hard.” The shopkeep headed around a shelf and disappeared.

“I love this tea he serves. After the books it may be my favorite thing about this place.”

Harry had an idea and excused himself to look for a book. Hermione didn’t notice him taking his bag with nor the satisfied look on his face when he returned.

Outside a mangy black dog was chewing on a bone and watching the door of the bookstore.

Chapter End Notes

super short and sorry it was messed up

Chapter 25

Chapter Summary

The trip to Hogwarts

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 25 - September 1st, 1993

Harry and Hermione were some of the first to arrive and quickly claimed a smaller cabin with windows facing the platform. Harry looked up as more and more students got on but the Weasleys were nowhere to be seen.

“I bet a chocolate frog off the cart that they don’t get here until five minutes before the train leaves.” He offered to Hermione.

“I bet you a sugar quill that it’ll be three minutes till the train leaves.”

There was a tentative knock on the door. “A Droobles Blowing Gum on ten minutes.” Neville came in upon seeing the smiles on their faces. “How were your summers?”

“Good. I spend the first month in France with family and this last month going to the library in Diagon.” Hermione’s tone made it clear which half of the summer she’d enjoyed more.

“I got away from my relatives and spent the summer in and around Scotland. How about you Neville?”

“Pretty good. I worked in the greenhouses a lot when Gran wasn’t forcing me to come along to her garden parties.”

“Hey Neville where’s Trevor?” Harry had been curious about this for a while but never thought about it when he was out around the Black Lake or in the Chamber. The massive frogs down there were all out to eat him and he had to be under his cloak outside.

“Here he is. No he’s not.” Neville frowned as he found the toad was missing from his pocket. He looked around and found Trevor had made his way to the top of the trunks stacked overhead. “What are you doing over there?”

“Can I see him? I learned my mum could talk to toads this summer and I wanted to see if I could too.”

“Sure.” Neville handed the amphibian over.

Harry held the toad up to his face. He concentrated on the toadiness of him, the shape, the feel, the look in his square pupils. "Hello."

Trevor blinked back at him without answering.

"I don't think it worked Harry." Hermione covered her mouth to hide her chuckles.

"Yeah. We heard you say hello." Neville took Trevor back and slipped him into his pocket.

"Ah well. I suppose I'll just have to comfort myself with my ability to do this." Harry started hissing. "Warm sun. Hot sun. Laying near a pool. Cool pool. Quiet pool. Happy happy Snake."

Neville cringed and quickly put a hand over his pocket as Trevor went crazy trying to get away from the hissing boy. Hermione lightly kicked the tip of her shoe into the tip of Harry's. "Quit that."

Harry laughed at them. He brought out his wand and noted the time. "Fifteen minutes till."

"Why are they always late?" Neville asked.

"I was there last year and Ginny kept remembering things she hadn't packed. Ron kept forgetting things he had packed. Fred and George kept a running commentary up and down the stairs and I think they packed their trunk up and down the stairs like three times stopping every flight to mock argue about something while Mrs. Weasley made breakfast, tried to make sure everyone ate, that everyone had a sandwich for the trip. She stopped everyone on the way out to look in their trunks to make sure they'd packed everything they were supposed to and then she'd send everyone back upstairs to grab coats, and shoes, and quills." Harry shook his head remembering it. "It was a madhouse. I can't even imagine what it must have been like when it was Bill, Charlie, Percy and the twins with Ron and Ginny too young to go still. Percy and I were packed and ready early. We passed inspection and then just kind of sat down and watched all the chaos."

"Wow." Neville looked a little wistful. "It must be interesting to have such a big family."

"I know what you mean." Harry nodded at Neville in sympathy.

"It might be horrible to say but I'm glad I'm an only child." Hermione said. "I value quiet."

The boys chuckled.

"Maybe after you graduate you'll go on to become a librarian like Miss LeStrange."

"Maybe. I talked to her about the requirements this summer and--"

"LeStrange. Did you say LeStrange? Where did you meet a LeStrange?" Neville looked distressed.

Hermione was kind of shocked he'd interrupted her.

“Miss Cynthia LeStrange? She’s a librarian at the Alexandria Adjunct in Diagon.” Harry told him. He was a bit worried because Neville looked seriously upset.

“Oh. Okay.” Neville looked away at the floor frowning.

“What’s up Nev?” Harry asked.

“Is this like...does your family have a bloodfeud with the Lestranges? Is this like a Weasley-Malfoy thing?” Hermione asked.

“Is what like a Weasley-Malfoy thing?” Ron asked from the door. He quickly put his and Ginny’s trunks up in the overhead. He eyed the seat beside Hermione that was occupied by Crookshanks dubiously and nudged Neville over instead. Ginny who’d entered quietly behind him sat on the other side of Crookshanks instead. She wanted to pet the cat but he gave her a shifty eyed glare and leap from the seat to the overhead above Harry. There he settled down to stare intently at Ron.

Harry quickly cast a tempus. Twelve minutes till the train left. Neville won but Harry didn’t think it was the time to mention it.

“No. The Malfoy-Weasley feud goes back like a five hundred years doesn’t it?” Neville asked.

“Uh yeah. Something about the Norman invasion?” Ron said. “Technically we’re at a truce right now I think.”

“So if it isn’t that then what’s the deal with you and the LeStranges?” Harry asked.

“You don’t have to tell us if you don’t want to.” Hermione told him gently

The train jerked a bit as it got underway and Ron and Ginny stood up to wave out the window at their mother. Once they’d gotten out the station Neville stood up and shut the door. He sat down heavily and looked around but apparently decided to tell them.

“A few days after Halloween. After You-Know-Who,” he glanced at Harry, “killed your parents Harry.”

Harry nodded to encourage him.

“My parents came out of hiding. Returned to Longbottom Manor. When the wards came down Mum hid me in a safe room. My gran opened it and found me later after the attack.”

“Are they...?” Harry asked tentatively. He’d never asked Neville why he lived with his Gran or where his parents were. Everyone knew his story though he’d rather they didn’t. He just figured Neville’s story was none of his business.

“No. They’re not dead. They’re in the Janus Thickey Ward at St. Mungos. That’s the long term ward for spell damage. Barty Crouch Jr., Rodolphous LeStrange, Rabanstan LeStrange, and Bellatrix LeStrange held them under the Unforgivable torture curse, Cruciatus, for...a

long time. They're alive but they're quiet. The healers say their minds are shattered. They'll never get better."

"I'm sorry Nev." Harry reached out to squeeze the blond boy's shoulder.

Neville sniffed a bit before sitting up. "It just surprised me when you said you'd met one. You just don't think about it you know. Running into the baby sister of the men who tortured your parents at the library."

"Miss LeStrange is so nice." Hermione said. "I would have never considered her family was..."

"Dark." Ron said in a disgusted manner.

Harry remembered how his father hated those from Dark families but that didn't make the whole family Dark. Look at Mr. Goyle. Miss LeStrange's family was supposedly Dark but that didn't make her evil no more than parseltongue made him evil.

"She must have been around ten when her brothers went to Azkaban." Neville said. "And you're right she's never hurt anyone to my knowledge. If you say she's nice I believe you but I can't say I ever want to meet her."

"We understand." Hermione patted his shoulder. "If you ever come to the library with us we'll go in first and make sure she's not at the desk."

"Thanks."

Harry nudged Neville's shoulder. "I owe you some Droobles Best Blowing Gum. You won."

"Won what?" Ron asked as Harry and Hermione laughed and Neville was roused to a few chuckles as well.

The twins and Lee Jordan stopped in briefly. Apparently Lee's tarantula was missing. After they left Hermione shot a look over at Harry who hid a smirk with the hand that Sang was on her ruby eyes winking at Hermione from under a large stone.

They were almost to Hogwarts when it suddenly began to get much colder. Typically it was a gradual thing as they went further and further north. This was sudden though and from the back of the train they began to hear screaming.

Harry's wand was already in his hand and he felt his snakes twist and coil around his body in preparation as he stood and faced the door. He'd spent the summer fighting all sorts of monsters down in the waterways. Hermione had her wand out but the others hadn't even considered doing so yet.

Harry didn't notice Ginny's worshipful look but Ron did and it made him frown.

Finally what was causing all the havoc arrived at their cart and pushed the door open. Harry's bravado failed him completely as blackness crept over his vision and he heard a man yell, "Lily! Take Harry and run!"

A woman was pleading, "please not Harry. Not Harry. Take me. Take me."

A high pitched voice with an undertone of hissing Harry duly acknowledged as a parselmouth came now. "Stand aside you stupid girl. Stand aside!"

Harry felt something pierce his hip and snapped back to the present just as a huge black robed figure loomed over him.

"Marine. Spray him!" Harry hissed and the slim blue snake complied spitting venom directly into the open cowl of the monster.

There was a scream of unearthly pain and the slam of a door as it hurriedly retreated.

Harry collapsed back down on the bench seat and looked around at his friends.

Neville was curled into a ball sobbing. Ginny was in Ron's lap her body shaking with great wailing cries. Hermione was the least affected but she still had Crookshanks in her lap cuddling the cat close. She met Harry's eyes over the cat's orange fur.

Under his robe he felt his snakes move and slither around him. There was a dull pain in his hip from where Kip had to bite him in order to snap him out of the monster's spell. He felt Madonna and Delphi each cross his chest with a huge coil each hugging him tightly.

He didn't quite put his wand away but he did pat Neville's shoulder with a shaky hand. "What the hell was that thing?"

Neville answered in a shaky voice as Ron was too busy with his upset sister. "A dementor. They're the guards of Azkaban."

The door slide open again and Harry and Hermione's wands met the open friendly face of a tired looking man with light brown hair and golden eyes. "Whoa it's okay kids. It's okay. I'm your new Defense Professor. Is everyone alright in here?" He started at Harry for a moment before looking away as Hermione spoke.

"A dementor came in here sir but Harry made it go away."

"Did you now?" The Professor looked at Harry oddly now. "How'd you do that?"

Harry shrugged. "I cast a spell." He certainly wasn't going to tell a professor about his venom shooting basilisks.

"Accidental magic then? Powerful stuff. I assume it was accidental. One hardly expects third years to know the patronus spell after all. You have any chocolate? The chocolate will lessen the after effects. Eat enough and you'll be right as rain when you get to Hogwarts. I've got to continue checking the train. I'll see you there." The Defense Professor pulled his head back and shut the door. They could hear him opening the next one to check on those kids as well.

Harry handed Ron a couple of frogs for him and Ginny. Neville was stuffing one in his own mouth and Hermione opened the packet and Crookshanks had to pounce on the frog when it escaped her trembling fingers.

Harry reached for the last one but he was already feeling much better. Kip's venom was running through his veins and he felt jittery. Power throbbed beneath his skin and he wished he really had cast a spell at the monster now. He tapped his foot impatient to get to Hogwarts and the Chamber beneath her so he could use up some of this energy.

The opening feast couldn't finish quick enough in Harry's opinion. He was twitching and more than once Hermione put a hand on his leg to try to calm him. Colin Creevey had a little brother and Harry tried not to groan as both boys nearly blinded him with a photo flash. He hid the hiss of pain behind his robe sleeve over his eyes.

Only several soothing hisses to his snakes kept them from reacting. They weren't used to this much attention as Harry had been blending in to the crowd since before they were hatched. Now Madonna hissed in his ear that she could feel the weight of the room's eyes on him. It made all of them nervous.

From up and down the table Harry could hear the whispers about the dementors on the train and then with growing horror the rumor that he'd fought one off. That had even more people looking at him. He kept his head down and with a sigh jerked his hood up over his head.

"It'll pass. Someone will break up with their boyfriend tomorrow and everyone will forget all about it." Hermione reassured him under her breath.

Harry nodded mutely. He ate quickly and quietly only responding to Ron or Hermione on either side of him or Neville across from him. Finally silence was commanded as Dumbledore stood to give the start of year announcements. Harry tugged his hood back far enough to look up at the Professor out of respect.

"Welcome to our first years. I do hope you're ready to learn and to our returning students I hope you blew the fluff out of your heads before you came this year as we will continue trying to stuff it full of knowledge. We also welcome a new Defense Professor this year. A returning student himself, Professor Remus Lupin."

Everyone clapped politely and the brunette man in scuffed up robes stood up and gave them all a friendly wave. He was sitting next to Professor Snape and it was difficult to tell which Professor was more upset by that fact.

"Also we congratulate Rubeus Hagrid for completing his teaching certification. He will be taking over the Care of Magical Creatures Class as our previous professor retires to spend time with his remaining limbs." Hagrid stood up unnecessarily since he already sat taller than

everyone else at the table and waved a massive hand at them all. The Gryffindors cheered for him but the rest of the room was a bit lackluster.

“I understand there was a bit of a mess on the train. Yes the Ministry, in their infinite wisdom, has decided to place dementors around the perimeter of Hogwarts to protect us from the escaped Sirius Black. They were never meant to come near the train nor are they allowed on school grounds. If you see one encroaching do not approach it under any circumstances but fetch a professor at once. Most of the staff are proficient at the patronus charm and will deal with the creatures as needed.”

“As for our own precautions I’m afraid I must restrict outdoor activities unless supervised by a professor.” Before Wood and Flint could protest the Headmaster held up his hand.

“Quidditch will continue unabated as most if not all the professors are in attendance of that however practices must be attended by either a professor or a student proven proficient in the patronus charm as tested by Professor Lupin. You will be either accompanied or supervised on your walks to and from the greenhouses and the pastures. Otherwise do try to stay inside the castle walls.”

Dumbledore smiled at them benignly as they grumbled beneath him. “Now for the school song!”

Harry joined the twins in a loud raucous rendition of the song. He hoped it would burn off some of his energy but it was not to be. As they gathered to leave Harry got the password from Percy and between one second and the next disappeared from sight. Before Ron could protest Hermione grabbed his arm and drug him up to the common room saying that Harry would explain later.

The castle opening again had stirred the beasts below and Harry found himself fighting a good many more giant bats, giant rats, giant frogs, giant flying fish and even giant globs of slime than he normally encountered but this was good as it gave him a chance to finally burn through the excess energy he’d been barely keeping in check.

He moved, slashed and cast his way through until he reached the center hub. No monsters ever ventured into the hub. Whether by magic or some lingering fear of the dead basilisk Harry didn’t know nor care. He ran up the stairs until he reached the bathroom and pulled his robe open and jerked down his pants to see the bite mark Kip had left on him.

The marks were already closed. Only twin blue bruise marks remained. “Okay Kip you wanna explain what that was?”

The white snake curled out from beneath Harry’s shirt and nudged the bruises with his nose. “You were frozen with fear. I did not know the creature you faced but I wanted to make sure you had enough magic to face it.”

“No I got that. Thanks for snapping me out of it. And thank you Marine for spitting the venom over my hand so it looked like a spell. That still doesn’t explain why your venom…”

supercharged me. Even after fighting all those monsters I still feel like I could do a lot of magic.”

“I only gave you a small bite.” Kip sulked. “I am your magic snake.”

“Oh.” Harry should have known that. He’d read about the different subtypes of bred basilisks. Sang was an assassin snake. Meant for quick, quiet and anonymous death. Aqua and Marine were personal guardians which was why they sat on his arms always ready to defend him. He was unsure why he needed two. One of them should have another specialty.

Madonna was huge, just sheer power and strength as the most massive of them by far. Delphi he thought must have something to do with divination. Kip he just didn’t know. Their colours were no indication at all but now that he thought about it made sense. Kip always wanted to be around his torso near his magical core.

He climbed the rest of the stairs to the library and found the scroll on the sub-types. Magic snake meant Kip could help him harness and direct his magic but could also see magic with his special eyes and if the parselmage had enough of an immunity even empower the mage with his venom.

Harry sighed and fetched a couple of juicy mice for his snakes that had used their venom for him tonight.

“Are you upset Creator?” Kip asked.

“No Kip. You did exactly the right thing. If I actually knew that patronus spell the Headmaster was talking about your boost would have come in handy. As it stands right now I’ve got too much magic and nothing to use it on. How am I supposed to sleep?” He gave the mice to each snake and picked the scroll back up hoping to glean some hint that might help him.

Harry finally returned to his dorm a little after midnight. He came in through the portal hole despite having finally discovered an entrance under the boy’s stairway. He still had way too much magic but he’d cast every spell he knew in order from easiest to hardest and then a few more spells he’d never dared before from his mother’s spellbooks. While it was less than he’d had after the feast he still felt like he could light up Hogwarts. Salazar’s journals mentioned something about feeding excess magic into Hogwarts’ wards but Harry was fairly sure that he’d need to know where the ward stone was for that and what exactly “ground and center” meant.

Ron and Hermione were still up and Ron’s shout of “Harry” didn’t go unnoticed. The Creevey brothers, too excited to sleep themselves, flashed another picture of him. It was every ounce of restraint Harry possessed not to blast the pale boys into a paste against the opposite wall.

“Ugh. I wonder if this is how Salazar felt all the time. No wonder he was ill tempered.” Harry ran a hand through his too short hair and threw himself down into a chair by the fire as he muttered in a hiss under his breath.

“Are you okay?” Hermione asked.

“Where have you been?” Ron asked at the same time.

“Yes and no. Physically I’m fine I just have a surplus of magic cause of the thing with the dementors. I’ve been casting almost nonstop since I left the Great Hall and you’d think I’d be exhausted but I still feel like I could take Hogwarts apart brick by brick and then rebuild her.” He scrubbed a hand over his face. “As for where I was I’ll show you after class tomorrow. I might not be able to sleep but I assume you guys are tired.”

“Okay.” Ron seemed suspicious which Harry reasoned he had a right to be.

“I tell you everything tomorrow when there’s no chance of eavesdroppers.” Harry waved a hand to dismiss his friend’s suspicion.

“What are you gonna do if you can’t sleep?” Hermione said as she stood up and walked over to Harry’s chair.

“I don’t know...Hey Hermione you ever heard of ground and center?”

“Umm no. I don’t think so.”

“Miracles of miracles.” Ron muttered. He stood too. “Night Mione.”

“Night Mione.” Harry stood and gave her a hug and a buss on the cheek.

“Night boys. Come along Crookshanks.”

The giant orange cat hopped down from his perch on the back of Harry’s chair and followed his mistress up the stairs after a final glare at Ron.

“That crazy cat really doesn’t like me.”

“He just wants your rat.” Harry said somewhat distracted.

“I don’t know if I’m gonna be able to sleep not knowing what all is going on with you.” Ron groused.

Harry glanced around the empty landing before the third year boy’s dorm. “Tonight after the others are asleep come to my bed. I’ll take you into my pack and we’ll talk okay?” He owed Ron the same one on one explanation he gave Hermione he figured.

Seamus and Dean were laying on Dean’s bed looking at pictures. Dean’s family had gone to Disney World this summer apparently. Ron and Neville weren’t interested but Harry came over and looked through the pack with them. He’d only ever seen the films at school but he still recognized a few characters.

Finally everyone got in bed and Harry pulled his curtains closed and opened his pack. He had more than a few transfiguration projects laying around that he’d been neglecting. He pulled his robes off, let his snakes into their fountain and got to work.

An hour later Ron still hadn't arrived and Harry climbed out to see what was keeping him. He only had to stick his head out to hear Ron's steady snores. He shook his head with a smile. So much for not being able to sleep without knowing what was going on. After a few moments of debate Harry decided to let him sleep and returned down into his pack.

Chapter End Notes

Yes that is a bastardize version of soft kitty what of it?

Reminder that Spiders flee before a basilisk and that baby basilisk's gaze is harmless the first few years of life.

Chapter 26

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 26 - September 2nd, 1993

“Mate? Harry?”

Harry lifted his head from where he’d finally gone to sleep on his couch in front of the fire.

Ron descended slowly into his pack only to freeze in fear.

Harry sat up with a groan pushing Madonna off his chest. He could feel Sang in his hair somewhere and it felt like Aqua or Marine or Kip or all three of them were wrapped around his calves. His head was pillowed on Delphi’s coils. He felt achy all over. Not surprising since he’d been up most of the night trying to use up the magic. Next time he was just going to let it trickle away naturally. Trying to use it all up like he had wasn’t working at all.

He smacked his mouth a few times the remnants of his last cup of tea turning his breath rank. He climbed to his feet and staggered as Madonna wrapped herself around his whole body in a hug. “It’s morning already?”

Harry glanced over to see Ron had raised his wand at him but it was shaky and he was pale with fright. “What’s wrong?” Harry turned around to see if anything was behind him. He hissed to his snakes. “What’s he so afraid of?” Harry pulled his wand out and looked around trying to find what might be scaring Ron some much.

“S-S-Snakes.”

Harry blinked at him for a few seconds before shaking the sleep from his head and heaving a deep sigh. “Ugh I didn’t want you to meet them like this. Ron put your wand down. These are my pets.”

“Pets!”

“Yeah. This big red one is Madonna.” Harry started towards where his robes were hanging and casually cast a mouth refreshing charm. “The big purple one is Delphi.” As he pulled on his robe Madonna and Delphi took their typical places slipping their heaviest coils down his back into the weightless pouch. He sighed in relief. “These blue ones are Aqua, Marine. The white one is Kip and,” he lifted a hand to run through his hair and retrieved the last snake, “this is Sang.”

Harry stretched his arms above his head and rubbed his eyes and approached Ron who still looked shocked but had slowly lowered his wand.

“This is what you were gonna show me last night?”

“Yeah among other stuff.” Harry clapped Ron on the shoulder and ignored the way he winced away from the hand that held Sang. “Let’s head up to breakfast and get our schedules. We’ll talk more after class like we planned.”

Ron stiffly climbed out of Harry’s pack with Harry following. He grabbed his worn bag that had been Charlie’s and watched Harry close and shoulder his own bag that was already filled with all his books and supplies. “Sure you should be carrying them around like that?”

“They’re babies Ron.”

“Babies?!”

“Yeah they’re only a couple of months old.”

Ron looked stressed and Harry grabbed his shoulder and gave him a little shake. “Ya know most people think rats are disgusting creatures. Carriers of plague.”

“What?”

“I’m just saying. In Greece snakes are a symbol of healing. Just because Voldemort,” Ron flinched, “was a bastard of a parselmouth doesn’t mean we all are and almost every snake I’ve ever met has been polite and helpful. My snakes love me. They’re really great.”

“I’ll take your word for it Harry.” Ron looked vaguely sick.

“You gonna be alright with this?”

Ron nodded reluctantly. “Because it’s you but keep them away from Ginny. She had a lot of nightmares this summer.”

“I could never keep this from you and Hermione but I don’t want anyone else here at school to know.”

“Gotcha.”

“Sorry about Ginny.”

“Not your fault. She’d be dead if not for you.”

“Hey you came down there with me.”

Ron snorted. “Yeah with a broken wand on the other side of a cave-in babysitting an idiot.”

“Still came with me even knowing we were facing something thirty times the size of Madonna.”

Ron gasped and paled. “It was-it was really that big?”

“Yeah.” Harry grinned at Ron over his shoulder. “I actually ate some of it this summer. Tastes like fish. Real yummy.”

Ron looked sick and turned vaguely green. “Uh come on Harry I gotta eat in a few minutes.”

They entered the great hall to find Hermione had already made them some basic plates and was holding both their schedules.

Divination was their first new class of the year and it was up in a high tower they’d never been to before. At the end of the hallway was a ladder leading up into the classroom and Harry climbed up first eager to begin.

Unfortunately at the top of the stairs the whole place was filled with smoke and incense. It was hard to breathe, let alone think in the stuffy room. Harry flicked out his wand and cast the air freshening charm without a thought. Finding a table for three he and Hermione were quick to pull their gear out. Ron less so.

The room was filled with little tables, thick cushions, and drapes hanging from the ceiling. After everyone was seated the teacher came out in a flutter of veils and oversized glasses. She came up short however and frowned in confusion looking at all of them curiously.

She looked more than a little batty and Harry wondered if she’d forgotten she had a class at this time.

“Ah my Gryffindor third years yes?” She smiled and began her introduction. She attempted to make it all sounds mystical and wondrous but in Harry’s honest opinion Snape did it better. Maybe it was her voice. She sounded sort of vague and out of it.

“We will start with tea leaf reading also known as tassomancy. Turn to pages 4 through 7 in your books for the reference list.” She waved her wand and everyone gained a cup of tea in front of them. “Once you have finished your cup please trade with the person on your left. Write down your observations. I will be around to assess.”

Harry gave his cup to Hermione and took Ron’s cup once they’d drained the small cups of lukewarm tea. *Unfogging the Future* didn’t mention it but another book had suggested the proper way was to start at the handle and slowly turn the cup around. The first thing Harry spied was three hoops in a wavy roll. It wasn’t in the book but Harry recognized them. They were Quidditch hoops. He quickly wrote that down next to Ron trying out for reserve Keeper. Next he saw a dog which meant a loyal friend. He didn’t need a cup to tell him that. He felt Delphi move up and lay her head next to his temple. An odd feeling came across his eyes but before he could make sense of the shapes Ron piped up with a question.

“What’d ya see mate?”

Harry gave his head a small shake careful of Delphi. The feeling faded and he heard an irritated hiss from his snake. “Uh Quidditch hoops. It’s not in the book but I take that to mean you’ll do well at tryouts. A dog which means you have loyal friends.”

Ron smiled brightly. “That’s awesome mate.”

“What do you see in mine Ron?” Hermione asked.

“Uh..A load of soggy brown stuff.” Ron frowned into the cup before looking up at Hermione with a sheepish expression.

Hermione sighed.

“What’s mine say-ing Hermione?” Harry asked as his voice cracked. He blushed.

Hermione frowned down at her notes. “Well let’s see. A falcon for an enemy. A skull for danger. A club for an attack. And a dog for loyal friends.” She gave her boys a dry look right before the cup was taken from her hand.

“You are almost right my dear but this dog is not a dog it is The Grim! Death awaits someone near you!” The professor cried in an ominous booming voice.

Snape still did it better but he gave her points for loudness. The room was quiet as everyone turned to stare at them with pity in their eyes.

Hermione took the cup back from Professor Trelawney and looked into it again with a doubtful look. The professor continued wandered around the room telling Lavender there would a death in her family soon and asking Neville how his grandmother was after a glance in his cup. Before the class was over everyone would be on edge if she kept that up.

Hermione said under her breath. “We have an enemy, danger, and attacks every year and every year we come through it because of our friendship. Drama Queen. Give Harry my cup Ron see if he sees anything.”

Ron gratefully handed the cup over and again Harry felt Delphi touch his temple with the side of her head. The odd feeling returned and Harry read about great knowledge gained, but also a symbol that kept changing from mentor or exhaustion. “Hmmm....your course load will see you gaining great knowledge but unless you get a mentor, Percy I assume, you will suffer from exhaustion and fail.”

“What? Where do you see that?” Ron asked as he took the cup back. He still saw only lots of soggy brown gunk. Still he wrote down what Harry said. He looked like he was regretting this easy class. He knew Percy had cruised through it but he wasn’t Percy was he?

Hermione looked contemplative. “I’ll talk to him tonight. Remind me please?”

Their next class was Transfiguration and Professor McGonagall had some choice things to say about Divination. Hermione looked uncomfortable that her favorite teacher had such a poor opinion of a subject she was coming to enjoy. Harry took her hand. “Maybe she’s like Ron and can’t see anything.” He whispered. Ron had a very poor opinion of the whole thing and seemed to regret taking the class now. He liked the idea of Runes, Arthimancy, and

Muggle Studies even less however and his mum would hit the roof if he had anything less than two electives.

“So who is prophesied to die this time?” Professor McGonagall asked the class at large.

Harry raised his hand. “She said I had the Grim in my cup but Hermione and I think it's just a dog.”

Ron rolled his eyes. “An enemy, danger, an attack and loyal friends. Gosh! Wait that sounds familiar. Didn't that happen last year? And the year before that?” Ron shook his head with a chuckle. “Life's never boring around you mate.”

“Hey how is any of that stuff my fault? I assure you I lived a perfectly boring existence before I met you and Hermione. Maybe you two are the trouble magnets.”

“What's a magnet?” Ron frowned.

“A lodestone Mr. Weasley. A lump of iron that can attract other metals to it.” The professor turned to the class at large. “You should never attempt to transfigure a lodestone. Not only will its own magical properties mess with your spell you also risk changing its alchemical process and rendering it inert. Now this year we will working on transfiguring small living creatures into inanimate objects. If you'll turn to the board...”

Harry grinned as he received a small brown bunny. He was certain he was going to ace this class this year. He'd been reading ahead and had a plethora of mice and rats to practice on. He petted the bunny between the ears causing it to freeze in fear before concentrating and changing it into a blue cardboard tissue box as directed.

“Well done Mr. Potter. Ten points to Gryffindor for a perfect transfiguration on your first try.”

Harry blushed. His first try had been much much less successful actually. He picked up his wand and with a flourish changed the bunny back. The little thing shook its head and bent down an ear to clean.

Ron and Hermione stopped trying on either side of him. They stared at his bunny.

“Well done Mr. Potter. Ten more points to Gryffindor but please stick to the topic at hand. Inanimate to animate will not be done until next semester.” Professor McGonagall certainly did seem impressed. Almost shocked in fact. She moved along the aisle.

“How did you do that?” Hermione hissed. She had still been studying her bunny and had not actually cast the spell yet.

“Practice. I feel kind of bad though. This wasn't the first time I did the spell and I didn't know I was supposed to wait to try turning things back.” Harry winced. “Makes sense though. My practice was....messy.” Luckily he had six hungry snakes that didn't particularly care if their meal was inside out. “I'll wait until after you do it first next time Mione. You deserve the points for getting it first.”

Hermione blushed. "I've been practicing too actually."

"Got it right the first time though didn't you."

"Not always." Hermione said with a humble smile and a blush.

Harry turned to help Ron as Hermione twirled her wand and changed her grey bunny into an intricate wooden tissue box.

After lunch they headed out to Hagrid's hut for their first Care of Magical Creatures class. Harry was looking forward to this. He knew his mum had taken the course from the books in her trunk. Hagrid was standing proudly in front of the pasture with contained some very unusual looking beasts. They looked part bird of prey, part horse.

"Welcome to Care of Magical Creatures!" Hagrid boomed happily.

Across the circle of students Harry noticed Draco looking less than impressed.

"If you'll all take out your books and turn to page 30 you'll see an illustration for the beastie we'll be learning about today."

"Open our books how?" Draco asked holding up a thrashing book held together by a slim black belt.

Hagrid looked astonished as the class all pulled books out that were tied together with ropes and belts. Looking over at Harry and Hermione made him smile however. "I see Harry and Hermione have figured it out. Care to share with the class?"

"You must stroke the spine of the book in order to establish yourself as its owner and make it docile." Hermione told them.

"Alternatively you can scare it into behaving but stroking it is better otherwise it trembles so much it becomes difficult to read." Harry growled at his cracking voice.

"Ten points to Gryffindor. Eh..er..Scaring the Monster Book of Monsters is really not recommended at all. I'm not sure how Harry did that but stroking the spine is the way to go. Now to page 30."

Draco gave them a sneer while Ron still just looked confused. Hermione had gotten his book from the store for him and he'd not had any trouble out of it at all. Still he stroked the spine and the book purred at him.

The class on hippogriffs went well and Harry could even see Draco's grudging respect of Hagrid grow as the bearded professor spoke of the creatures in terms far more advanced terms than the book could say. Hagrid's experience and care of creatures was broad and encyclopedic.

Finally he had them put their books away. “Bit of a test on your first day we’ll have you introduce yourself to the hippogriffs proper like.” He brought out a large grey beast with an eagle’s head and dappled flanks. “Who wants to go first?”

Seeing doubt and fear in the other student’s faces Harry stepped forward. “I will Hagrid.”

“Come on up here then.”

Harry approached slowly and respectfully maintaining eye contact as the book had suggested before bowing slightly in front of the beast. The hippogriff bowed in return.

“Very good Harry. Ten points to Gryffindor. He’ll let you give him a pet now. Try his neck feathers there.”

Harry reached up to pet the soft grey feathers when the hippogriff suddenly reared back and screamed. It lashed out at Harry striking his upraised arm with a sharp talon that tore through his flesh. It scuttled back from Harry in fear and only Hagrid’s firm hold on the chains kept him from breaking free entirely.

Harry stepped back quickly and held his arm to his chest with a hiss of pain. Already he felt Aqua wrapping himself around the wound binding it tightly to reduce the blood lost. Marine was hurrying across his shoulders to join him as was Kip from below. The snakes had been down on his forearms and he could only imagine the sight and smell of the dangerous snakes had startled the beast. With the grimace Harry worked his wand free and slipped the tip of the wand into the wound.

“Cleansing venom, shedding skin, make me whole again.” Harry hissed out through gritted teeth. Aqua, the snake closest to his wound, wouldn’t need to shed her skin for a while but the wound on Harry’s arm was tightly bound and already healing rapidly. It still hurt horribly as the wound was cleansed but he’d be alright in a few minutes. “Back to your places. Aqua go to the top of my arm. You can’t be seen.”

“But Creator, your arm!”

“I know. You can return after I’ve shown Hagrid it's fine.”

“Is not fine. Needs me.”

“Now Aqua.”

The slim blue snake regretfully twined up to Harry’s bicep.

Harry stood upright shakily as Hagrid approached. “Harry are you alright?”

“Just a scratch Hagrid. I’ve already healed it up for the most part.”

Hagrid took his arm and looked over the thin red line in Harry’s flesh with a grimace. “I can’t understand it. You did everything right and Buckbeak’s usually such a well-mannered hippogriff. I’ve never known him to do such a thing.

“Maybe I blinked or looked away and he took offense. No harm, no foul. Is Buckbeak alright?”

“I chastised him soundly and he feels mighty guilty about it. Well as long as you’re alright.”

“I am.”

Hagrid released his arm and turned to face the class who Harry only now noticed were looking at him fearfully. Hermione and Ron came up on either side of him as he let his sleeve fall down and felt Aqua hurried back down to wrap herself around the wound. The pain eased even more with her return. There was a pinch at his wrist and he knew for the second time in as many days his basilisk had felt the need to bite him. Aqua’s venom would quicken the healing as it burned out any filth that had been on Buckbeak’s claw. Maybe she had a unique specialty after all.

“What was all that hissing about Mate?” Ron especially looked weirded out.

Harry thought quickly. The last thing he wanted was for everyone to be afraid of him like last year. “Parselmagic is primarily used for healing.” He said in a loud voice forcing Hagrid to stop talking and turned to face him with the rest of the class. “Parselmouths, recent Dark Lords excluded, are typically renowned as healers around the world. I learned lots about them in the library this summer including a bunch of healing spells. Buckbeak there could have torn my arm off and I could have put it back with parselmagic no problem.” Harry grinned at Ron trusting Hermione to judge the classmate’s expressions.

“They’re still leery but not as scared as they were.” She whispered to him using his shoulder to hide her mouth.

Hagrid nodded slowly. “Well thankfully you didn’t have to. Now I want you to know that was an unusual thing to happen. Typically when Hippogriffs are given the proper respect they’re harmless. Who else wants to give it a try?”

There were no takers immediately before Ron sighed over Harry’s shoulder and muttered. “You better heal me up if this goes wrong mate.” He stepped forward. “I will Hagrid.”

Ron faced the new hippogriff, a cream coloured beauty named Lady Jane, fearlessly and bowed to her respectfully. She bowed back and allowed Ron to pet her feathers and with Hagrid’s encouragement climb on her back and go for a ride over the lake. Windblown and smiling brightly Ron’s glowing face finally encouraged the others to step forward to try their hand.

Harry watched from a distance as Hermione made the acquaintance of a huge dark brown beast named Menelaus. Even Draco who Harry initially thought might cause trouble made a friend of Buckbeak and was one of the only ones to take a ride on the beasts. He declared it to be better than flying a broom to his friends and boasted that he was going to ask his father for a hippogriff of his very own.

Harry shook his head. Same old Draco. Harry used the shield of Hermione and Ron’s bodies to pull his sleeve back and take a look at the progress of his wound. Aqua had pulled his

fangs free but still held Harry's arm tightly. The wound was a nearly invisible red line that stretched from his wrist to his elbow. The puncture wounds from Aqua's fangs were a brighter red and were still slowly leaking a bloody looking substance. Harry petted the slim snake's head with two fingers before pulling his sleeve down.

At dinner that night people were no longer talking about Harry facing off with a dementor as Hermione predicted. Pity they were instead talking about how Harry had been attacked by a hippogriff and had healed himself using parselmagic.

Harry groaned as people from around the room shot him wary glances. "Damn Voldemort to hell. Parselmages had a perfectly nice reputation until him." He flipped his hood up over his head and put his head down on the table.

"Did they though? Slytherin was a parselmage mate." Ron reminded him.

"Yeah. So? One of the reasons Salazar and Helga got along so well was their shared interest in healing. Parselmagic isn't really a battle type of magic and I don't remember many instances in his journals that he ever talks about using it to hurt anyone. Outside of you know creating a basilisk but anyone can do that it's just a really really dumb thing to do if you're not a parselmouth."

"What about after Salazar?"

"I wish I knew. His descendants must have been parselmouths but he was born right about the time all the originals in Great Britain were dying out from inbreeding. I've seen the family tree down in the chamber but it only continues for about 200 hundred years after his death. They continued the inbreeding that nearly wiped them out last time though. I assume the skill and magic went dormant. Ironically enough I might actually be an heir of Slytherin through my mum but from around 1257 to now I have no idea what happened to the remaining parselmouths."

"How do you even know all that mate?"

"I've read a lot of his journals and there are tons of parselbooks down in the chamber. Salazar was a half-blood by his muggle father. Probably the reason he was so powerful actually because his mother's people, the original parselmouths, had nearly wiped themselves out with inbreeding. His generation was made up almost entirely of squibs. They helped build Hogwarts in fact. Those that didn't get fostered out to muggle families. My mum was probably one of those."

"Mr. Potter?"

Harry turned to see Madame Pomfrey.

"I heard you were injured today in Care of Magical Creatures. You did not come see me afterwards." She looked at him sternly.

Harry winced. "I...uh..I already healed the wound."

"I'll be the judge of that. Follow me."

Harry sighed. He grabbed a final treacle tart as he got up. "See you guys in the common room."

In the infirmary Harry found Professor Dumbledore, Professor McGonagall, Professor Flitwick, and Professor Snape waiting. He wondered what passageways they used to get around the castle.

Doubly glad he'd hissed to all his snakes to hide well away from his wound he took a seat on his usual bed.

"I hear you've been using parselmagic Harry." Professor Dumbledore said.

"Yes Sir. I met a healer at St. Mungos whose family in Australia have been parselmage healers for generations. He gave me a book of healing spells." This was true. He'd owed Harry a copy of his grandfather's spells.

"Parselmagic can be dangerous. It's dark magic Harry."

Harry thought Dumbledore sounded kind of patronizing and for once in his life Harry was very confident he knew more on this topic. "On the contrary sir Parselmagic is renown worldwide to be a healer's craft. It is only here in England it has such a bad reputation. In Greece the God of Healing, Alcepius, was a parselmage and was honored by Zeus to be set among the stars as the constellation Ophiuchus, the snake. Parselmages in Australia are considered to be closer to the Rainbow Serpent, for their gift. That's just a couple of examples. I've read many accounts in Asia, Africa, and the Americas as well. Just because Voldemort," he ignored everyone flinching except Dumbledore, "used snakes for evil doesn't mean Parselmagic is evil. Parselmagic is fascinating and versatile but it is universally considered the gift of a healer and nowhere in the world is it considered Dark except here in Great Britain which can be pointed back to the actions of one wizard. The Dark Lady Semiramis was a healer who used her gifts for evil yet you do not condemn Madame Pomfrey her craft. Ulric the Evil was, well, evil and an alchemist but Nicholas Flamel was a good man. With all due respect sir I believe I have a gift and I intend to use it for the good of mankind not its ill."

His professors looked somewhat stunned before Professor Flitwick reacted. "Well argued Mr. Potter. 5 points to Gryffindor. I confess I'm only here because I too find it fascinating and would like to see the results and if possible the spell itself in action."

Professor Dumbledore looked worried as did Professor McGonagall but Professor Snape hid his reaction behind a stoic mask.

Harry rolled back his sleeve to reveal a thin white line was all that was left of the slash that went nearly to the bone.

Madame Pomfrey cast a spell at it but detected nothing unusual apparently. “Besides the scar itself it’s like you were never injured but Hagrid reported the hippogriff struck you nearly to the bone.”

“I’m not going to say it didn’t hurt. The first spell I cast was to stop the bleeding and seal the wound. Then I realized I should have cleaned it and cast that spell then I realize the filth had to have somewhere to go so I reopened a tiny part of the wound so it would drain.” Harry smiled a bit sheepishly as he lied. “I’m not very good yet.”

“Well, even if you did the things out of order it was still quick thinking and well done magic in any case.” Madame Pomfrey told him. “Like Filius I would like to see it in action if you don’t mind. I have a training dummy over here for the NEWT students.” She moved a curtain to show a flesh coloured golem-like creature laying on the bed. Harry recoiled from it in disgust.

A quick cutting spell from Professor Flitwick opened a deep wound on the dummy’s arm reminisce of the wound Harry had suffered earlier. It bleed quickly and Harry reacted though he knew he wouldn’t be able to use the same spells he had earlier that day. Those spells required him to have a snake on him. Parselmagic for a parselmage was different. Still it’d work much the same it’d just take a lot more out of him.

“Cleansing pain. Knit from within. Close the muscles, close the skin.” Harry hissed as he focused on cleaning the wound and then knitting it back together before sealing the wound. It took more magic and Harry finally felt the last of Kip’s venom boost leave him. He stepped back and sighed.

It was silent in the room again. Finally Professor McGonagall spoke. “Remarkable that something that sounds so evil could do such good.”

Harry laughed. “I suppose it does sound evil to you. In English what I said was something like cleanse, knit and close only in parseltongue there are nuances in each word. Love for instant in parseltongue.” He hissed the word in question in a long slow hiss that made him close his eyes and smile but the others in the room flinch and shudder. “Is such a word with so many layers of happiness, protection, compassion, care, empathy. I hope I meet another parselmage someday to discuss it. All I have now are books.” He smiled at them charmingly.

“Yes well. Perhaps one day you may travel beyond our shores to do such a thing. Until then Harry I have to request you leave your healing to Madame Pomfrey. While it may be powerful you are yet untrained.” Professor Dumbledore told him with an admonishing look.

“Yes sir.” Harry bowed his head and felt the jingle of his necklace. “Speaking of. Madame Pomfrey, Professor Snape. I know you were worried after the basilisk bit me last year and the healer at St. Mungos looked at my scar. He said it was an immunity bite. It’s something parselmages can do. If we survive a bite from a snake then we are immune to all weaker venoms. Given that the basilisk is the king of serpents.” Harry winced and tilted his head to the side. He lifted his chin and thumbed the thin plate over his collarbone.

“My goodness.” Madame Pomfrey said after she cast the spell to read the necklace.

Professor Snape frowned mightily after he’d done the same.

Harry shrugged. “Snakes are for healing. Their venom is in most healing potions.” Harry turned tentatively to Professor Snape. “I was hoping, Professor Snape, that you could help me with finding alternatives to some of the more common potions? I’ve been looking and cross referencing but I’m not a Potions Master.”

The Potions Master in question glowered at him.

“That sounds like a wonderful idea Severus. I know you and Harry have had your differences. Perhaps this may be an excellent opportunity to start anew.” Professor Dumbledore said with a smile.

Professor Snape turned a sneering look on the Headmaster before giving a sigh. Through his teeth he asked Harry. “Are you free Thursday evening?”

“Yes sir.”

“Meet me at the entrance to the dungeons eight o’clock sharp.” He turned and swept away with a billow of his robes.

Harry looked up at the other professors. “May I be excused? I have homework.”

“I presume since you are free Thursday evening you are also free Tuesday evening Mr. Potter?” Madame Pomfrey asked before he could leave.

“Yes ma’am.”

“You will meet me here at 8 o’clock sharp. I’ve been here too long and know you too well to believe you will come to me with your needs so before something unfortunate happens you will at least learn best practice.”

“Yes ma’am.” Harry nodded before he glanced at the other professors for a moment waiting on another instruction.

“You are free to go Mr. Potter.” Professor McGonagall told him with a somewhat indulgent smile.

“Good night Professors.”

Chapter End Notes

Harry's danger sense in regards to snakes is shot.

Ron takes it surprisingly well because Harry is so fearless and nonchalant about it.

And we continue with the Ginny never got therapy thing. It's not gonna be a focus here at all though. Ginny's barely in this story.

Harry's casual use of magic is a thing. The air freshening charm is almost second nature at this point.

Harry's voice is breaking, cause he's thirteen. It won't come up a lot but it's safe to assume most of the boys in third and fourth year have voices that break occasionally.

Ron's not an idiot for not knowing what a magnet is. The wizarding world just calls it a lodestone here.

Harry just feels like he's cheating cause he's been working ahead. Hermione is just impressed. No one dimensional friendship based on "Hermione always does it better so Harry holds himself back to keep her friendship" nonsense here. Harry's a bit ahead in the course work but that doesn't always mean his spells were successful. Especially not the ones that require finesse instead of brute force.

In my head after Hagrid got out of Azkaban his previous expelling was reviewed and overturned. He got at least his OWL/NEWT in COMC over the summer and hence got his teaching certification.

Draco's not a dick here because he sees just how bad it could go and is more respectful because of that. Slytherins value self-preservation after all.

Note: if it says Harry hissed he's speaking in parseltongue.

Menelaus was Helen's husband in the Iliad and therefore that Hermione's father.

You might notice that the snake get male and female pronouns and that they change on occasion. This is because the snakes (as stated way back in chapter 1) are gender-less so Harry changes how he thinks of them all the time without noticing.

Semirhage is from Wheel of Time by Robert Jordan. She was a healer who used her knowledge of healing to become a remarkably proficient torturer.

Chapter 27

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 27 - September 2nd, 1993

It was potions first thing the next morning and Harry was glad he'd gotten his request out in front of the other professors because Professor Snape was not in a good mood at all that morning. Before the end of the hour Gryffindor was down 30 points. Before Harry left he was called back.

Professor Snape thrust a book at him entitled *Alternative Potions for the Allergic*. "I expect you to have the first five chapters read by Thursday otherwise do not bother showing up."

"Yes sir." Harry said before hurrying out the door. Maybe by Thursday he'll be in a better mood and I can ask him about Mum. Harry thought fleetingly.

For now Harry caught up to Hermione and Ron who were waiting at the end of the hall. Together they headed towards Defense and their new professor.

Professor Lupin was knowledgeable, affable, and fair. They left his class feeling as if they might actually get a fair education this year. First year was hit or miss with Quirrell. While he knew his stuff he was difficult to understand some days. Lockhart had been a colossal failure all around. After the accident they were forced to take the exams made by Quirrell the previous year and only Hermione and Percy had done at all well on it among the Gryffindors.

Percy had made time for Hermione that evening to help her work out how to juggle her class load. She came back with a smile looking quite a bit less frazzled than before. She managed to talk to Harry privately while Ron was trouncing Oliver at chess and trying to convince the older boy to take him on as an apprentice.

"Harry can I talk to you privately for a minute?" Hermione asked.

Harry nodded putting his finger in the book Snape had given him earlier. He followed Hermione out of the portrait and down the stairway to an empty classroom they often used to study in when the common room got too loud. Someone had painted the ceiling red and gold before their time marking the classroom officially Gryffindor territory. He raised an eyebrow however when Hermione closed and locked the door.

She pulled something out of her blouse. A long golden chain on the end of which was a small disc surrounded by several larger golden rings. She threw the suddenly expanding chain around Harry's neck and pulled him close.

"What's this?" He reached to touch it and Hermione smacked his hand away.

“It’s a time turner. It’s what makes it possible for Percy and me to take all twelve courses. They only issue out one a year to the most studious of students who wish to take all the classes offered.” She turned the outer rings several times before flicking the innermost disc.

Harry watched in amazement as the sky outside seemed to go in reverse as the sun rose in the west. “Okay. Care to explain this?”

“A time turner takes you back in time depending on how many times you turn it. I’ve taken us back eight hours.”

“Eight hours?! You mean its eleven o’clock in the morning right now?” Harry cast a quick tempus and watched the results flicker between 7:03 pm and 11:03 am. “The hell.”

“It’s difficult to explain. Right now you and I are in Charms downstairs but I am also in Arithmancy. But we’re also here now and eight hours from now we will be here as well. When 7 pm comes the us in charms will leave the common room and head in here to go back in time to 11 am which is now. We, the oldest us, can’t be here at that time because to see yourself out of time is to risk a paradox which is very dangerous.”

Harry rubbed his temples. “Okay...I think I followed that. Why though?”

Hermione sighed. “Can we go into your bag? I could really use some tea.”

Harry nodded somewhat wearily and headed over to the corner of the room where he sat his pack in the seat of a desk and then cast a notice-me-not charm on that desk before climbing inside. Hermione followed him.

It was a mark of how tired Hermione was that she didn’t even flinch as Harry’s snakes deserted him for the tinkling fountain in the center of the room.

Harry put the kettle on over the fire and assembled the tea tray. “Okay. Kettle’s on. Now start from the beginning.”

“After dinner the first night Professor McGonagall took me aside and gave me the time turner as well as instructed me in its use. I had to promise not to use it improperly. Which I had assumed meant only for classes. So after divination I spun back in order to go to muggles studies and after charms I spun back in order to go to arithmancy.”

“No wonder you were so hungry at lunch.” Harry remarked. It had been unusual to see the normally neat Hermione go at her food with gusto.

“You saw the missing thread before I did. I was adding hours to my day without compensating for things like food and sleep. If not for Percy I might have made myself sick. He pulled out the official rules for time turner usage. There’s an entire section on the health of the time turner user. Instead of turning back a couple of hours here and there I should really turn back the whole day in order to make sure I get an adequate amount of sleep, food and study time. Percy recommended commandeering a location like the classroom above as a space of my own to do everything I needed. He even offered to share his own space as he will be graduating this year.”

“That’s nice of him.”

“Apparently the oldest Weasley brother, Bill, also did twelve courses and he set up the room originally. Percy doesn’t think Ginny will be interested but he doesn’t want to dismantle the room entirely as well.”

“It can be easy to get attached to having your own space.” Harry nodded as he magicked the hot kettle off the fire and poured the tea.

“Exactly. Bill shared the room with Percy but I get the feeling it only really worked because they were brothers. It’s not a big space and Percy already ‘shares’ it with Penelope.”

“You mean...?”

Hermione made a kissy face and nodded. “Not while I was there but she came in while I was there and seemed upset to see me. Admittedly if I spend the next year ‘disappearing’ into a room with Percy it isn’t gonna look good for my reputation.”

“Percy’s...Percy though. Not that he’s not a good looking bloke and as smart as you and... now that I think of it you and Percy probably get along a lot better than you and Ron do huh?”

“Oh yes. Much better.” Hermione blushed and Harry decided not to push.

“So I’m guessing you have a better idea for your own space?”

“Well yeah I have this great best friend who bought me my own library you see.”

Harry laughed. “But your library doesn’t have a kitchen. Or a bed.”

“Exactly. Though I did keep all those huge pillows you put in there. If you could keep my bag in your bag letting me out for the times my classes are doubled up...”

Harry nodded. “You got it. No problem.”

Hermione relaxed gratefully. “I thought maybe I could take you back in time with me occasionally too. I know your schedules looking a little busy now. You may not get to go back to the Chamber very often.”

Harry groaned. “I know. I didn’t know how good I had it this summer. My classes might not be doubled up but it feels like I have as many as you now what with my alternative potions with Snape and the Healing basics with Madame Pomfrey.”

“I’d like to come with you to those if you don’t mind.”

“The potions one or the healing one. Pomfrey probably wouldn’t mind but you know Snape.”

“I know. The healing one though I still want to know the alternate recipes to the potions you may need. We’re going to be friends forever after all.” Hermione was very still after saying that as if she wasn’t sure Harry was okay with their friendship lasting beyond Hogwarts.

Harry reached out and clinked their cups together. "Till the end of time."

Hermione smiled.

The friends caught up on their homework, slept, and at Harry's insistent played a few board games they transfigured out of the closet of raw material Harry still had. They now had a normal checkers board and a backgammon set. Harry fixed dinner for them and they did a bit of recreational reading as well before the eight hours were up. Then they left the bag at 7:05 pm and headed back to the dorm room.

Harry settled down on one end of a couch to continue reading the book Snape gave him while Hermione settled on the other end, kicking off her shoes and wiggling her toes under Harry's warm thigh before pulling out a book to read. Crookshanks hopped up and made himself comfortable half on Hermione's feet, half in Harry's lap after a wary glance at his waist. Kip moved up a bit higher and Harry stifled a giggle when he set his head in the dip of Harry's belly button.

A glance at Ron revealed he was actually having some trouble beating Oliver but Oliver looked impressed nonetheless and they were hotly debating Quidditch over the board. Harry wondered if Hermione was going to tell Ron about the time turner. He couldn't. It wasn't his secret to tell. He wondered if Ron knew Percy had one as well or that his brother Bill had used one. He frowned before returning to his book. He'd missed Ron this summer. It felt as if he and Hermione had grown closer and stronger in their friendship while neglecting Ron.

Not that it could be helped. Ron had been in Egypt most of the summer. Besides it was only the second day back and they had all weekend to truly get caught up. Ron would be fine. Especially since it looked like he'd just beaten Oliver at chess and the 7th year was looking at the 3rd year with that manic look in his eye. Any minute now he'd be dragging Ron off to...and there they go into the 7th year boy's dorm likely to retrieve Oliver's red journal filled with all his plays. Harry smiled happy for Ron.

Two hours later Ron came back out with a dazed look on his face and sat down heavily in front of the couch. "Guys. Oliver says I'm his new protégé. I'm officially the new Quidditch team strategist and after he sees me fly maybe the reserve Keeper slotted to take over for him next year." He ran his hands through his hair and tilted his head back to look at them in wonder. "This may be the happiest moment of my life."

Harry and Hermione smiled down at Ron. Harry clapped him on the shoulder and gave him a shake while Hermione leaned forward to run her fingers through his hair and give him a kiss on the cheek.

"Congrats man. I knew it. I knew you were gonna impress the hell out of Oliver. Should have introduced to you sooner."

"Congratulations Ron. You're gonna be a Keeper and Quidditch Captain and maybe..."
Hermione smiled mischievously.

“And maybe what?” Ron looked leery.

“One day you’ll be the out of this world player/coach/strategist that finally wins the Chudley Cannons the Cup.” Hermione said in the same matter of fact tone of voice she just when reciting facts.

“Just think Hermione. One day we’ll look back tell the reporters about this moment. When we knew him then and knew he’d be great.”

Ron chuckled. “Ah you guys are taking the piss. This is really important to me.”

Hermione looked concerned. “No we’re not.” She pulled her legs up and over to turn and sit down on the floor next to Ron. “We’re serious Ron. You’re gonna be great.”

Harry did the same sitting on the floor next to him. “Yeah. We’re your friends. We wouldn’t mess with you like that. Tell you what. Tomorrow it’s all about you. We’ll celebrate. Head down to the pitch and practice and then afterwards we’ll go down in my pack and I’ll bake you a cake. Chocolate, your favorite right? We’ll have us a little party. I’ll make dinner. Hermione can brew us up a little beer. What’d ya say?”

Ron smiled softly. “Don’t tell Seamus about the beer.”

The friends laughed and gave Ron a hug from either side. Crookshanks glared at the back of Ron’s head.

Chapter End Notes

The theory is that both Bill and Percy graduated with 12 OWLs which means they must have taken all 12 classes just like Hermione which means they must have also been issued a time turner. At least HERE that's what happened.

Also I'm totally implying that Hermione has a crush on Percy here. Minor little school girl crush. Nothing to get excited about.

Look being friendless, like Hermione and Harry were, sticks with you for a very long time.

I know people are just on tender hooks waiting for the Ron bashing lol. Harry and Hermione are truly happy for Ron here. There will be no Ron bashing.

Chapter 28

Chapter Notes

Class with Remus

Class with Snape

Wash day fun and Hermione sees the Chamber

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

Chapter 28 - September 9th , 1993

After a week at school Harry still hadn't managed to take his friends down to see the Chamber. He didn't seem to notice that neither Ron nor Hermione were all that keen to venture into the depths of the castle despite the promise of a practice area and a library. With Hermione's help Harry got to go down a few times. There was nothing quite so relaxing after a stressful day than fighting his way through the monsters of the waterway, letting his snakes go play in the carcass of their Egglayer and cooking up his own meal in front of the roaring fire. Then fighting his way back out again. It was fortunate that Salazar's passages didn't appear to connect to any of the other secret passages or Harry imagined Hogwarts would have lost a number of students by now. As the school year continued the monsters seemed to grow worse.

Despite some mistakes here and there Harry and Hermione had finally worked out a good system for their bags and the time turner. Harry's invisibility cloak helped a lot. Harry wasn't sure if Hermione had told Ron or not but he did notice they switched after Runes which Ron didn't share with them and on the days they didn't have Runes Hermione scheduled the switch to happen in the library. He didn't know if she'd told him privately or not but still felt it wasn't his secret to tell.

Ron flew well enough to impress Oliver. It helped that with the twins as beaters here and at home Ron was in his element and comfortable. He was official reserve Keeper and with Angelica's blessing Oliver spoke to Professor McGonagall about Ron taking over Quidditch Captaincy next year. He'd have to keep his grades up the professor had warned sternly and for the first time Ron fell in with Hermione and Harry willingly to study and get his homework done.

After a letter to his mum and with Percy's grudging help Ron even convinced Mrs. Weasley to allow him to drop Divination citing lack of talent. Professor McGonagall seemed to take it as a personal victory every time one of her Gryffindors dropped the course. As it was only Harry, Hermione, Lavender, and Parvati were still taking the class.

Hermione had lost quite a bit of respect for the Professor Trelawney, who continued to be flaky and a bit daft. She kept on with the class however finding the sheer multitude of ways

people used divination to be fascinating. Harry told her about the shop down the street where the lady had divined the origin of his cards and how she had acted in the same vague knowing manner. Hermione kept a journal of Trelawney's off hand predictions trying to discern a pattern in them. It almost seemed to be a hobby for her. Maybe she wanted to prove McGonagall wrong. Maybe she wanted to prove Trelawney was legit. He didn't know but just let her get on with it.

Healing on Tuesday had went...oddly. Due to Harry's raising Madame Pomfrey and Hermione discovered Harry had a rather extreme attitude to most injuries. That being that anything short of protruding broken bones and something gushing blood Harry didn't see much point in healing it and he had the absolute worst bedside manner Madame Pomfrey had ever seen. When a first year came in with a skinned knee from falling on the stairs Harry healed it without a single comforting word and told the little Ravenclaw to clean his face and stop crying. He'd been berated for that quite soundly. Even Hermione had cooed over the smaller child. Harry still didn't realize what he'd done wrong.

Once again Professor Snape seemed in a poor mood for Thursday's Potions class that morning. He asked if Harry had read the chapters with a tone suggesting he didn't truly think Harry had done so at all. He seemed even angrier to discover he had. They were down 20 points by the end of class.

Finally they headed up to Defense class where they were told not to sit down at all but to instead follow Professor Lupin to the Professor's lounge.

"I've cornered a boggart in the cabinet here and we're going to use this opportunity to learn about them in a hands on fashion. Now who can tell me what a boggart is? Have any of you encountered one before?"

Of course Hermione raised her hand.

"Miss Granger." Lupin seemed to take Hermione's waving hand with a sort of fondness they normally only saw in Professor McGonagall. Only Harry seemed to notice that Lupin's eyes flicked to him every time he called on Hermione.

"A boggart is a household spirit or malevolent genius loci inhabiting enclosed spaces if at all possible. It is a shape shifter with minor mind reading abilities that will assume the form of whatever most frightens the person who encounters it." As always Hermione sounded as if she was reciting from a textbook. Harry knew she actually was. Her memory was actually quite impressive though she mourned that she did not quite have a photographic or eidetic memory.

"Very good Miss Granger. Ten points to Gryffindor. Now what we will do is have you form a line. You will each face it alone and attempt to cast the spell to cause the creature to hide inside the cabinet again. The spell is riddikulus and it requires an emotional trigger. Laughter. You must face your fear and make it funny using the spell. Without the ability to cause fear, the boggart's sole offense, it will instead hide." The Professor stepped forward himself and flung open the door. A strange white orb appeared as if from a mist and the professor cast the spell causing the orb to pop like a balloon and whistle loudly before hiding back in the cabinet. "Now who will be first?"

They formed a line and Harry found himself at the back behind Hermione and Ron. The Professor advised them to be thinking about what scared them the most and what could make that funny.

Harry thought hard but he couldn't readily think of anything he was scared of. Maybe before this summer but now, with his basilisks, there wasn't a lot that could hurt him. There was little short of goblin silver that couldn't be dealt with via basilisk venom.

"What about the cold thing from the train?" Madonna hissed quietly in his ear.

Marine twisted as if insulted.

Harry stroked the blue snake under the robe sleeve soothingly.

Kip moved up to peek just above his collar. "Marine took it out yes but you were still completely frozen in fear until I bit you."

Harry nodded. "Dementors then." He whispered under his breath. Hermione turned to look at him with a frown and Harry realized he didn't know if he hissed or spoke.

Dean Thomas's boggart turned into a severed hand which Harry didn't think was that scary. Dean seemed paralyzed though and stammered out the spell which made the hand hop up and start dancing. It danced right back into the cabinet.

Neville's was surprising. From his tale on the train Harry half expected to see someone who looked like Miss Lestrange come out of the cabinet but instead it was Professor Snape. The apparition didn't even say anything it just loomed over the blonde boy menacingly. Neville was not prepared for him apparently and just seemed to shrink within himself for several seconds before Professor Lupin gently suggested imagining the stern professor in the clothing of Neville's grandmother. One vulture hat later the fake Snape disappeared and Neville slumped in relief.

Ron stepped up and Harry wasn't surprised to see Aragog appear. He was surprised when the spider's legs all disappeared and it rolled back into the cabinet.

Hermione was stepping up and Harry still couldn't think of any way to make his boggart funny. The only thing he could imagine was it melting in a pool of venom but that wasn't really funny was it? He couldn't find anything funny about his mother and father's last fearful words at all.

Hermione's fear surprised her it seemed. Professor McGonagall came out and told her that she'd failed everything. That her wand would be broken and that she would be sent home. Before Professor Lupin could step in Harry leaned forward to whisper in Hermione's ear. If it worked for Neville then it might work here. "Imagine her in Trelawney's glasses and shawls and flaky voice."

Hermione cast the spell and the boggart drunkenly swept itself back into the cabinet. She leaned back into Harry with a relieved sigh and Harry gave her a brief hug before stepping

forward himself. He still didn't know what he was going to do about the dementor but he was determined to try.

The boggart came out and as expected began to form the tall black hooded monster but before Harry could cast the spell Professor Lupin had stepped up. "Well that's enough for today!" He announced in a too loud voice before banishing the sudden white orb back into the cabinet. He turned to face them with a rather frozen smile. "I want a thousand words on boggarts and at least two more ways besides what worked in class on how you can defeat them. Dismissed. Harry please remain behind for a moment."

Harry was still frowning at being denied a chance at the boggart. He waved Hermione and Ron on but knew they'd be waiting outside for him. He turned to face his professor warily with his wand still out. He didn't have the best track record with Defense Professors. "Yes Professor?"

"I'm sorry about that at the end there Harry but I didn't want to frighten the whole class."

"Why would they be frightened? It's my fear."

"Well..." Professor Lupin looked a little out of sorts. "Everyone is afraid of You-Know-Who."

Harry blinked surprised. He supposed the tall black robed figure might have been mistaken for Voldemort. Tom was rather tall after all. "I'm not afraid of Tom. I am afraid of dementors. That's what was forming."

Now Professor Lupin looked quite surprised. "Ah did you say Tom? I don't understand."

"I am Lord Voldemort is just an anagram of Tom Marvolo Riddle. That's his real name."

"Oh." Professor Lupin gave himself a shake. Whether because he just found out the Dark Lord's true name or because Harry seemed unafraid of him he didn't know. "You're afraid of dementors though you say?"

"Yes. I repelled the one on the train but I was completely frozen in fear." Harry felt Madonna wrap her tail around his torso and give him a hug. He took a deep breath.

"I see." Professor Lupin thought quietly for a moment. "Are you doing anything Wednesday evening?"

Harry was almost incredulous. Really? "No Sir."

"You are not the only one having difficulty with the displaced guards of Azkaban and I've been asked to teach a class for the 6th and 7th years on the patronus charm. I'll be doing it on Wednesday evenings. If your boggart is truly a dementor I think having you in the class would allow us to practice without having to put up with actually having one of the monsters in the room. In exchange you'd get a little advance training. It's a charm well above OWL level so I don't expect you'll be able to truly cast it but something is better than nothing."

"Yes Sir. Thank you sir. I would appreciate that."

“Very good. Well. I’ll see you next Tuesday then.”

“Yes sir.”

Harry approached the dungeons with several minutes to spare. Professor Snape wasn’t there yet and Harry sighed. He had a feeling that even getting there early would not have saved him from the Potions Master’s wrath had he gotten there after the dour man.

He leaned against the wall and waited patiently. Hermione was, technically speaking, with him right now. She was in his bag, in her bag. She claimed she was going to study but a shared glance between Harry and Crookshanks meant that the cat would be trying his best to make his mistress take a nap instead. As Crookshanks was quite a talented familiar with a loud, soothing purr he had no doubt that Hermione was curled up on one of her massive pillows even now curls splayed out behind her in a wave with a huge cat curled up against her stomach purring loudly as her book fell from her nerveless fingers.

Harry smiled at the scene. As both he and Crookshanks took plans to make sure Hermione didn’t wear herself out he had gotten to see his tightly controlled friend in more and more relaxed settings. It was nice. The Hermione who sped read in the library glaring at anyone who dared to make a sound other than the scratch of a quill on parchment was very different from the Hermione in her PJs with a cooling cup of tea at her elbow curled up with a book while Crookshanks purred and her little music sphere played soothing sounds. Surrounded by her own books in her own space his friend was a very different creature but Harry supposed that was true of anyone.

“Ah Potter you’re here.”

“Yes Sir.” Harry stood up and faced the tall professor.

“Follow me.” The man swept off without another word. Harry hurried after him lengthening his stride to keep up with the ground eating pace set by his professor. It wasn’t easy. They went down four levels into the dungeons and Harry glanced around marking the exits to the waterways he knew about in this area. While he hadn’t felt like exploring the dungeon properly this summer for fear of running into this professor he’d still had Salazar’s blueprints to go off of and of all places in the castle the dungeons had changed the least over the centuries. Somewhere down here were the tombs as well but Harry thought they might be a few more levels down.

Finally they came to an old and empty potions lab. It was quite a distance from the classroom or the potion storage room. Harry wondered why they were so far away until they entered the lab. There were numerous snake motifs along the walls. Harry surmised the Professor was curious about Harry’s parselmouth abilities.

“I thought you might feel more comfortable here.” The professor sneered.

Harry rather thought Professor Snape had assumed the opposite but stayed quiet.

“You read the book I gave you?”

“Chapter 1 through 5 and quite a bit into chapter 6.”

“Do you have any questions?”

Harry did actually. “I noticed that unlike what my trouble is many of the substitutions in the potions where common allergens were swapped out most of the time the substituted ingredient was snake venom.” Harry scratched at his head. The sewn on wig was itchy and he couldn’t wait till later tonight when he and Hermione would remove it and have a good wash day. “I’m actually kind of happy about that.”

Professor Snape seemed surprised. “And why is that?”

“Well I met this mediwitch and her father is a Potions Master. She was there when I told Healer Guramaru about being a parselmouth and she suggested I could make a good living if I started selling venom to potion masters. The price of venom in Britain is crazy compared to everywhere else. She said a bunch of stuff about import fees.” Harry shrugged. “I plan to adopt a number of venomous snakes and nurse them for their venom and sell it. I went through my potion books and highlighted all the potions that use venom and what kinds but now that I know it’s a common substitute ingredient that means I can sell even more of those venoms.” Harry smiled up at the Professor kind of proud of his business model.

Professor Snape looked less than impressed. “Did you noticed anything else?” There was a dangerous undertone of threat there and Harry had no doubt he would be scathing if Harry got the next part wrong. Fortunately Hermione had also read the first six chapters and noticed something Harry hadn’t. Probably cause he’d been too distracted writing down ideas for his business.

“The potions that replace ingredients with snake venom I could instead use those ingredients in potions that do use snake venom. I don’t think it’ll be than simple. I mean you can replace butter with margarine but the cookies will come out different.”

Snape raised an eyebrow at the baking reference. “Yes Mr. Potter. It is not that simple. The boil cure potion for instance. What would you suggest we replace the venom with there?”

Harry thought for a few moments trying to remember all the things that did what the copperhead venom in the potion did. “Ant dung, yellow bile of crane, or ground limestone? They all have similar properties but I don’t know which one would be best.”

“Then we shall brew all three variations and find out. Shall we?”

Harry nodded and reached into his bag for his potions supplies. He had a feeling Professor Snape knew exactly which one would be best. He’d heard the snarky man referred to more than once as a near phenomenal potions master shattering the previous record for the youngest person to ever be awarded his mastery in the craft. As such while people complained about his teaching style many more people felt honored he taught anyone at all.

Harry set up three brewing stations and thanked the professor when he pulled out two additional cauldrons. The boil cure potion was a first year potion and due to Professor Snape's exacting standards Harry didn't need to look up the recipe as he'd been expected to memorize it two years ago.

He started brewing and immediately knew the yellow bile wasn't going to work when it started smoking immediately after he added to crushed fig. He vanished the mess quickly before Professor Snape could react.

"Do you understand what went wrong there?"

Harry frowned thinking even as he sliced the cat liver into precise and even bits. "The bile itself wasn't to blame I don't think. The venom normally stabilizes the interaction between the powdered claw and the fig. Without it there they reacted to each other."

"That's correct." Harry couldn't be sure but he thought he detected just the slightest hint of surprise in his voice. "Will that happen in the other potions?"

Harry glance over the ingredients. "Ummm....I think the ground limestone might do something to the livers but I'm not sure what."

"Please continue then."

Harry did so and sure enough when he added the livers they turned grey, swelled and then hit the bottom of the cauldron with several heavy clunks. The potion began to heat up then and Harry removed it from the fire. Only the ant dung potion remained and while it was off colour and a bit more viscous than the typical boil cure potion it still seemed mostly okay.

"Do you know what went wrong with the limestone?"

Harry didn't actually. Harry frowned racking his brain before sighing. "No sir."

"The livers act as a filter. You might have noticed all the other ingredients were organic. The limestone was not and therefore the liver could not react with it at all. If the limestone were added last or if you substituted the liver for something that could process inorganic ingredients then it might have worked but the liver's other properties are too important to the potion to replace them." The Professor was surprisingly not as scathing as he typically was. He ladled the ant dung mixture into a clear vial and raised it to the light. Harry could see particles still floating in the mixture and winced. He knew this potion should have an even consistency.

"This will work but not well." The Professor declared. "What could you do differently to improve it?"

Harry took the vial and held it up to the light himself. "Two extra clockwise stirs after the figs are added?" Harry glanced at the Professor and assumed that raised eyebrow meant he wasn't done. "And a longer brewing time after the livers? Maybe....four more minutes?"

"Three minutes and I'd only increase the stirs by one."

“Yes Sir.”

“You will bring me a potion with those modifications next time. Clean up and you are dismissed.” The professor left the classroom with a billow of his robes.

Harry stared after him somewhat shocked. “That was a lot less painful than I thought it was going to be.” Harry pulled out his book and quill and ink and quickly noted down the modifications. He also jotted down what the professor had said about the livers. He sighed. He knew now that he was right to ask Snape for help with this. It wasn’t enough just to replace the ingredients.

He sighed and quickly cleaned everything up with magic. After all this wasn’t a detention where Snape would make him clean everything by hand. The cauldron with the limestone filled livers however resisted the efforts of the cleaning spell. The livers were fused to the bottom of the cauldron and refused to be moved by magic. There were probably stronger spells that would do it but cauldrons could be finicky. Harry knew that was one reason why Professor Snape’s detentions were almost always scrubbing cauldrons. Harry sighed and took it down into his pack where he filled it full of hot soapy water and set it in the corner to soak. Just because he did have to scrub that one didn’t mean he couldn’t make it easier on himself.

He left his pack, closed it up tight, and shouldered it. He glanced around and instead of leaving the room he headed for the back wall. There was a passage back there and Harry opened it with a hiss. He didn’t notice the professor in the corner who had returned while Harry was cleaning.

Down in the chamber Harry brewed the shampoos and conditioners he and Hermione needed. It was a fairly quick process and fortunately used no snake venom. Mostly just nut butters, oils, and honey actually. The concoction even smelled a lot better than normal potions. He got everything ready in the large bathroom behind Salazar’s bed chamber. The one in his pack was alright but there was more room in this one.

He ventured down to find a sleepy Hermione just emerging from her bag. “Hey. I’m sorry. I fell asleep.”

“Good.” Harry chuckled at her. “Come on out here.”

“I’m not dressed.” In the warmth of her pack she was only dressed in loose PJ bottoms and a tank top.

“That’s fine. We’re down in the chamber. No one to see you but me.”

Now Hermione was awake. “What?”

“Snape took me pretty far down in the dungeons. The potion’s lab was one of Salazar’s old private ones and as you might imagine it had a passageway down here. The bathroom is

bigger. I figured it'd be easier for us both to use. Come on. I already got everything ready." Harry disappeared back up the ladder.

Hermione took a deep breath and shared a look with Crookshanks before climbing up after her friend. She emerged in a clean well appointed bedroom done up tastefully in dark shades of green and darker woods. The large, moving tapestries were amazing and for a few seconds she was wondering why she'd been worried about coming down here at all.

Harry appeared from around a corner. "Hey Crookshanks. I assume you want to explore but stay in the apartments okay? There are a ton of monsters in the waterways. The chamber immediately outside of the kitchen is okay but don't go too far without Madonna or Marine okay?"

The cat walked out with dignified grace.

Now Hermione remembered why she'd not wanted to come down here. "What kind of monsters?"

Harry grinned. "Sorry I'm not totally sure. Maybe after a few more years of COMC. They looked like giant frogs, flying fish, giant bats, stuff like that." Harry shrugged one bare shoulder.

Hermione blushed somehow wash day hadn't translated in her mind that she might have to get naked with her male friend. She tentatively enter the bathroom to find Harry was only stripped to the waist however. He was scratching at his head and trying and failing to cast the spell to remove the sew in.

"Stop that before you set your head on fire." Hermione walked in and pulled his wand hand down casting the spell and watching as the black thread pulled itself loose.

Harry yanked off the wig with a grateful sigh. "Oh Blessed Serpent that feels good. Undo my braids please? I NEED to scratch."

"Try it yourself first."

Harry groaned but lifted his wand again. The braids partly came undone. He cast it again and they only came undone a little more.

Hermione cast the spell and finally released the long red locks.

Harry sighed gratefully and tucked his wand in his pocket as he thrust both hands up into his hair scrubbing at his scalp gratefully.

Hermione laughed at him before pushing him to sit down in front of a bench and sitting behind him to give his head a good massage modestly forgotten.

Harry groaned gratefully and relaxed his neck letting Hermione's strong fingers rub tight circles all over his head. "Do...you...next..."

Hermione laughed. "Okay." As she rubbed Harry's head she glanced over the developing boy sitting in front of her. Harry was thicker than she expected. He'd always been almost rail thin but a summer on his own had bulked him up a bit. He was by no means big and probably never would be but he'd reached a healthy weight at last with a surprising amount of muscle on his arms and torso. She vaguely remembered in Kipling's Jungle Book Two that Mowgli owed a good part of his strength to wrestling with Kaa. She wondered if Harry would develop the same kind of strength from his snakes.

Neither Hermione nor Harry realized the meat from the basilisk Harry had been eating all summer was contributing heavily to his growth and weight gain. Hermione would be surprised to find Harry was much heavier than he looked due to the magically increased muscle density the snake meat was giving him. It wasn't just that he was eating snake meat. It wasn't just that it was meat from a magical snake. It wasn't just that he was eating his kill from an epic battle. It wasn't just that the meat was infused with his own magic preserving it. It wasn't just that he was a parselmage eating the meat of the snake he got his immunity bite from. It was a combination of all these things resulting in a perfect storm scenario that Harry wouldn't notice the true effects of for years to come.

Harry slumped once Hermione was done and traded places with her lethargically. Slowly and carefully he removed the snood and sedate hair pins letting the mass of dark brown curls fall down her back. He started at her temples and Hermione soon realized why Harry had moaned and groaned throughout her massage. His strong fingers on her scalp felt amazing. After he was done massaging he nudged her over to sit in front of the bathtub and started wetting her hair down and washing her scalp using the same massaging motions he'd used before. Then he thoroughly coated her hair in the deep conditioner and grabbed a wide toothed comb. He gently detangled and brushed out her hair until it hung in slick curvy strands.

Hermione changed places with him and brushed the shed hairs out of his otherwise fairly tangle free hair. She magically manipulated the warm water in the bathtub to saturate his hair. She washed his scalp as well and then coated the length of his dark red locks with the heavy deep conditioning treatments Chelsea had provided. Then it was sit and wait in front of the fire place together while they carefully transfigured a deck of cards and then played a few rounds of go fish.

Finally they rinsed, washed, and reconditioned their hair. Hermione scrunched in the leave-in conditioners and even a light holding gel while Harry combed it through his own hair as maintaining his curls wouldn't be as important under the James Potter wig.

Hermione pulled out some recreational reading while Harry perused her library to find something fun to read himself as they waited for their hair to dry. Harry had been quite insistent that wash day be a fun day. Percy, and through him Bill, had prescribed at least one fun day per week where the holder of the time turner did no school work instead they slept, ate, and relaxed the whole day. Hermione had been extremely resistant to such a plan but with Harry in the know he wouldn't let her neglect herself.

Finally their hair was dry and Harry groaned as he cast the spell to braid his hair. He did better this time without the distraction of the intensely itchy scalp to distract him and even

managed the sew in spell on the wig that had been hand washed as well. No sooner was the damn thing on that he was scratching at it with a frown.

“Before we go can you show me the library?” Hermione asked.

“Sure it’s on the top floor.” Harry led the way giving Hermione the rest of the tour of Salazar’s apartments. She was fascinated by the ritual and enchanting and alchemy floors. Finally they reached the library and Harry moved on in while Hermione stalled in the doorway mouth agape in awe.

Harry reached out and retrieved the basilisk specialty scroll looking up just what Aqua was capable of as a healing specialty snake and what on earth was up with Delphi the only snake he hadn’t named. Instead when he had been naming the snakes Delphi had quite firmly told him her name was Delphi. He should have suspected her divination specialty then.

“Harry?” Hermione whispered. She moved into the center of the room her head tilted back to look at the ceiling only three stories up and depicting a giant ouroboros.

Harry smiled at the awe on Hermione’s face. “Yes.”

“This is incredible.”

Harry chuckled. “Isn’t it though. Next fun day wanna come in here and look at some of the ancient Greek scrolls?”

“We can’t now?”

“We need to spin back several hours as it is so we can get back to the tower before curfew.” Harry carelessly waved his wand to show her the time was almost three am. Hermione had napped earlier but Harry was feeling pretty bushed. “Also here read this first.” Harry grabbed the only new looking book in the library. It was the care of ancient libraries book Miss LeStrange had suggested.

Hermione eagerly took it with a smile. “I wondered what all is necessary to become a magical librarian?”

“I don’t know but that sounds like a job right up your alley. Maybe ask Miss Pince?”

Hermione nodded absently as she fell into the new book.

Harry sighed shaking his head and guided her to sit down before returning to his own scroll. He took a few notes. All of his notes were in parselscript much to Hermione’s frustration. Once he was finished he put the scroll back in place and retrieved Crookshanks from downstairs. The big cat had claimed the mantle over the massive fireplace in the living room. He greeted Harry with a massive yawn showing off his numerous sharp teeth. Harry was singularly unimpressed after life with basilisks.

He sent Crookshanks upstairs to his mistress and went downstairs to gather up his snakes. They were fat and lazy filled with meat and lethargically cleaning each other. Harry looked at the massive snake with a sigh. It was tasty but he was glad Hogwarts was providing a bit

more variety food wise. There was still so much left maybe he should find a better way to preserve it. Was snake jerky a thing?

Finally he went up to coax Hermione back to the real world. She tucked the book away and at Harry's urging didn't spin them back until they were already in the waterways so there was no chance they'd run in themselves. Hermione debated helping Harry fight their way upstairs until she got a look at the massive horned toad that leap out of the water and started towards them. Harry was quick with a powerful shock spell that had the beast twitching wildly before falling back into the water. After an admonishment to teach her that later Hermione spun them back almost eight hours and quickly dunked into Harry's bag as they were set upon by three large flying fish-like creatures that Harry dispatched with both spells and a short sword before shouldering his bag and heading upstairs to a passageway near Gryffindor dorms.

There he opened the pack and called down to Hermione who emerged reading his book and fully dressed in her Hogwarts' robes with Crookshanks on her heels. She linked her arm with Harry's to guide her into the portrait of the Fat Lady. Ron was in a corner with Oliver poring over a Quidditch magazine and Neville, the only other one likely to notice their entrance, was engaged in carefully sketching out the parts of a plant they'd learned about in Herbology earlier that week. They didn't notice Ginny or the other girl's curious and jealous eyes.

Harry claimed a sofa near the fireplace with Hermione who shivered and tucked herself up against him. Once Crookshanks joined them to stretch across both their laps Hermione stopped shivering and instead set all her brain power to absorbing the new book she'd been given. Harry wondered how she enjoyed something she read so quickly. He shifted a bit and grabbed the novel he'd snagged from her library earlier out of his pocket reading it with one hand as the other was around Hermione's shoulders. They spent a happy hour that way before Ron came over to join them. He seemed disgruntled about something but Harry was too sleepy to pay him too much mind.

Unbeknownst to the two time travelers while their absence hadn't been noticed their new closeness had been. As Hermione was maturing rapidly into a lovely young lady and Harry into a handsome young man there were a number of rumors going about the school about them. This might have all escaped Ron's notice entirely if the twins hadn't began to tease Ginny about it. Still Ron didn't think Harry and Hermione were doing anything too bad. It just irritated him that they seemed to be doing it without him.

"Hey guys." Ron stood awkwardly over them trying to puzzle them out like a difficult chess move when both brunettes gave him sleepy smiles and he felt his ire fade away.

"Hey Ron. What insanity does Oliver have in store for us?"

Ron smiled brightly more than willing to talk Quidditch with Harry and if Hermione ignored him beyond moving her cold feet up into his lap after he sat down next to them well that wasn't all that unusual. Finally Ron asked, "What was it like with Snape tonight mate?"

Hermione frowned behind her book. She had forgotten to ask that. She blamed sleepiness and the wonder of the apartment of a founder.

“Not too bad. I got there before him so that was a boon. He had me brew three different versions of the boil cure potion and figure out why the substitutions didn’t work in two of them and then what I should do differently the next time I make it. I have to make a better modified potion by next Thursday than I did tonight but at least he didn’t assign me any writing.”

“Three potions? Two of which went wonky? That sounds rough.”

“It really wasn’t that bad. Potions really isn’t that different from cooking or baking when you get right down to it and I’m a good cook. It wasn’t any different than cooking dinner I guess. Your mum has a bunch of pots on the stove when she’s cooking doesn’t she? It’s like that.” Harry shrugged.

Neville had overheard this and shuddered. “You couldn’t pay me enough to take extra lessons from Snape.”

“He wasn’t that bad tonight. I mean if I hadn’t done the reading he’d have probably used me in the potion but working on modifying the potions like that in ways that you don’t usually see really gives you a sense of just how...” Harry struggled over how to phrase this. Best friend of his mum or not Snape was still a grumpy, angry, snide professor on a good day, “talented he is. I mean he really knows his stuff.”

“Youngest potions master ever.” Hermione chimed in.

“Yeah. And it wasn’t just, I mean he could have made the modifications and brewed that potion in his sleep but he made me. No. He taught me how to figure it out myself. Cause it’s great. It really is that we have such a renowned potion master in our school but we’re not always gonna be here so I better figure out how to do the modifications myself now on simple stuff like the boil cure while I can cause one day I might need...” Harry tried to remember one of the really advanced potions that called for snake venom. “I might need the intestinal rebuild potion and I better know how to replace the boomslang venom in it or I’m toast.”

Ron looked unconvinced as did Neville but Hermione had an approving smile on her face.

“Professor Snape does better in small classes with people who are actually good at brewing and paying attention. NEWT classes with him are almost like day and night to how he is to the younger years. What he really needs is an apprentice who could teach the younger years for him.” Percy stated from behind them. He looked tired and about to head to bed himself. He glanced over Harry and Hermione with a critical eye probably trying to judge if they were getting enough sleep or not.

“Why doesn’t he then? Get an apprentice I mean. Anyone would be better than him.” Neville asked.

Percy shrugged. “He has pretty exacting standards. He had an apprentice during my first and second year but once they got their mastery they moved on. Part of it’s his age too. He’s only about thirty-three. A lot of apprentices are older than even that and you have to imagine it

chaffs a bit to have a younger master.” Percy yawned. “You lot should be getting to bed. It isn’t the weekend yet.” He turned towards the boy’s stairs.

“He’s right. I’m beat. Snape left me the cleanup work too. I gotta get those extra cauldrons back to him at some point.” Harry stretched and roused a grumpy Hermione and a grumpier Crookshanks.

Hermione stood up before either of her boys and gave both of them a hug before she headed for her own stairs a lagging Crookshanks behind her as the cat continued to glare at Ron.

“I wish he wouldn’t do that.” Ron groused to Harry and Neville as they climbed the stairs. “Scabbers never did anything to anyone.”

“Tell that to Goyle.” Harry chuckled remembering first year when Scabbers had snuck his teeth into Malfoy’s goon.

Ron chuckled at the memory as well but sobering. “I’m actually pretty worried about Scabbers. He’s been losing weight and fur lately. I think he might be sick.”

“Take him to COMC tomorrow see if Hagrid can’t take a look at him.”

“I’m scared to after I saw him feeding those rats to the hippogriffs.”

“We’re just taking a test tomorrow. No creatures Hagrid said.”

“Yeah. That’d be a good time.” Ron agreed.

Chapter End Notes

hp-lexicon actually did this. Kept up with all of Twelawney's offhand predictions...an impressive amount of them come true.

I'm not an abused child, not even a terribly neglected one but my mom was a nurse so most injuries and illness were treated with remarkable nonchalant. Things like "You have bronchitis, you're not contagious you can still go to school." "Chest pain? Sounds like you might have a heart murmur like me. No big deal. Don't worry about it." "You're bruising like a peach and have had a 16 day period? We'll have soup beans tonight. The iron should clear that up." "Well if you're showing cold symptoms the contagion has past here's half a dose of cold medicine go on to school." It's literally taken over a decade for my husband to convince me to go to the doctor regularly and unfortunately my own reactions to my children's hurts is shockingly nonreactive. "Oh the cat bite you...well it's not bleeding you'll be fine." So yeah Harry's abusive/neglected home life? That's not a one and done. That sort of stuff stays with you for a long long time.

Lupin and McGonagall are fond of Hermione because she reminds them of Lily. Teachers frequently ship their students and Lupin is totally a Harmony shipper.

I find it much more believable that Lupin was asked to teach a special seminar for the 6th-7th years on the patronus charm than Harry being the only person in the castle wanting to learn it.

A grown Mowgli owed his strength to many things but he credits "wrestling" with Kaa for the majority of it for the great serpent was vast and heavy and for hours at a time Mowgli would lift and move the massive coils as he liked forming them into a bed for himself. Seriously if you've never read the The Jungle Books go read them now. Keep in mind when they were written cause they're not quite PC but they are good books and Mowgli is a great hero.

Yes snake jerky is a thing. Never had it myself.

GoodGuy!Ron loves his friends.

Harry and Hermione are just friends. Close friends. Notice Hermione is just as relaxed with Ron as she is Harry. Ron's jealous that they seem closer not because he thinks there's anything romantic going on but because they seem to spend more time together than with him and it bugs him.

Chapter 29

Chapter Notes

Huge twist in the coming chapter.
I've literally never read of someone doing this before.

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

Chapter 29 - September 10th, 1993

“Well now let’s have a look at yer rat then.” Hagrid sat down on his porch steps after class. Hermione was holding Crookshanks as she did her normal post-test worrying. Harry and the big cat were trying to reassure her when Ron brought out the normally fat and glossy grey rat. Crookshanks’ eyes narrowed in on the rat and Hermione felt his muscles bunch right before he leapt towards Ron’s pet.

Only Harry’s seeker reflexes grabbing the big cat out of the air spared poor Scabbers a fate worse than death. Even then the big cat struggled against Harry. His claws digging in and tearing at him. Marine moved to defend his creator and only Harry’s frantic hissing kept his friends from losing both pets.

Out of nowhere came Fang, of all creatures, to the rescue as he came around the side of the house, spotted Crookshanks, and immediately started barking loudly. Crookshanks took one narrow eyed look at the dog and took off towards the castle. Using Harry’s battered chest as a springboard digging his claws in even deeper.

Harry sighed and sat up watching the big orange furball quickly climb a tree in the courtyard and hiss at Fang from a distance. Only then did he notice that Hermione and Ron were screaming at each other.

Harry looked over the scene as he opened his robe and shirt and began gently hissing the various bleeding wounds on his torso and arms closed. As far as he could tell Ron was pissed than Hermione had gotten a cat at all knowing he had a rat and Hermione was furious that Ron had cheered when the huge boarhound had gone after her sweet precious Crookshanks.

Scabbers meanwhile had never been in any danger enclosed inside Hagrid’s massive hands as he was. Now that Crookshanks was gone Hagrid had resumed looking over the rat with a frown. “Ron? How old is this rat?”

“What?” Ron’s face was ruddy from yelling at Hermione who didn’t look much better. If her hair wasn’t secured back in the snood and clips it’d likely be huge. She was so mad magic seemed to be coming off of her.

Harry rocked up to his feet wincing slightly as his arms and hands were still bleeding. He walked over to try to calm Hermione down since Ron was distracted by Hagrid. Harry held up his hand and rolled up his sleeve. Aqua was quite unhappy. "Wanna practice your healing charms?" Harry tried to distract her.

"Is that a dig about how I should control Crookshanks better?!" Hermione turned her ire on Harry.

Surprised Harry stepped back. "Of course not Hermione. First off you can no more control Crookshanks than you can control me or Ron. That Kneazle mix is way too smart for that. Secondly don't yell at me. I didn't do anything but prevent several tragedies."

"Several! My poor Crookshanks is up in a tree!" Hermione pointed angrily. She made no move to save her cat however. While not quite afraid Hermione was surprisingly leery of dogs.

Harry heaved a deep sigh and healed his own wounds before they scarred. "Come on. Let's go save Crookshanks." He rolled his eyes and cast a light stinging hex at the big dog that had him yelping and running back to Hagrid's shack. He looked up into the tree as Hermione skirted the retreating dog. "Mine not clawing me up this time?" He said to the big cat as he held out his arms. He knew from experience getting out of a tree wasn't nearly as easy as getting in one.

The big cat still looked up at Hagrid's hut though whether it was to make sure Fang was gone or to see if he had another chance at Scabbers Harry didn't know. Finally he descended as far as he could before hopping into Harry's arms claws sheathed this time.

"Oh my poor baby." Hermione cried and wrapped her arms around the big cat. "Come on downstairs and Mummy will brush you and love you until you forget all about that mean old dog and that stupid rat." She opened her bag and let Crookshanks inside before following him down.

Harry sighed at the assumption he'd just take care of Hermione and her bag but then again wouldn't he expect Hermione to do the same? He closed her bag and gently dropped it down into his own before heading back to Hagrid's hut heedless of his bloody hands and chest. He buttoned everything back up as he walked back up that way. He ignored the staring eyes of the remaining students in the courtyard who'd watched the drama play out.

Ron looked up at him as he came through the door. "Hagrid's mixing up some medicine for him." Ron looked forlorn and more than a bit lost. Scabbers was shivering on the big table under Ron's soothing hand. "He says Scabbers is really really old. Like rats aren't supposed to live more than a year or two and we've had Scabbers, Percy and me, since Perce was like six. Hagrid says sometimes ordinary animals when they're around magic will live longer than normal but even with that Scabbers is coming to the end of his life span. Wants me to make him somewhere safe and quiet and comfortable."

"I'm sorry Ron."

“I guess I always knew the day would come but you don’t think about it ya know?” Ron sat down heavily on Hagrid’s huge couch pulling Scabbers up to his chest and petting the rat fondly. “What am I gonna tell Percy? And where am I gonna put Scabbers? He’s always just, I just carry him around with me ya know? Never seemed to bother him.”

“Here you go Ron. Three drops a day. If he won’t take it directly put a bit in his water bottle. It should ease any pain he’s in.” Hagrid said kindly with a pat of a huge hand on Ron’s back.

“Let’s head up to the tower Ron and find Scabbers a nice place.” Harry offered. “Thanks Hagrid.”

“Thanks.” Ron muttered as he followed Harry a pitiful look on his face.

Once they got far enough into the castle Harry pulled Ron into an empty chamber. “I know where you can keep Scabbers comfortable.”

“Oh where?”

“My bag has an extra room where I keep the live food for my snakes.”

“Scabbers isn’t food! You’re no better than Hermione’s murderous cat!” Ron yelled.

Harry sighed. He really didn’t like being yelled at and thanks to the Dursley’s beating tears out of him now it just made him mad. “I know that you idiot. You think I haven’t warded that room against the snakes? It’s nice and quiet. Scabbers can have a comfy cage, a water bottle, food bowl, even a bloody wheel if he wants it. There’s no way I’d mistake Scabbers for any other rat with that missing toe of his.”

Ron still looked mistrustful but agreed to go downstairs and take a look. “Alright. I guess. Better than anything I could do for him.”

Harry locked the door and tucked his pack in the corner under a notice me not just in case before letting Ron down in there. It occurred to Harry that with Ron being so busy with Oliver and Quidditch this was really only the third time he’d come down here. As such Ron jumped back and yelped as the snakes left him to head to their fountain.

“Relax. They won’t hurt you.” Harry said dryly. After dealing with a ferocious Crookshanks and being yelled at by both his friends Harry was about done with today. After this he was heading down to the Chamber and he might not come out until Monday morning. He touched the combo on the snake food door with his wand, 728, and as it opened waved Ron inside. His friend skirted around the fountain in the center as far as he was able before dunking into the tiny room.

“Uh Harry? There’s nothing in here.”

“I told you the rodent room was protected from the snakes.” Harry said dryly. This time the combo was 763 and the door opened up on a long narrow room lined with cages. The smell was horrendous but luckily Harry immediately cast an air freshening charm.

“Oh wow what a stench!” Ron said. Even with the charm after the initial whiff it was nearly impossible to smell anything but rat droppings.

Harry held his breath until after he cast the spell. Vindictively he hadn't warned Ron. He figured Ron must have been used to it the way Scabbers slept on his pillow for crying out loud. The rat room had a series of charms on it to keep the air flowing, and the cages had bedding refreshers but it never really seemed to help. Harry grabbed a small empty cage. “Here we are this'll give him room to move about.” Harry opened the tiny door and after a final nuzzle Ron put a suddenly resistant Scabbers inside.

“Sorry buddy but it's for your own good.” Ron said regretfully to the suddenly energetic rat. Scabbers had always been a mostly well behaved and more importantly free range rodent. Cages were completely foreign to him.

Harry secured the cage on a low shelf with a lock on the cage door. He gathered up a spare water bottle and food dispenser both of which had auto refill options. Harry had gotten every automatic option so he would be able to deal with the rodents as little as possible. He wanted to avoid getting attached.

“What's with the locks?” Ron asked.

“Rats are clever. Anything simpler and they'd figure out how to open the doors.” Harry said. “The cages are also designed to grow with the rat or rats inside. So I don't have to move babies to a bigger cage later on. The water and food dispensers are automatic so you don't have to worry that I'll forget to feed him or anything.”

“He's not been eating a lot lately anyway.” Ron handed Harry the medicine from Hagrid and watched as Harry put three drops in the water bottle before affixing it to the still frantic Scabbers' cage.

Finally Harry touched his wand to the word Auto printed at the top of the cage. “This activates all the auto features. His bedding should fill in now.” From the floor of the cage soft multi-coloured wads of cotton rose up. “There we go. Everything Hagrid said he needed. Food, water, medicine, comfiness, and quiet.”

Ron sighed. “Thanks Harry.” He looked around the room. There weren't a lot of empty cages but a couple of cages were teeming with baby rats. “Aww they're so cute.”

Harry felt like reminding Ron that they were food which is one of the reasons Harry avoided looking at or handling the babies at all but couldn't do that to his friend. “If Scabbers...passes on and you want another rat you're welcome to come down and pick one out. I'll loan you a cage until you get it hand trained like Scabbers.”

“Wow really Harry? That'd be nice. I'm really gonna miss that old rat.” Ron looked into Scabbers' cage sadly. The rat had stopped moving around so frantically and was now simply holding on to the cage bars with his little rat hands squeaking at the boys. “I know I talked bad about you sometimes Scabbers. About you being a hand me down pet and all but I am gonna miss you you dumb fat rat.” Ron sniffled.

Harry led his friend out of the room and closed the door. Behind them Scabbers went nuts inside the cage for several minutes and the other rats saw something very surprising but the boys were oblivious as Harry offered to put the kettle on to boil but Ron refused to stay down there with the snakes.

Ron went straight to Percy when they got back to the common room and told him about Scabbers' fate.

"Hagrid's sure?"

"Yeah. He said it was a miracle Scabbers lived as long as he did. Eleven years is remarkable for a rat." Ron tucked his hands in his pockets and looked at the ground dejectedly.

Percy didn't look much better. "Where is he now?"

"Hagrid said to make him somewhere comfortable and quiet. There's not really anything I could make him up in the dorms so he's in Harry's bag. We made him up a cage and stuff and put Hagrid's medicine in his water bottle."

"What's the medicine for?"

"To...to..." Ron hiccupped and Harry patted his back a few times.

Harry took over. "Hagrid said it's likely Scabbers is in quite a bit of pain. The medicine's just a minor pain relief potion. To make sure his final days are comfortable."

"I see." Percy said looking as lost as Ron did to be honest. "And he's comfortable?"

"Oh yeah. Cotton batting for bedding. All the food and water he could want."

"Maybe a tart or two? He always loved Mum's tarts."

Ron spoke up then. "She was always scolding us for giving them to him."

"Remember that time he got into Bill's birthday cake?"

"And ate all of it! Everyone was like how could that rat eat all that cake?"

The ginger boys were smiling through what looked suspiciously like tears and Harry patted Ron's back and left them to reminiscing. Harry had the feeling that both boys had already said their goodbyes. He'll tell them Scabbers died in a few days even if he didn't and let them get the mourning out of the way. Slip some poison in with Scabbers' medicine to make sure the rat passed quietly and was buried before letting Ron pick out a new baby rat. Maybe Percy too.

For now Harry told Neville he was going exploring and that he'd likely be out pretty late. The blonde boy looked worried but Harry tugged the top of his invisibility cloak out of his

pocket and gave him a wink. Neville gave a long suffering sigh but nodded waving Harry on.

September 1993

Hermione once she'd calmed down was willing to forgive Ron his hurtful words especially in light of the fact that Scabbers was actually dying but Ron was less willing to forgive Hermione for Crookshanks' attempted attack. Harry felt Ron's stubbornness had a fair bit to do with the fact that he was still grieving the rat than the fact that he was still mad at Hermione. He was only half right.

Losing his rat had highlighted to Ron how little time he was spending with his best mate Harry and it only added to his ire that Hermione and Harry seemed closer. Whether it was a romantic closer or not was lost on Ron at thirteen despite the teasing of his older brothers.

Harry was honestly just glad Hermione had told him about the time turner because without it he wouldn't get to spend any time with Hermione at all as Ron used every opportunity, be it Quidditch practice or chess matches or homework help he stubbornly refused to ask Hermione for, to grab and hold Harry's attention.

It wasn't that Harry minded spending more time with Ron. The red head was a barrel of laughs 90% of the time and a damn near prodigal genius when it came to Quidditch strategy. He came up with maneuvers not even Oliver could dream up and practiced utmost secrecy when the team was together. What he missed the most though was having both his friends together.

Now in classes when they sat together Harry was in the middle and forced to deal with stubborn silence on both sides. Any attempt of one of his friends to talk to him got a glare from the other usually accompanied by a snide remark. Harry felt like pulling his wig off and beating them both with it. Madam Pomfrey's oh so helpful suggestions were not helping in the slightest either.

Meanwhile Harry finished giving Scabbers his medicine. The rat was still alive surprisingly though progressively thinner and with less hair. The day after the medicine ran out Harry put a lethal dose of basilisk venom in the water bottle and at last Scabbers died in his sleep. The next Saturday Harry brought Scabbers up out of the bag in a transfigured pine box ignoring his snakes who insisted this was a waste of a good rat. Honestly Harry was worried the rat would give one of them indigestion even if Ron would never forgive him for such a thing.

The tiny rat sized funeral was attended by the Weasleys currently in school, Ron and Percy most prominently. Harry and Hermione were there of course and in her support Ron finally cried on her shoulder and forgave Hermione. Harry gave a silent sigh of relief over that. Hagrid came of course having dug the grave in the small pet cemetery the school maintained in just inside of the Forbidden Forest.

Every one said a little bit about the rat. Ginny cried. They lay numerous flowers in with him before Percy and Ron tossed in the first handfuls of dirt before Hagrid buried him completely

with one giant shovel full. Afterward Hagrid brought out the biggest wand any of them had ever seen looking more like a thin knobby club than a wand and cast a spell he assured them would keep the wild animals from messing with the grave.

No one noticed the thin black dog watching them from deeper in the woods.

Chapter End Notes

723=rat

763=rod(ent)

Yes there's what amounts to a magical padlock on the rat cages. It needs Harry's magical signature and a combo to open. Scabbers isn't getting out. Harry tells Ron the cages are designed to grow to fit what's inside as well. Scabbers didn't freak out when he saw Harry added the venom because he thought it was just more pain relief potion.

There's gonna be a lot of time skips from here on out.

Chapter 30

Chapter Notes

Everyone's so worried by Sirius

Warning for language in this chapter.

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

Chapter 30 - October 1993

Around the middle of October everyone noticed that Professor Lupin seemed to gain a smile and a bit of pep in his step. This was preceded by Professor Snape becoming the opposite growing darker and angrier with every day that passed.

Nonetheless for the majority of Hogwarts students classes went on business as usual. Harry and Hermione kept up their crazy class schedule but now Ron was more likely to snag Harry at the very least whenever they entered the common room and engage them in a game of some kind. Hermione if she didn't play could generally be counted on to sit nearby and read.

Ron maintained an animosity towards the big cat until the baby rat he'd chosen was old enough to be hand trained and the trio discovered Crookshanks genuinely didn't care. He no longer glared at Ron or watched his every move. At one point during a particularly tense chess match Ron won only to pale when he noticed his new rat, Ken, was missing. They found the tiny creature curled up in a ball in Crookshanks' fur not a whisker out of place.

Hermione theorized that Scabbers might have been sick with something that bothered Crookshanks causing the cat's kneazle senses to go haywire. Whatever the reason after that incident Ron grudgingly agreed to let bygones be bygones but the big cat never seemed to really forgive the red haired boy. He was friendly and even loving to Harry but treated Ron with a polite disinterest. If anything the cat seemed to be better friends with the new rat than Ron.

October 27 th , 1993

Getting the patronus class together took quite a bit more time than Professor Lupin had been anticipating. Apparently Dumbledore had continued to try and get the dementors removed but having failed in the last Wizengamot meeting finally relented allowing the class to proceed.

Harry walked into the room surprised to find he was the only third year there. A lot of the older students sneered at him but Professor Lupin waved him to the front with a smile. "Mr. Potter has agreed to be our guinea pig in a way. His boggart forms a dementor which we will be practicing on so as to avoid having to deal with the creature directly. In exchange he'll learn the spell with you but I don't want you to be disheartened Harry if you don't make as much progress as the other students. Please have a seat."

Harry took a seat in the front next to Percy and away from the boggart wardrobe in the corner. He felt dwarfed in a class filled with 6th and 7th years but at least they weren't all sneering at him anymore.

"The spell I'm going to attempt to teach you is highly advanced magic. Well beyond OWL which is why I restricted the class to only those of you past it. If you do succeed I hear the NEWT examiners grant some bonus points for this spell on the DADA NEWT but typically this spell is taught as part of the Auror course so if any of you are on that route you'll have a leg up in training." He paused making eye contact with those he knew were on that course and smiling at their eager expressions. "I must warn you. The charm may be too advanced for you. Many qualified wizards have difficulty with it. You noticed the Headmaster said only some of even your teachers can do it."

The professor pulled out his wand. "Now the spell is called the Patronus Charm. You probably heard the Headmaster mention it during the opening feast. When it works correctly it conjures a Patronus which is kind of Anti-Dementor, a guardian which acts as a shield between you and the Dementor. This spell also works on Lethifolds which are native to South America and have a similar though much more deadly effect on wizards."

Harry had a sudden vision of Madonna, the size of her egglayer, coiled between him and a dementor.

The Professor pulled out his wand. "The Patronus is a positive manifestation of your magic. A projection of the very things that the Dementor feeds upon, hope, love, happiness, the desire to survive, but as it cannot feel despair, as we do, the Dementor cannot hurt it.

Percy raised his hand.

"Yes Mr. Weasley."

"What does a Patronus look like?"

"It is unique to each wizard. There's some theory that forming a patronus can give you a hint as to your animagus form as well. As you know Professor McGonagall is a cat animagus and her patronus matches. Now we conjure the patronus with an incantation. This spell can be cast silently but I do not recommend trying that until you've really gotten it down. This is an emotion based spell. There's little wand movement but the emotions you put behind the spell will determine its success and later its strength and effectiveness."

He looked around the room. "We will now spend the next minute in silent concentration. I want all of you to find a single, very happy, memory. Focus on it. Focus on how happy you were in that moment."

Harry cast about for a happy memory. The first time he rode a broom. The hatching of his snakes. The smell of his mother.... Harry took a deep breath remembering again the warm sweet smell of her. The emotions of love and comfort and yes. This would be the memory he used.

“Everyone got it? Okay the incantation is Expecto Patronum!” From Professor Lupin’s wand came the wrath of a white wolf. It looked around for several seconds as if for danger before turning to the Professor and dissipating.

Harry muttered the words to himself concentrating on his memory. “Expecto Patronum. Expecto Patronum.” Beside him Percy did the same with a look of concentration.

“Right then everyone. Give it a try.”

“EXPECTO PATRONUM!” Came from every corner of the room. Various silvery and white wisps filled the air around the young witches and wizards trying to conjure the guardian including from Harry’s wand.

Harry grinned and didn’t see the incredulous looks from various students and the professor. He just concentrated on his memory and decided to try it again as he could hear various others around the room doing. “Expecto Patronum.” This time his silvery white mist formed a definite serpentine form. Now his memory was muddled. He remembered the smell of his mother. He could remember her heat. He could almost remember the low hum of a voice singing. “Expecto Patronum!” A silvery-white snake burst from his wand. The crested head showed it was a basilisk. Not as big as the Egghlayer but nearly twice the size of Madonna the big snake turned at Harry’s hiss.

“Wow. You’re beautiful.” The snake turned and slithered towards Harry. It was amazing. Harry could actually feel the love, the comfort of his mother radiating out of the snake. He went to place his hand on the snake’s head but it dissipated as he touched it.

The class around him was silent. Harry smiled at where his patronus had been. Finally he whispered in English this time. “That was incredible.”

Professor Lupin gave himself a shake and walked up to Harry cautiously. “That it was Mr. Potter. Congratulations on being the first to conjure a corporeal patronus. 20 points to Gryffindor?” The professor seemed bewildered. Not only had a 3rd year successfully performed this insanely difficult spell but he hadn’t even had all that much trouble with it at all. To conjure a corporeal patronus was something he’d struggled with for years. To get it on the third try was unheard of. For a 3rd year? Impossible. That wasn’t what had him staggered though. After all this was James’ son. He shouldn’t be surprised by anything he did but a snake? Not just a snake but a basilisk? “Well...ready to try it on a dementor?”

“Yes sir.” Harry stepped confidently towards the cabinet. It flew open and again formed the tall black cloaked form. Cold seeped into the room and again Harry could hear his parent’s last moments alive. As his mother started to beg Harry imagined that voice singing instead and “Expecto Patronum!” The silvery-white snake burst from his wand fangs first striking at the black cloaked figure which screamed and dived back into its cabinet.

Harry winced. Despite the patronus' brief blast of love his mother's dying words still echoed in his ears.

"Very good Mr. Potter! Now form a line who's ready to give it a try?"

Harry looked around and realized he'd have to do that again and again for the next hour as the other students tried and maybe succeeded maybe failed. He'd have to stand here and listen to his mother's screams. Maybe this wasn't such a good idea after all but he'd gotten to try it. Didn't everyone else deserve the same chance?

He turned back to the cabinet with a frown no one could see and felt Madonna and Delphi's coils tighten around him. He took a deep breath and summoned the boggart dementor again and again. Sometimes he was forced to cast his patronus again when the student aiming over his shoulder failed to cast the spell.

Surprisingly enough it was a Slytherin who noticed all was not well with the 3rd year. "You okay Potter?" Big hands grabbed his shoulders and turned him around to face an aristocratic looking boy with a strong chin and piercing yellow eyes. Harry peered up at him with glassy eyes. "Shit. Marc! Come here." The boy in green grabbed Harry beneath the arms and hauled him over to a chair. "Hey Potter! You in there?"

A hulking shadow stood over them. "What's up Ade?"

"Fucking hell. If a dementor is Potter's worst fear then he's been hearing dementor despair for the past hour."

"Shit." The shadow descended and Harry recognized Marcus Flint with a start. The snarl of snaggleteeth were hard to miss.

"Got any chocolate?"

"Yeah." Flint pulled out a wrapped bar of Honeydukes Chocolate and broke off several small pieces which the two boys fed to Harry slowly until he began to perk up a bit.

"Oi! Get away from my seeker Flint!"

"Fuck off Wood! We were helping him."

Professor Lupin, who had been across the room helping several students who'd not even gotten wisps yet turned at the commotion and headed towards them. "Now now boys. Save it for the pitch. Harry? What's wrong?"

"Overexposure to dementors is my guess. Even a boggart has gotta be sending out something. Maybe not as strong as a real one but something." The first boy who Harry had heard Flint call Ade spoke up rather than let either Quidditch Captain speak.

"I've been keeping chocolate on me for the younger years." Flint spoke up holding out the mostly depleted bar of chocolate. He handed the rest to Harry.

“Thank you.” Harry croaked out taking another bite of the chocolate in relief. The sound of his mother’s body hitting the ground faded and Harry raised his wand to cast the Patronus Charm again. This time the silver white snake curled around his shoulders and Harry took a deep breath as the snake slowly faded.

“I’m so sorry Harry. I didn’t think the boggart would be capable of mimicking a dementor’s power as well as its form. Why didn’t you say anything?”

Harry shrugged as he sucked on the chocolate in his mouth. Carrying around chocolate sounded like a fantastic idea. Why hadn’t he thought of that? “Everyone deserves a chance to practice I figured.”

“Not at the expense of your mental health.” Flint said with a frown that made his teeth stick out even more prominently.

“What are you hearing when the dementor gets near that makes it your greatest fear anyway?” Ade asked curiously.

Before anyone could chastise Ade for asking such a personal question Harry answered with a dull voice. It wasn’t like everyone didn’t already know what happened. “I hear my parents dying. I hear Mum begging him to spare me. I hear him casting something like abra ka dabra at her. I hear her body hit the floor. I hear him cast the same thing again and this bright green light...then it starts all over again with Dad yelling for Mum to run.”

The class was silent and still as everyone looked on with horror.

Ade moves first and lays a hand on his shoulder. “And that’s what you’ve been hearing on repeat for the last hour? Just so we could practice?”

“Fucking hell. We’re gonna need a lot more chocolate. I got the spell down. You Ade?”

“Yeah. Let’s take him down to the kitchen. Get couple mugs of cocoa in you eh?”

“Yes that’ll be for the best I think boys. I wish you would have told me Harry. There was no need to put yourself through that. Not for a class. Mr. Flint, Mr. Pucey? I’m trusting you now. If I hear that Mr. Potter went awry I’ll be very upset.”

Both Slytherins snarled at the implied prejudice but their hands on Harry’s arms were fairly gentle as they lifted him to his feet and helped him out the door after snagging his bag.

Harry looked up and watched Flint tickle a pear on a painting of fruit and watched as it swung open to let them into an enormous room. As big as the great hall with gleaming copper kettles hanging from mid air around a room surrounded by shelves and shelves full of food. The room was absolutely full of house elves too.

“Cocoa and keep it coming for the little guy here. Dementor over exposure. Fetch all the chocolate you think he can eat.” Ade ordered.

Ade Pucey? Harry had no idea who he was. He barely kept track of all the upper years in his own house let alone others. He only recognized Flint because he was the Slytherin Quidditch

Captain. Harry looked at the tall wizards on either side of him as he sipped the soothing cocoa. They seemed to be ignoring him besides sliding a chocolate pudding closer to him as they discussed their own classes over his head. He was surprised to find that Flint was in both Runes and Arithmancy.

“I thought you failed last year?” Harry asked. His eyes widened as Flint snarled. “Sorry. That was tactless.”

Flint huffed. “Yeah I failed. Everyone thinks that means I’m stupid.”

Harry kept his thoughts to himself about how Flint’s looks really didn’t help that perception. The Slytherin surprised him again by reading his face.

“Yeah I know. I’m big so I must be slow right? Fuck I ain’t the smartest wizard in this school or the most powerful Mr. I cast an advanced auror spell at thirteen but I do alright. I actually excel in Runes and Arithmancy. It’s all patterns and math and I’m good at that shit. As for why I failed...” Flint looked away and took a hearty pull of his cocoa finishing it off.

“Another!” he ordered from the house elf who happily fetched him exactly that. “My mum was dying last year. I was at the hospital more than I was here. I came back for games and practice just for the flying.” He took another drink of cocoa and stole one of Harry’s desserts that lined the table. “She died just before NEWTs. I was wrecked. In absolutely no condition to take those tests. Professor Snape negotiated with the Headmaster to let me repeat the year.”

“I’m sorry about your Mum.” Harry said.

“Figured it was only fair you know after you told everyone in there what you heard when the dementors are around after Ade’s stupid ass question.” He glared over Harry’s head at the other boy.

“Yeah yeah. Foot in mouth disease. Fair’s fair. When the dementors get near I hear the Dark Lord too.” Ade said with his brows drawn down as he looked at the table. “I was about five I guess. He’d come to see my father about something. It wasn’t done yet and he was furious. I’d been playing in the floor and Father had hidden me under the desk when he came in. I had to listen as he cursed my father. Made him scream on the floor of his own study.” Ade shook his head. “You may not like to hear this but according to my grandfather the Dark Lord wasn’t always like that. Sometime in the seventies he just went fucking nuts. There are all these whispers that he isn’t really gone but man I hope he is. I don’t wanna ever hear my father scream like that again.”

Harry looked down into the creamy surface of his cocoa. “He’s not gone.”

“What?!”

“How do you know?!”

“First year. Er..my first year. Professor Quirrell found his spirit in Albania and it latched on to the back of his head. Came back to Hogwarts to try and get the Philosopher’s Stone so he could be fully revived.” Harry shuddered remembering the twisted face on the back of his teacher’s head.

“Fucking hell. What happened?”

“Headmaster said everyone already knew.”

“I mean you hear rumors but not exactly what happened.”

“Hermione, Ron and me. We thought Professor Snape was gonna steal the stone and told Professor McGonagall who blew us off so we got the bright idea to go down and save it ourselves.” Harry paused frowning. He tried for a moment to picture himself as small as Dennis Creevey bravely going to face a Cerberus. “Fuck we were dumb. I mean looking back now three firsties against a Cerberus, a devil’s snare and a troll? And what exactly did we think we were gonna do if we did find Snape down there. Tickle him to death?”

“I was gonna say. Weasley, well all the Weasleys I mean damn there’s so many of them I’m gonna have to actually use their names aren’t I? Why didn’t you tell Ron’s brothers? The twins are fucking amazing at magic and everyone knew Percy was gonna be fucking Head Boy. Even if the teachers wouldn’t listen surely they would have.” Ade asked.

“I don’t remember exactly.”

“What happened when you got down there?”

“Well Quirrell had already left the Cerberus asleep so we slipped by it. Devil’s Snare is easy as long as you stay still or have a light spell. Each teacher created some kind of puzzle to get around. Cerberus was Hagrid’s, Devil’s Snare was Sprout’s, then there was a room filled with flying keys that must have been Flitwick’s, then a giant chess table that was McGonagall’s, a room with a troll was Quirrell’s, and Professor Snape had a logic puzzle with potions in the room where the doors were covered in flames. One potion took you forward, one took you back, and, like, three potions were poisons.”

“Fucking hell. That’s all? That’s all that was in place to protect one of the most precious treasures in the known world. A bunch of puzzles three first years got through? There weren’t any wards? What about the rest of the teachers? Didn’t they help? A rune schema? An arithmancy problem? Fucking crystal ball? A locked fucking door? I mean what the actual fuck?” Flint looked at Harry like he was close to thinking he made it all up.

“What was past the flames?” Ade wanted to know.

“This Mirror of Erised. Quirrell was standing in front of it but only someone who wanted the stone but didn’t want to use it could get it out.”

“The Mirror of Erised is a cursed object. How do you know about it?”

“Uh I found it that year around Christmas. It was just sitting around in one of the classrooms. Headmaster found me looking at it one night and told me about it.”

Ade shared a look with Marc over Harry’s head.

“Anyway Quirrell had the Dark Lord...why doesn’t everyone call him that instead of that ridiculous You-Know-Who business?” Harry shook his head. “The Dark Lord’s face was on

the back of his head. He said all this crazy bullshit that would have had Salazar rolling in his grave before he attacked me and tried to choke me only for some reason, Headmaster said it was because of my mother's love, touching me hurt him? I don't know. I pushed my hands in his face, Quirrell died and the Dark Lord's spirit fled. I woke in the infirmary a few days later."

Both older Slytherin boys looked at the 3rd year in disbelief. "Mate I hate to tell you this but somebody lied to you." Ade said.

"There are so many fucking holes in that story. First off you think you were the only ones to try the third floor corridor that year? There wasn't any door there at all so how the fuck did three first years find it?" Flint asked.

"Unless someone wanted you to find it."

"And how'd you find out about the stone anyway. No one knew about that until Nicholas Flamel himself came to get it afterwards."

"Headmaster said it was destroyed."

"Destroy the philosopher's stone?" Flint was incredulous.

"That would actually make sense. Flamel looked pissed as he was leaving but I mean given that he looks around our age I doubt he'll have any trouble making another one."

"No shit but why destroy it at all? It took the Dark Lord ten years to find a willing vessel and you can bet that Flamel is gonna hide it a fair sight better than Dumbledore did. I mean flying keys. That shit's tailor made for the youngest seeker in a century."

"And a chess game? Really?"

"Admittedly a troll's a bit of a bother but you little firsties had defeated one earlier that year already."

"And no logic puzzle was gonna stop curly top."

"Back to my original question. How'd you learn about the stone in the first place?"

"Uh Hagrid. He mentioned that whatever was in the corridor was between the Headmaster and Nicholas Flamel. Once we figured out who he was that was easy enough to figure out what Snape or rather Quirrell was after."

"Why'd you suspect Snape anyway?" Ade asked like he couldn't imagine the Potions Master as a bad guy.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Mates I hate to tell you this but to non-Slytherins he's a bit of a wanker. To first year Gryffindors he may as well be the devil himself. Quirrell was killing unicorns and drinking their blood and we were all totally convinced it was Snape. I mean I get it now. He's...grumpy but he'd never actually hurt any of us and I don't doubt if we'd had a single clue he wasn't a bad guy and told him someone was going for the stone instead of

McGonagall he'd have locked us in a classroom and gone down there to tear bloody strips off of Quirrell but at the time all we knew was that he was threatening Quirrell about something and limping after getting ravaged by Fluffy."

"Fluffy?"

"The Cerberus. Hagrid calls him Fluffy."

Flint put his head in his hands while Ade just shook his. "Mate. Buy a clue."

"I mean looking back at it now I see the holes but give me a break. I was eleven. You remember being eleven big boy? Now take pity on this poor dementor exposed Gryff and tell me since you're so convinced I was setup who do you think did it?"

Ade smirked. "I'll give you the rest of your cocoa to figure it out little boy."

"What's your name anyway? Him I know." Harry jerked his head at Marcus who seemed to be stifling laughter in his hands.

"Adrien Pucey of the Honorable House of Pucey at your service." Ade held out a hand that Harry shook with a laugh at Ade's serious proper face.

"Uh..same? I have no fucking clue to be honest with you. All I know about the Potters is my father was one and my grandfather invented a hair crème and left me a boatload of money from the profits but from what I've heard of them I doubt they were honorable."

Now both Slytherins started to laugh. Harry joined them though he didn't know why. He continued though. He knew pureblood was important to Slytherins and quite frankly he'd just like to set the record straight on his mum. "Now my mum's family is better." Harry took a sip of his cocoa as the boys turned to look at him strangely.

"I inherited my mum's tarot cards but I found out she inherited them from her mum who inherited them from her mum and so and so forth going back generations of witches. My great grandmother was a squib. First of the line but she kept the cards and had a daughter. Couple of generations later up springs my mum. I heard someone call it going dormant."

"Yeah. I mean you hear about that. Most families keep track of their squibs because of it. I got a squib cousin that lives in Manchester and he's got a little girl we think might be getting a letter here in a few years. What was your mum's name again?"

"Lily Evans."

"What was your great grandmum's name would be the question? We might even be cousins." Ade asked.

"Uh Gaunt I think. Mum's diary calls her GG or Granny Gaunt. Says she never married just had the one daughter and told fortunes till the day she died. Told Mum she'd be a great lady one day as she was teaching her to read the cards."

Now both boys looked surprised. “Fucking hell. If you can prove that....” Ade said in a bit of awe.

“Gaunts are part of the sacred twenty-eight.” Flint said.

“Sacred twenty-eight?”

“Someone wrote a book back in the forties about the purest families. Twenty-eight of them. Flints are one. Gaunts are another.”

“Gaunts in particular were supposed to be one of the last surviving branches of the Slytherin family. They were all parseltongues too.” Adrien put in.

“Like me?”

“Yup. Dirt poor though. And they’re all dead now. ‘Cept you I guess.”

“Not all of them.” Flint trailed off. “My granddad was friends was the son of the last daughter. She ran off and got pregnant by some wizard and died at a muggle hospital so he was raised up in a muggle orphanage. They went to school together. Tom Marvolo Riddle.”

“But that’s the Dark Lord’s name!”

“Yeah and we were hoping he was dead.” Flint snarked.

“Fuck. That means you and him.” Ade stared at him.

“No.” Harry stated.

“I mean you had to know you were related in some way from the parseltongue. That’s why everyone thought you were the heir last year.” Ade pointed out.

“Fuck that bullshit. Slytherin might have been the only one left with any real power but his mum was a part of the huge fucking tribe of Parselmages that were going dormant cause they inbred too much. The squibs of those Parselmages helped build Hogwarts and those that went even more dormant than that were fostered out all around England. And there’s parseltongue all over the world. My ability could have come from any of those.”

“How do you know that?” Flint asked.

“Library in the Alley had some books written in parselscript. They were written by one of the last Parselmages before Salazar who recorded the end of the tribe.”

“Sure but it is confirmed the Gaunts were one of the last of Salazar’s line and if your Great-Grandmum was a Gaunt that means you really are the Heir of Slytherin and the Dark Lord’s cousin.” Ade laughed at the incredulous look on Harry’s face.

The boy put his head down on the table. “Fuck my life.” He looked up at the working house elves. “I’m gonna need more chocolate.” A new cup appeared in front of him almost instantly.

“You cuss this much normally?” Flint asked amused at the thirteen year old’s mouth.

“No. I took my cue from you guys. Hermione would wash my mouth out with soap if I said any of that in front of her.”

Ade made a whip sound with his mouth. He laid aside the revelation that the Boy-Who-Lived and the Dark Lord were cousins for now though he’d definitely be telling his father as soon as possible. “Speaking of rumors.”

“Ya know for a couple of big burly looking motherfuckers you guys are gossipy as fuck.” Harry muttered around his cocoa.

Flint laughed. “Whole wizarding world is like this kid. Get used to it. Why you think the Prophet is so popular?”

“So what’s happening between you and curly top?” Ade wanted to know.

“Nothing. We’re friends.”

“Really? She’s growing up pretty. How long you think you can remain friends?” Flint asked.

Harry sipped his cocoa.

“It can’t have escaped your notice. Especially after she tamed that wild mane of hers.” Ade grabbed one of the desserts himself and dug in. The three boys were making a dent in them but the house elves kept putting more on the table.

“I was there when she tamed it and if you think she’s pretty in Hogwarts robes you should see her in one of her bright colored robes with the sun streaming down on her through a bookstore window. Or even better in her pajamas curled up like a cat asleep on a pillow, a cup of cold tea on the floor after she’s fallen asleep studying again.” Harry glanced at either boy.

“This where you fed us some line about how she’s like your sister?” Flint raised one eyebrow and it occurred to Harry he might be handsome if it wasn’t for his messed up mouth.

“Nope. This is where I repeat that she’s my friend. I love Hermione. I’d die for her. Kill for her. But we’re thirteen well she’s fourteen now but anyway we’re way too young to worry about that yet. Beyond that my friendship with her is way more important than snogging.” He glared at either boy. “And you two are way too old for her.”

“Yeah now but she’s only gonna get prettier. Ten years when she’s 24 and we’re 28 though?”

“You have my blessing to date my friend when she’s 24.” Harry stated dryly. “Though I’m surprised I haven’t heard the word mud from either of you.”

“Granger’s a wizarding surname.” Flint told him.

“The hell?”

“Malfoy’s too much of a prick but some of us aren’t as picky.” Ade smiled and lifted his eyebrows a few times.

“Flint’s were pure in the 40s but my mum was half-blood. We were getting too close. If I don’t marry a...dormant...blood? Whatever. I got no other options but a second cousin.”

“Hermione’s half-Italian, half-Greek. There’s no way she’s related to any of us. What about outside of Great Britain? Don’t you guys look for brides on the continent?”

“How’d she get a name like Granger then?” Adrien asked.

“Her dad’s mum is Italian. Married an English bloke.” Harry had asked himself this summer. He turned to Flint. “Ya know if it wasn’t for your teeth you wouldn’t be a bad looking bloke. I find it hard to believe the wizarding world doesn’t have something that could help but Hermione’s folks are dentists. Muggles have ways to fix that.

Flint growled and rubbed at his mouth.

Ade sighed. “It’s not that Harry. Wood hit Marc in the mouth with a blast of accidental magic when he was a first year. Accidental magic isn’t as easily reversed as a hex or a curse would have been. The healers say the magic should wear off eventually. Probably when Marc gets his next big magical inheritance at twenty-one.”

“Oh man that sucks. I’m sorry.”

“Eh.” Marc curled his lip and shoveled a spoon full of pudding into his mouth. Harry had noticed he’d only chosen soft desserts. They looked bad but he tried to imagine for a second what it must be to eat with those.

“Magical inheritance?”

“Fuck don’t they tell you kids anything?” Ade asked.

“Are you kidding me? Hermione and I didn’t know there was a fucking hospital or that we needed vaccinations until this summer.”

“Fuck really?” Flint asked in disbelief.

“Really.”

“Shit like that was what the Dark Lord was trying to fix. You know before he went fucking insane.” Ade told him with a roll of his eyes.

“You get your first magical inheritance at eleven. You get mostly stabilized then. That’s why we start school after we turn eleven. You get another minor one five years later at 16. That’s why there’s a gap year between your OWL and NEWT years. Gives us time to adjust to a new power level. You get the next one five years later at twenty-one. If you’re really lucky you might get another one after that and so on and so forth. The only ones you’re really guaranteed are the first three. They say wizards who live to be like a hundred get another big one.” Flint explained. He licked his ugly teeth with a frown. “Just two more years. Fucking

Wood. It's been a good run but you Gryffs are gonna win this year. Aside from Ade and Malfoy I had to replace our whole fucking team this year while Wood's been building his up. He's got the best chasers, best beaters, best seeker, and he may be a prick but he's a good keeper. Salazar but the look on his face these last seven years has been a sweet one every time I've won that trophy."

Ade cast tempus. "It's been nice but we should be heading back to the dorms before Snape comes looking for us."

"Dumbledore." Harry said quietly. He'd been pondering what they'd talked about earlier. How had he known about the mirror? Dumbledore. Why only challenges set by those teachers? Because those were first year teachers. Whose chocolate frog card had given them the final clue? Dumbledore. Who knew Nicholas Flamel? Dumbledore.

"You're smarter than you look." Flint said.

"I think I literally said the same thing about you a half an hour ago."

Ade laughed as he stood up. "Well Potter it's been a fun and enlightening evening but don't think we're gonna take it easy on you on the pitch this weekend."

"Wouldn't dream of it." Harry laughed. "Thanks guys."

"Anytime Harry." Flint ruffled Harry's hair.

"See ya kid." Ade waved as they left.

Harry finished his last cup of cocoa and walked to the back of the kitchen to a wall covered in twisted ladles and walked through. Lupin came in a few minutes later with a frown. He saw the multitude of empty cocoa mugs and chocolate dessert plates but the elves couldn't tell him where Harry had gone.

Chapter End Notes

Crooshanks is half-kneazle yes but let's not forget that the other half is cat. Nothing against Ron personally. Crookshanks just doesn't care for him. Remember until Hermione Crookshanks was violently disinterested in everyone. It's honestly more of a surprise that he likes Harry at all.

I literally took a lot of Professor Lupin's words about the patronus directly from his lesson with Harry in the book.

Remember all that stuff about cumulative effects happening in the chamber that Harry's not truly aware of? In canon it took Harry three months to learn the spell which was truly impressive. Here it takes him about a minute.

Seriously anyone notice the task from each teacher was only a task from the first year professors.

Once again others know more about Harry's family than him. Notice NO ONE not even Lupin is sitting Harry down and actually telling him about his father.

Surprise Surprise Tom lied about his father being a wizard. Anyone surprised? I'm not....I wrote it but still.

Finally for everyone worried about Harmony. I've tried to not answer any of those questions too much cause Harry explains it here.

Imma be honest the whole Marcus, Harry, Adrien conversation came out of no where. Just writing and writing and writing and where did this come from.

Chapter 31

Chapter Notes

Warning: if you hate Snape/love James skip this chapter. On the other hand if you love Lily do read this chapter

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

Chapter 31 - October 31st, 1993

With significant trepidation Harry came out of the passageway near Snape's office. He knew the man was inside because Salazar, suspicious bastard that he was, had spy holes into his own quarters. Apparently it had been to make sure Godric hadn't done something stupid like prank him but Harry was never going to tell Snape about those holes.

He knocked on the door and stepped back taking a deep breath. Who the fuck knew how this was going to go but he owed it the memory of his mum to at least try and get along with her old friend.

The door swung open and Snape filled the doorway. "I'm positive Mr. Potter that you are aware I don't keep office hours on Sunday."

"Yes sir. This isn't about school though."

"Oh?"

"Yes sir. I need to talk to you about something. May I come in?"

Snape studied him for several moments before stepping aside and letting Harry in.

"Make it quick Potter. My leisure time will already be taken up by the feast this evening and as you might imagine I value it much higher than any insipid request of yours."

Harry took a deep breath and remembered his carefully prepared speech. "I met a friend, a roommate, of my mum this summer. She told me that my mum and you were close friends. Later I went down to see her vault and I found her trunk which had her journals in it. I've felt much closer to her than ever before. As you may know I grew up with my Aunt Petunia and she never mentioned Mum at all. Once I had all these things I wanted a way to preserve them and I built a shrine to her and the lady who helped me gave me prayers to say and said on the day of Mum's death I should spend some time in reflection at her shrine and I thought, maybe, as Mum's friend, you'd like to join me?"

Professor Snape looked down at him with those deep black eyes of his for several minutes. "A shrine to your mother? Not your...father?"

“Umm no sir. I know almost nothing about James except that he was a horrid bully and...that he told my mum to run with me while he held off the Dark Lord. He must have died in an instance though cause he barely slowed him down.”

“How do you know that?”

“The bully part or...of course not. James bullied so many people any of his victims could have told me about him.” Harry shook his head trying not to get flustered. This was embarrassing talking about feelings with his professor. He felt strangely vulnerable. Kip slithered up the center of his torso and he straightened his spine. “It’s the dementors sir. When they get near I hear their last moments. The Dark Lord ordering my mum to move aside, Mum begging for my life. Chelsea said Mum loved me so much. No matter what the Dark Lord had offered her I don’t think she’d have ever stood aside and just let him kill me.” He looked up to find Professor Snape frozen. He was pale. Paler than normal and his eyes were far away.

“He offered to spare her life?”

“Yeah. Several times. Ade said the Dark Lord didn’t used to be crazy. Maybe he recognized Mum was his cousin and didn’t want to kill her, though I still don’t know why he wanted to kill me.”

“There was a prophecy...” Professor Snape sat down slowly. “Wait cousin?”

“Prophecy?” Harry asked. “Oh yeah. Mum’s Great Grandmum was a Gaunt squib and the Dark Lord’s mum was a Gaunt. So they were and we are cousins. Hence the parselmouth. I really am the Heir of Slytherin ironically enough. What was that about a prophecy?”

“A prophecy talked about a child that would vanquish the Dark Lord born as the seventh month died to parents that had thrice defied him. You and one other fit the bill. That’s the reason for the attack though do not go spreading that around. Prophecies are enormously finicky things so I don’t want you going around thinking you’re the chosen one or anything Potter.” Professor Snape still looked kind of shocked but Harry figured with the return of the vitriol in his voice that he must be feeling a bit better.

“If you don’t mind sir could you please call me Harry. I’ve been trying to distance myself from James after I heard what a horrid bully him and his friends were. I even changed my hair and got my eyes fixed this summer.” Harry tugged at the itchy wig. “It was great. No one knew who I was and no one called me James. Honestly it’s a bit creepy being called by a dead man’s name. If I want to stay anonymous during the summer however I have to wear this stupid wig during the school year.” He scratched at the hateful thing. Wash day was still four days away and he couldn’t wait. He was hoping to convince Hermione to spin the whole day back for them.

Snape blinked at him. “You changed your hair?”

“Yeah that’s where I met Chelsea. Moldavite? Not sure if that’s her maiden name or not. She’s a hairdresser and she grew my hair out and changed it to red so it matches Mum’s instead. I love it. Here look.” Even if it wasn’t wash day here in the privacy of Snape’s

quarters he could take the wig off surely. It wasn't like anyone but him could look through those peek holes. Maybe it'd make the man stop looking at him so hatefully. He cast the reverse sew in spell and pulled the wig off revealing the tight red braids. Air rushed over his sweaty scalp and he sighed happily. He cast the unbraiding spell next and dropped the wig on Professor Snape's desk as he thrust both hands into his hair and scrubbed at his scalp for a few minutes. He tossed the glasses away to sit with the wig as well and looked up at a somewhat surprised looking Potions Master.

Harry smiled unaware that after staring at his mum's picture so much that he smiled like her now and Professor Snape was now struggling with seeing the face of his friend in her son.

"Chelsea really helped me out a lot this summer. She took me to St. Mungos to get my vaccinations and signed off to get my eyes fixed and she signed my Hogsmeade form too. She seemed to really hate James though. Seriously why does everyone tell me he was such a great guy when all I seem to run into are his former victims? I hate bullies. My cousin Dudley made my life a living hell growing up. Honestly James sounds like Malfoy only his targets were so-called 'Dark' people." Harry literally made quote fingers around the word Dark. Supposedly Slytherins were Dark but Ade and Marc were cool. Supposedly the Goyles and LeStranges were Dark but the older ones he'd met had been super nice and helpful.

"Potter was a stupid, arrogant, pig headed toe rag of a man and his friends not much better. I'm surprised actually. I had thought Lupin would have regaled you with all sorts of tales of your father and his adventures during school." Snape looked from Harry to the wig in disgust. Though whether at himself or James was anyone's guess.

"Lupin? Professor Lupin? He knew James?"

"One of his best friends along with Black and Pettigrew. He hasn't mentioned it?"

"Not at all."

"Hmmm..."

"Umm... I don't wanna talk about my father. Or rather we've talked about him enough. Could we talk about my mum? Honor her and have a moment of silence and I could show you my shrine. I have some of her clothes and when the doors are opened you can smell her and it's...amazing. I can power a patronus just from her smell alone."

For the first time in memory Harry stared because just at the edges it looked as if Professor Snape's mouth had softened in what might have on anyone else been a smile. "Yes. You have an Extended charm on a trunk I imagine?"

"On my bag. I didn't want to leave a trunk at the Dursleys while I was out and about." Harry slung his pack off his back and opened the locks. "Uh only Hermione and Ron have really been in here. I've been trying to keep it a secret. Private you know? So don't tell anyone please. I asked Hermione and there's no rule against it but still."

"I will not tell anyone about the charm on your bag. I promise." Professor Snape intoned solemnly.

“Thanks.” Harry walked down the stairs thankful that he’d already talked to his snakes. He didn’t want them heading to their fountain while Professor Snape was down here. He had to keep some secrets to himself. He walked over to the cabinet waving to the Professor who was standing in the foyer looking around in some amazement. “Come over here. The smell is the strongest when you first open the doors.”

“Harry how much did all this cost you? You can’t be running through your inheritance like this all at once.” Professor Snape walked over looking down at him in concern.

“Sleekeazy’s Hair Potion.”

“What?”

“My grandfather, Fleamont Potter, invented Sleekeazy Hair Potion. I’m not gonna flaunt it or anything but I do have money. Besides if you knew how the Dursley’s treated me you’d know that a place with a kitchen and a bedroom are necessary.”

“How do they treat you?” Professor Snape asked darkly.

“You knew my aunt. How do you think? I suppose the closest comparison would slightly better than the Malfoy’s treat their house elves. After all my ears aren’t big enough to close in the oven door.” Harry looked disgusted a look shared by the Potions Master. “I made a deal with them this summer. I stay completely out of their sight. I mean completely and they, well, if they don’t see me they can’t put me to work and they don’t have to feed me. Not that they ever fed me much. Healer at St. Mungos said the Phoenix tears likely healed all the malnutrition Chelsea was worried about.”

“Why do you go back there at all? Why not stay with Weasley or Granger?”

“I asked the Headmaster about that before the summer started this year and he told me that there were wards setup around the Dursley’s house for my protection. Something about how that’s why the Dark Lord couldn’t touch me in first year. He did say I only have to stay there a few weeks a year to charge them though. After that I could go stay with my friends. I figured that just meant within the plot so I asked Percy how to get to Diagon Alley. He told me I could take the Knight Bus. At first I figured I’d just spend the day there and sneak back at night but I worried about my trunk and Hedwig being left where the Dursley’s could get them so I found this luggage shop in Diagon hoping to maybe get a backpack just so I could have my most precious things with me all the time and Mr. Goyle showed me this.”

Harry waved a hand around. “Well he showed me that.” He pointed to his foyer. “He was worried about me spending too much money too. After I went to the bank and talked to the goblins though I got the rest of this stuff. A lot of the furniture was in my mum’s vault actually. From her mum and dad I guess.”

“Yes I recognize some of it.”

“Did-did you go over to their house often?” Harry shifted his feet in front of the cabinet. “I should make some tea. How do you take yours?” He flicked his wand to start the fireplace up and heading towards the kitchen to get his tea things.

“Yes. Very often. My home life wasn’t the best either. Mama Evans invited me to dinner every time I happened by their house and sought every excuse to keep me there as long as possible.” Snape sat down on the couch and crossed his legs. “I cleaned gutters, weeded the garden, and washed the dishes with Lily beside me most of the time. Mama Evans bought me a cheap pack of tarot cards from a catalog and taught Lily and I to read them long before we ever got our letters to Hogwarts.” Snape accepted a cup of tea from Harry and added a lot of cream and a single scoop of sugar to his cup. “The family cards were passed to Lily because Tuney vehemently rejected the notion of fortune telling. It was a very old set. I imagine they were lost in the attack.”

“No. They were in Mum’s school trunk.” Harry reached into his pocket to reveal the silk pouch of cards.

“Odd. I would have thought she’d have kept them on her.” Snape’s brow furrowed. “Mind you take care of those. They are very old.”

“I know. A lady in Diagon Alley looked at them and she...I haven’t learned what she did in divination yet. She had me wave the cards over a silver bowl of water and we watched them being given to my mum, and to her mum, and to her mum, and so on through many many generations of mainly witches but occasionally wizards. All with green eyes right up until they were made. It was amazing.”

“Scrying.”

“Hmm?”

“That method of divination is called scrying. The lady who did that must have had a very strong eye or you do.”

“I have the talent I think. Not to the extent she does though. She sold me decks for Ron and Hermione for Christmas when I didn’t even know if I was gonna get them yet and then offered to check the history of my cards before I could ask. Kind of like Professor Trelawney but with less...dramatics.”

“What was her name?”

“Calypso.”

“Ah...That’s not the nicer part of the alley.”

“I’m really good at hiding.” Harry gave him a cheeky smile that would have put the Potions Master in a towering rage if he’d been wearing the wig upstairs but now just reminded him of long ago summer days and a red head with a toad.

“Your mother used to smile like that right before she suggested we do something crazy.” Professor Snape watched Harry lean forward eager for a story. Again his face softened ever so slightly to suggest the beginning of a smile. “She could speak to toads did you know?”

“Yeah Chelsea told me. Do you know what happened to Ricky?”

“He found himself a mate the summer after sixth year and decided to stay with her and settle into tadpole bliss rather than come back to Hogwarts. Lily was happy for him but she had to drop out of the Toad Chorus group and it just about broke her heart. She wanted to get another toad but by the following summer she’d started dating Potter who apparently took a very dim view of reptiles.” Professor Snape’s mouth twisted hatefully.

Harry rolled his eyes. “There nothing wrong with toads or frogs or snakes for that matter. I’ve never met an impolite snake. Hating an entire group of animals is just stupid. Did the Christians do this? The parselscript history books I’ve read say they’re the reason the parselmouth tribes went into hiding back before Salazar was born.”

“You know much Christian rhetoric?”

“Nothing really.”

“Yes well the religion takes a rather dim view of snakes because one of their creation legends has a snake as the villain who got humans thrown out of paradise.”

“So? That doesn’t mean all snakes are bad.”

Snape shrugged. “Lily found Ricky the summer before first year after we’d gotten our letters. She was friends with all the local toads of course and sad to be leaving them as I told her the school was in Scotland and we don’t have many toads up here. As she was saying goodbye Ricky popped up and said he thought it’d be a fine adventure to see Scotland and so she brought him with her.” Again Snape almost smiled. “Tuney hated toads and was appalled that night when Ricky jumped up on the table to snatch a fly out of the air before it could land in the pudding.”

“Aunt Petunia said Mum came home with frog spawn in her pockets.”

“Yes some foolish frog had laid its eggs in a puddle and Lily couldn’t stand to think the poor things would die and so we magicked up her robe pocket to be impermeable and slipped them all in her pocket. Once we were home we found we couldn’t quite get the eggs out again and so Lily had to walk around with a pocket full of tadpoles for a month until they grew legs and got big enough we could fish all of them out of her pocket and put them in the pond.”

Harry laughed.

“Your mother was endlessly compassionate. It baffled Mama Evans that Lily and Tuney could be so very different. Tuney apparently took after her father’s mother who was a very hateful woman I recall.”

“How did they die? Mum’s parents? Aunt Petunia never spoke about them. I used to dream that they’d take me away one day when I was little but then I heard her tell Dudley they were dead.”

“You never asked?”

“Don’t ask questions was rule number one growing up.” Harry said sourly. He’d grown up with his mum’s sister. Not knowing about James’ family was one thing but not knowing about his mum’s was ridiculous. Aunt Petunia never talked about them however. Maybe if Dudley had asked but the fat lump rarely paid attention to things that didn’t affect him directly.

“Mama Evans was hit by a lorry on her way home from the shops the day Lily and I were on our way home from our 7th year at Hogwarts. She’d burnt the first cake she’d made that morning and didn’t have enough eggs for a second so she’d run out to get some more while Mr. Evans was picking us up from the train station. She died instantly. We had her funeral. Potter came and tried making jokes as usual to cheer Lily up. As if there was any cheering up after the death of her mother. We had a big fight about Potter that night and it was the last time I talked to her face to face...we exchanged letters but I was busy with my apprenticeship and she was busy with her wedding.” His lips curled.

“I’m sorry.”

He sighed deeply. “Mr. Evans died within the next year. He’d never been an easy man to deal with though never physically abusive to my knowledge. I’ll not sugar coat things by telling you he died of a broken heart or some such nonsense. The truth of the matter is his wife waited on him hand and foot and with her death and his daughters married and gone the house fell into squalor and he ate some lunch meat that had turned. The boy who delivered the newspaper noticed a few days later that he’d not been collecting the paper and went in to find him dead.”

Harry winced but he’d read his mum’s journals. He knew her dad was distant at best. Even Uncle Vernon seemed to be more affectionate and loving, to Petunia and Dudley at least, than his grandfather had been to his wife and daughters. Not abusive just disinterested in them.

“I wasn’t able to attend the funeral but Petunia and Lily buried him quietly with little fanfare. I sent flowers.” Snape looked away. “Lily was pregnant with you at that time. The pregnancy was hard on her. She wrote me nearly daily. I sent her all sorts of potions because she couldn’t brew herself while she was carrying. She and Potter had a fight once you were born you know? Over who would be your godfather. She wanted to elect me. Potter wanted Black and of course he over ruled her. She was a different person with Potter than she’d been before. Meeker, less sure of herself.”

“Chelsea said when she started dating James they tested her for every love potion they could think of.”

“And then came to me to test her for everything they couldn’t think of. Eventually we had no choice but to come to the conclusion she really loved him.” Snape sighed and finished his tea. “I believe you wanted to show me your shrine?”

“Yes sir.” Harry finished his own tea and opened the cabinet. A small rug rolled out automatically and Harry knelt on it. For several minutes he just sat there breathing deeply as he looked at the pictures of her. He felt Professor Snape kneel next to him. “Hey Mum. It’s the anniversary of your death. I brought Professor Snape with me just like I promised.”

Professor Snape cleared his voice. "Hello Lily." He took a deep breath. "I miss you. More each year. We were supposed to be together forever. Friends to the end. The end was twelve years ago today." He reached up a hand to the picture of a gently smiling Lily. "I'm so sorry."

Chapter End Notes

PERSPECTIVE!!!! Harry's only getting one perspective from people who hate James. YES. We the readers of Harry Potter KNOW James was brave and kind and generous but Harry doesn't know that and no one that does is talking to him despite having plenty of opportunity. Not just Lupin why hasn't McGonagall called Harry in for a spot of tea to talk about her favorite student? Hagrid seemed to be more an acquaintance to the Potters than a close friend and probably isn't privy to James outside of tales and him being a brave war hero. What about the people who sent Hagrid pictures. Why didn't they send letters too? Things like "Hey here's my favorite picture of James. He was a great guy. Always helped me with Transfiguration." something like that but nothing. However because of Sirius and Remus it is common in fanfic and canon that Harry learns much more about James than Lily.

I wanted to flip that script. Here Harry runs into Lily's friends instead and taking the idea from my mother's yearbook which was COVERED in vague warnings of "Good Luck with [my father]" or "I don't know what you see in [my father] but I wish you the best." they have a very different perspective of James than Remus and Sirius do.

Answering the question one reviewer asked about why Harry knew about the wards. He tried to avoid going back to the Dursley's at all and appealed to Dumbledore which is when he got that explanation. Couldn't find a place to shoe horn it in earlier.

My headcanon is that James had a poor opinion of divination like so many other Gryffindors and Lily put aside her cards leaving them safe in her vault.

Being from the American South I grew up with Christianity being practically inscribed on my bones. My first book was a Children's Bible. It was unfathomable that there were people on Earth who didn't know about Jesus...until I started talking to a teenager from England. His family wasn't religious which was shocking and he was aware there was a Jesus and that was about the long and the short of it. In his words most of England wasn't very religious. I don't know how true that is overall but I doubt the Dursley's were religious enough for Harry to have picked up much of anything because if they were religious Harry probably wouldn't have survived his childhood.

Chapter 32

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 32 - November 1993

The rest of third year flew by for everyone not in possession of a time turner. Halloween marked a decided change in the way Harry interacted with Professor Snape. While it was almost unnoticeable to the casual observer, Ron for instance still derided the irritated Potions Master at length but Snape was kinder in Harry's additional potion class. He shared many stories about his mother, her years before and during Hogwarts. Harry even allowed the Potions Master to have his mother's potion journal for Christmas which the man clearly treasured. He'd made a copy of it but gave the man the original.

In their usual class the man maintained his usual severe countenance but stopped targeting Harry directly. With some amazement he even stopped targeting Neville though that may have been due to something else. Rumor had it after discovering he was literally the worst fear of a boy whose parents had been tortured into insanity he had reeled in his ire. Not that it helped. Neville continued to be absolutely abysmal at the craft to the Potions Master's increasing frustration. Thanks to Harry's additional training however he paired the boys up just to prevent explosions and because he knew Harry to be capable of healing most things that Neville destroyed.

Harry and Hermione continued their time traveling adventures with Harry taking care of Hermione and making sure she didn't exhaust herself. He was now positive Hermione had not told Ron about the time turner.

"Why not?"

"I wasn't supposed to tell you about it Harry! I wasn't supposed to talk to Percy about it."

"That's just stupid and you know it. Why wouldn't they gather all the people with time turners up so you guys can learn from and lean on each other? Especially the new third year? It's not like you guys can't make time to talk to one another. It'd be like a secret club. The Time Turner club." Harry waved his hands mocking a banner with the club title on it.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "You have a point. I was talking to Percy and it turns out most can't hack it. They try to get through third year and then drop one or two of the electives. Usually Divination and Muggles Studies. Percy only got into the correct healthy rhythm because of Bill and Bill only managed it because another upper year saw him struggling and grabbed him before he collapsed."

"So next year you gonna find the third year taking all twelve courses and help them?"

"Of course I am."

“The Time Turner Club, a home for over achieving time travelers to keep themselves from becoming utterly knackered. Founder and President Hermione Granger. Treasury Harry Potter.”

“Shouldn’t you be Vice President? And its Treasurer not Treasury.”

“Nah. I don’t have a time turner. Maybe I should buy one? Any way I’ll fund the club with snacks and comfy beds and such. Hence Treasury instead of Treasurer. You can elect someone else as Treasurer and then I’ll just give that person a bag of money so they can keep up with whatever you guys need. I mean what if next year the time turner recipient is Ginny and she can’t afford to buy all the books. You could buy what she needs out of the Club budget.”

“Are you serious about this?”

Harry shrugged. “Yeah why not? I wonder if it counts as charity and if I can write it off my taxes...when I start paying taxes. Uncle Vernon always tallied up exactly how much I cost and wrote me off their taxes as charity. He always made sure I knew exactly how much it was too.”

“Just when I think your relatives can’t get any worse you casually tell me about some new atrocity. Granted tax dodging isn’t the worst thing they’ve done at least. I have no idea. Given that it’s a secret club I doubt you could report the contribution though.”

“Good point.” Harry shook his loose red hair over the arm of the couch. It was wash day again. “Back to my original point. Why not tell Ron? I mean literally two of his brothers were in the club as well. It’s not like he’d go blabbing about it.”

Hermione was quiet as she looked over her book at Harry. She pressed her lips together petulantly. “I like that it’s just us okay? You have Quidditch with Ron and this with me and everything else with us both and I don’t want to share you, this, with him...Is that okay?”

Harry sat up. He was reminded again that like him Hermione hadn’t had any friends before Hogwarts. She was so strong most of the time her vulnerable moments few and far between that it was easy to forget that she sometimes felt like this. Like she would be left behind. “It’s okay that this is just us...you know I love you right?”

She smiled. “I know. I love you too Harry.”

Chapter End Notes

Snape's a human. Shocking I know. In some ways I don't thinking he ever mourned Lily in a healthy fashion. Harry's actually allowing him to do that.

Seriously letting Hermione run herself into the ground was nuts. Why none of the teachers or McGonagall stepped in just seems dumb to me. Hermione should have been

having regular checkups in my opinion.

Hermione never tells Ron. For the same reasons Bill and Percy never told anyone. Hermione only bent and told Harry because she needed his help and now she loves all these private moments she gets with her friend.

Chapter 33

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 33 - December 1993

Mid-way through December the Prophet blared a surprising headline.

“PETER PETTIGREW’S BODY FOUND ON THE HEAD AUROR’S DESK!”

Apparently an examination of the body showed that the man had continued to age in a healthy manner for the last twelve years. Cause of his recent death was not revealed but apparently he went peacefully which they theorized meant that Sirius Black hadn’t had anything to do with it. As the original investigation claimed his body had been destroyed the investigation had to be reopened. The next day’s headline was almost more surprising.

“SIRIUS BLACK NEVER RECEIVED A TRIAL!”

Apparently the man had blubbered out an overwrought confession when arrested and had been directly thrown in Azkaban with no other investigation or criminal proceedings followed at all. Now the entire case surrounding the Potter’s betrayal and Pettigrew’s death and the death of all those muggles had to be reopened and reinvestigated.

All was quiet until the day before Christmas when the students were overjoyed to feel the oppressive atmosphere that had hung over the school finally lift. The dementors were being called back to Azkaban. The next day the paper declared the Kiss on Sight order had been repealed until Sirius Black could be given a legitimate trial. Professor Lupin smiled through all of breakfast.

The DADA Professor had still not mentioned his friendship with James to Harry though the young parselmage couldn’t fathom why. Everyone else who’d known his parents had been only too happy to tell him about them. As much as he didn’t like bullies he’d have liked to have heard something nice about his father besides the fact that he was good at Transfiguration. Surely there had to be something good about the man if his mother was in love with him.

Unfortunately the journals that were in her trunk stopped about midway through her 7th year. Given the amount she wrote in them Harry assumed that journal didn’t get finished until after she’d graduated and therefore didn’t get stored in the trunk like the rest of them. According to Chelsea and Professor Snape Lily hadn’t started to tentatively give James a chance until Valentine’s Day during their 7th year. As of the end of the oldest journal Harry possessed James was still an arrogant jerk though a fit one apparently. That had been an awkward read. Almost as awkward as when he’d read about his mum’s first time with a Ravenclaw in her 5th year.

He may have skipped all those pages while blushing a bright red that had Hermione questioning him. Eventually he'd let Hermione read those parts just to make sure there wasn't anything important in there but apparently his mum could be just as silly as any other girl and Harry mightily hoped he never ever ran into Tiberius Rookwood who apparently had dark blue eyes the color of the deepest ocean, thick curly blonde hair made to run your fingers through and lips that kissed like a total dreamboat.

Chapter End Notes

Sirius' imprisonment is ridiculous. A huge miscarriage of justice. The fact that Dumbledore never did anything, that he gave Snape and Draco second chances but Sirius "apparently" goes bad and he just leaves him to rot? It's *deep sigh* wrong.

And it's so easy. You pull one string on Sirius and the whole thing unravels. Here Sirius (remember that skinny black dog watching the funeral from the forest?) digs up Peter's grave (cause the spell was to guard against wild animals and therefore would ignore animagus) changes him back and drops him on Amelia Bones' desk. Cause he knows she'll investigate. Amelia Bones is like the Justice ex machina of the Harry Potter verse. Have you noticed that?

Why does Lupin never talk to Harry during third year? We never receive an answer on this. Personally it's a toss up between Dumbledore told him not or Remus just has so much self-loathing he can only see himself as a bad thing in Harry life. We know Remus is awesome but inside his head it's all "Werewolves are evil, horrible creatures therefore I'm an evil horrible creature." cause he had a glorious 7-9 years where James alleviated that but James has been dead for 12 years and Remus really thought Sirius had betrayed them and Peter was dead and he's been all alone. Honestly it's probably only the looming threat of Voldemort's return and that Dumbledore/Harry might need him that's kept Remus from suicide or, sadly, from joining a pack and getting some desperately needed companionship.

I thought the parts of Lily's journals where she talks about her crushes would be funny and embarrassing for Harry. I'm really blocking Harry learning about James at every turn aren't I? *devious smile*

Chapter 34

Chapter Notes

Anti-Harmony people beware.

However this will be the only romantic part in this whole story.

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

Chapter 34 - December 25th, 1993

“Happy Christmas Hermione!” Harry said as he walked up out of his pack. He’d not been surprised to find no presents at the foot of his bed inside his pack. Instead they appeared to be stacked on the couch in Salazar’s quarters next to where his pack had been sitting the night before.

Hermione was carefully walking up the stairs from the kitchen with two mugs of hot cocoa. “Happy Christmas Harry!”

After Ron revealed he was heading home for Christmas Hermione suggested something surprising to Harry. “Let’s sign up to go home too but instead come back to Hogwarts and stay in the Chamber.”

“Are you sure? Don’t you want to see your mum and dad?”

Hermione had winced. “Christmas time is always benefit balls and these big awkward family affairs and honestly I’d just really rather not. Spending Christmas with my best friend translating Ancient Greek sounds like a much better way to spend the holiday.”

Harry had to ask for elaboration on that only to discover Christmases for Hermione typically required her to get dressed up and smile pretty at adult functions or dodge boisterous cousins at family functions.

“If I ever have to wear a green velvet dress with an enormous bow in my hair, white tights and Mary Janes while I smile sweetly and get told children are to be seen and not heard I may scream. Then my family were to the adults I’m the smart one and oh so sweet getting my cheeks pinched and condescended to for being so precocious and precious but to my cousins I’m the stuck up book worm and...” She took a deep steadying breath before revealing their ultimate crime. “They destroyed my books Harry. They ripped out the pages and pissed on them and I swore I’d never speak to them again and thanks to Hogwarts I’ve managed to avoid them for the last two years. I’m in no hurry to break that streak until I’m old enough to avoid them entirely at those family functions. When I’m about eighteen sounds about right.”

“And old enough to defend yourself with your wand?”

“Exactly. Did you know there’s a loophole in the muggle protection laws regarding the family members of muggleborns?”

“I did not know that. Tell me more.” Harry smirked somewhat cruelly.

“As they’re considered in the know the law states that they should know better than to antagonize their magical relative. Much like you wouldn’t poke a dangerous dog you shouldn’t tickle a witch either.”

Harry chuckled. “So we sign up to go home and if anyone asks I’m spending Christmas with you. I think Ron’s mum wanted him and Percy to come home so she could comfort them about Scabbers’ death. We should leave them to it.”

Hermione had not enjoyed the broom ride from Hogsmeade to the uppermost entrance of the Chamber though she did love the view it presented of Hogwarts. “I’d love a magical portrait of this view. One that changed with the seasons.”

“That would be amazing.” Harry agreed.

Now it was Christmas morning. Harry accepted his cup of cocoa from his friend and sorted through the pile of presents. Neither of them had slept in Salazar’s bed. There was just something awkward about sleeping in someone else’s bed even if that person had been dead for a thousand years. Besides it let him slip out last night and hunt down each of his snake’s favorite treats and get a fat juicy mouse for Crookshanks.

Hermione found his present and opened it first. “Oh Harry! I’d been missing this tea so much. Thank you!” She leaned over to hug him.

“You’re welcome. I thought we might head into Diagon Alley before school starts back and get a cup of the real thing too.” He squeezed her into his side. “I got you two presents. Check out the other one.”

“Oh Harry you didn’t have to- Oh my very own tarot cards!”

“Gifted cards are supposed to be better. I got Ron a deck too. Don’t know what he’s gonna do with them now though. I got him a new Cannons poster with their game dates as well.”

“Thank you Harry. This is great. I can’t wait to use them. I’ve been reading ahead and just been itching to attempt a spread. This set is perfect for me too and...Carmenita is the Empress!” She looked at him with shiny eyes.

“She fits you. When I saw that I had to buy them.”

“Oh I could kiss you!” Hermione turned back to her cards with a blush. “I mean...I could... I...umm...”

If Harry had any idea just how much he looked like his father at that moment when his lips curled up into a flirtatious smile not even a change in hair or glasses could hide he might have thought twice about what he did next. He caught Hermione’s eye and moved in to

gently press their lips together. They held together for one long second scarcely daring to move before they pulled back.

They were silent for several minutes as they watched each other. Harry licked his lips. Hermione bit her lips together letting them pop back out looking fuller and redder than before. This time she leaned in and kissed him oh so gently moving her lips over his slightly open ones. "Thank you Harry."

"Happy Christmas Hermione." His voice had deepened there for a moment. He was just grateful it hadn't broken like it had been doing off and on for the last few months.

She blushed. "Aren't you gonna open your presents?"

He chuckled though he was blushing a bit himself. "Yeah"

Hermione had gotten him books of course. What was a surprise was that they were muggle books. "The Belgariad?"

"I'd noticed you have been doing more recreational reading and I thought you might like this series. The Wheel of Time is a bit...well to be completely honest with you I kind of hate every female character in that series. Besides it's not finished yet. I thought maybe the Lord of the Rings because it's such a classic book series but again it's a bit difficult to get into and it's not as, well, funny. The Belgariad though I think you'll like. Many of the characters have a roguish humor I think you will appreciate."

Harry smiled as he studied the map in the front of Pawn of Prophecy. "Thanks Hermione." He leaned over and gave her a quick kiss at the corner of her mouth.

She blushed with a smile and continued to sort through her presents. Harry got a Weasley sweater in his usual emerald green while Hermione got a knit hat in blue from the same. They both nibbled on the fudge she'd sent them both. From Ron they each got a pair of gloves declaring their support of the Cannons on the back and a couple of Chocolate Frogs. Hagrid had given Harry a wooden box within which he found a very interesting surprise.

"It is cold here. Where am I?" Came a hissing voice from inside the box.

"Hello." Harry hissed back. "You are in Scotland. I'm going to open the box now. Do not strike."

"I can smell my venom would do less than nothing to you Speaker. Let me out."

"My friend who is sitting beside me is vulnerable however. I will be very upset if you hurt her."

"I will not bite the female. There is no point."

Harry opened the box slowly to find a baby viper. She was only about 30 cm long and had a beautiful pattern of black rectangles and yellow hourglasses with a broad yellow stripe down her back broken up by regular black rectangles. "Oh you beauty." He reached and let the baby viper crawl into his hand before lifting her out of the box.

“Thank you. I am very pretty.”

Sang lifted her head from where she was wrapped over Harry’s fingers. “I like your pattern.”

“A King serpent!” The new viper which Harry felt he could tentatively call a Gaboon Viper looked at Sang a bit fearfully.

“Yes. I have several basilisks. This is Sang. I will introduce you to the others later. For now you said you were cold? Are you hungry or thirsty as well?” Harry cupped the small snake under his chin and let her move up to encircle his neck pressing her horned nose into the hollow of his throat once she was settled.

“An enormous man fed and watered me before putting me into the box. I will be hungry again in a few days.”

“Okay. Get warm then. I will introduce you to the other snakes later. You’re my first snake that is not a basilisk. Do you have a name?”

“I am Kichaka. My Egglayer said it means one who blushes in the human tongue. She named me this because the black lines under my eyes are darker than my siblings.” The little snake sounded sleepy.

“The human tongue? You mean one of the African languages? That’s where you were found right? Africa?”

“I don’t know. The language the humans speak.”

“Humans speak many different languages.” Harry cleared his throat and looked at Hermione. “Can you understand when I speak English?”

“That seems bothersome. Why do they do that? What were all those weird noises you just made?”

Harry chuckled. “The human language I speak is called English. Maybe the other snakes can teach it to you. I wonder what the human language you understand is called?”

He felt her yawn under his chin. “I do not know. I’m sleepy. I was in a sack before the box for a long time. It was uncomfortable and I couldn’t sleep.”

“Sleep now little Kichaka. We will talk later.”

“Goodsleep Speaker.”

Harry smiled at Hermione who eyed the little snake with some trepidation. “Her name is Kichaka which means one who blushes in the human tongue of wherever she’s from. She’s a Gaboon Viper if I’m not mistaken which means she’s from Africa but I forget which part. I might need to go buy a bunch of snake books rather than depend on my notes from the library.”

“I’ll take you to my favorite muggle bookshop in London. Somehow I don’t think you’ll find many witchy snake books in Diagon Alley.”

“I think you’re right.” Harry moved the paper out of the way tossing several bits in the fire once he was sure they were empty. It was then he found it. While wrapped there was no hiding what it truly was, a broomstick. “Huh where’d you come from?” He looked it over. There was no note only “Happy Christmas Harry” written in a jagged hand on a bit of the brown wrapping paper.

“A broomstick?” Hermione asked. “Who would send you a broomstick? You already have one of the best.”

Harry shrugged. “I don’t know.” He untied the strings holding the paper together and gasped. “Fuck me.”

“Language.” Hermione whispered but she was equally in awe. She remembered watching Ron and Harry drooling over this broom.

A bright red-brown handle led into darker red bristles. Firebolt was embossed on the handle. “Wow.” He reached out to touch the shiny wood.

Hermione grabbed his hand. “Wait. You don’t know where this came from. What if it’s cursed?”

Harry whimpered staring longingly at the gorgeous broom. He bit his lip before hissing out. “Kip! Come here please.”

“Are you doing parselmagic?” Hermione asked.

“No. Just calling Kip. He can see magic. Hopefully he’ll be able to tell if anything nasty is on the broom.”

The long thin white snake slithered into the room from the bathroom. He liked laying in the stone sink. “Yes Creator?”

“I have received a gift but I know not from where. We fear it may have some magic on it that could do me harm. Can you look and see?” Harry hissed to the snake.

Kip slipped his cool wet body up Harry’s pajama pant leg and under the unwrapped present. He continued his path up to Harry’s neck where he stopped in surprise. “Who is this?”

“Kichaka. She was a gift from a friend. She’s sleeping right now. Leave her be please.”

“As you wish Creator.” Kip wove himself into Harry’s loose red locks until he formed a crown in his Creator’s hair and finally rested his crested head between and just above Harry’s eyes. He stared at the broom for several minutes. “The broom has much magic in it but I see none that would harm you Creator. There are many charms for your safety.”

“Thank you Kip.” Harry felt the snake tuck his head back into his coils but he didn’t leave Harry’s hair. “Kip says there’s nothing on the broom that would hurt me. He can see the

safety charms though.”

Hermione relaxed. “Well that’s good at least but we still don’t know where it came from. Not many people can afford the Firebolt. Remember you and Ron were arguing about whether Malfoy would have one this year.”

“And he didn’t.” Harry blushed. “I went back later and asked. This summer while they still had a good supply of them the brooms were going for over 3 thousand Galleons. It’s gotta be more now. They only made so many for non-professional usage.” He reverently ran a hand over the broomstick. “This beauty is amazing. I have to go try it out.”

Hermione chuckled. “Be my guest. I’ll clean up and make breakfast.” She shifted through the remaining wrapping paper and tossed it into the fire before heading down into Harry’s pack. Harry might be okay with using Salazar’s kitchen but Hermione preferred the conveniences of the modern world. The only thing she made in the Chamber’s kitchen was tea or cocoa and once a hearty stew.

Fortunately an early attempt to feed basilisk meat to Crookshanks kept Harry from serving it to Hermione. While fine for Harry and his immunity the Kneazle mix detected the poisonous meat would hurt his mistress and made his discovery known by refusing the prepared meat and yowling loudly with bared claws when Harry almost served it to Hermione.

A detection spell looked up in some of the books they’d gotten for Harry’s impromptu healing classes had a spell to detect harmful substances in food. That had been an interesting result. To Hermione the meat glowed a deadly black but to Harry the meat glowed a healthy red. Hermione muttered something about writing something up about parselmouths and their immunity bites to submit to a health journal.

Chapter End Notes

As far as she knows her parents haven't told the rest of her family but the law isn't all that well written.

Old beds are creepy. Even though I've implied Salazar died on his couch his bed is still ancient and honestly not terribly comfortable.

Ron does some minor grousing at home about Harry's presents. Harry will point out that he promised no BIRTHDAY presents for the next 4 years. He said nothing about Christmas presents.

The Empress card does suit Hermione.

Nature vs nurture is at work within Harry Potter. Nurture saw him being a neat freak who hates bullies. Nature finds him good at transfiguration and charms with more than a little of his father's charm and charisma. That's gonna become more and more apparent very soon. Too bad no one is telling Harry that.

The Belgariad is a fantastic series and overwhelmingly perfect for the Harry I'm developing. The opinions on the Wheel of Time from Hermione are mine. Honestly Mat was by far my favorite character and after what happens to him and how those...girls...treat him...I just stopped reading. Min was a good female character. Morraine at times was good. But most of the rest were just the most...uh...I don't want to say bitches but if the collar fits. Especially the way they treated Mat.

The Lord of the Rings is a classic and Harry will probably borrow it out of Hermione's library over the next few years. I thought the Belgariad could use some promotion though. And hey lots of stuff in there about prophecies too.

<https://undergroundreptiles.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Baby-Gaboon-Viper-3.jpg>

I imagine other snakes are a little intimidated by basilisks.

Kichaka is Swahili and means exactly what it does here...I assume. I got it from a baby name website. There is some overlap on gaboon viper's habitat and the places in Africa where Swahili is spoken.

Ah the Firebolt...yes it's from Sirius. You may recall a black dog watching Harry go into the shop. In this story Harry didn't lose his Nimbus though because I'm injecting some MUCH needed common sense into the Harry Potter universe and Dumbledore had Ministry officials at the games to keep an eye on the dementors for precisely the fear that such a huge concentration of joy would attract the dementors. Gods that was stupid.

Like in canon though Sirius has been totally slipping past the dementors as a dog and watching Harry play. The dementors, like the snakes, see animagus as animals not magic. Crookshanks knows something was up because of his extra ability to sense deception.

Yeah seriously no one should eat Basilisk meat but Harry.

The time skips get progressively larger from here on out.

Chapter 35

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 35 - April 1994

It was months before anything else was seen or heard about Sirius Black in the paper. In April the evidence gathering portion was finally complete and a trial date had been set for early June. Harry wasn't sure how to feel about the man. Of course he'd hated him when he'd been told about the betrayal of his parents. Now it seems like he might not have been the betrayer but by all accounts he was still a bully like his father. Hagrid told them off hand about meeting Black that night and rather than take care of Harry in the aftermath of his parent's death he'd run off to chase Pettigrew. He supposed he'd have to wait and see for himself presuming the man managed to get off on the charges laid against him.

Professor Lupin still hadn't said a single word about being James' friend to Harry but Hermione had surmised from an extra credit project from Professor Snape when he substituted that Professor Lupin was a werewolf. She had not told anyone but Harry and they agreed that the DADA Professor must not be infectious except during the full moon or he wouldn't be allowed to teach in the school. Harry had also figured out that Professor Snape must be in a constant state of brewing the Wolfsbane Potion for the other professor when he asked to buy Harry's stock of Gaboon Viper venom he'd been milking from Kichaka. Harry had his suspicions that Hagrid had given him Kichaka for that very reason in fact. Luckily even as a baby Gaboon Vipers had extremely large stores of venom.

Harry had given Professor Snape a huge vial of basilisk venom for Christmas in addition to his mother's journal. After the break the Professor had caught Harry and actually tried to return it. Apparently it was worth many times its weight in gold which finally gave Harry an idea of what to sell it for. Harry had refused to take it back but also refused to expose his source. The Professor seemed reluctant but eventually conceded. Queerly he mentioned a little known mental art called Occlumency the next time they had their ingredient replacement class. It was off hand but mentioned so out of context Harry had to look it up later. It was then he figured out why the Professor hadn't needed him to say where he'd gotten the venom. He wasn't sure how to feel about the fact that his professor could read his mind and resolved with Hermione to learn the skill as soon as possible.

It would have to wait until after exams however because even with time turners both Hermione and Percy started to lose their minds. Harry would commiserate with Penelope in the library over their frantic friends as they urged them to leave the room at least as far as the hallway so that they could eat.

Wash days at least Harry managed to keep sacred but only by outright kidnapping Hermione from her studying and carrying her into his pack. Then he took her to the Chamber and hid her book bag with Crookshanks. Hermione had gotten better about walking with Harry through the monster filled tunnels but she in no way felt comfortable tackling them alone. Fortunately after a day in the Chamber, a head massage, a hot soothing bath and a delicious

meal she was usually ready to forgive him for stealing her away from grinding herself to a fine powder with her studying.

Penelope begged to know what Harry did and eventually ended up dosing Percy's tea and tying him to a bed. Harry did not want to know what she'd done afterwards to get Percy to relax though the twin's impromptu whistling whenever Percy walked through the common room left little to the imagination.

Chapter End Notes

Filler chapter.

Sorry it's so short but I decided really early on to divide the chapters by the date changes. gonna post two today to make up for it.

Chapter 36

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 36 - June 25th, 1994

The end of the year feast was a joyous occasion for Gryffindor. The 7th years carried Oliver into a red and gold Great Hall on their shoulders as he'd finally won them the Quidditch cup. Across the room Harry caught Marcus Flint and Adrien Pucey's eye and raised a glass to them. They gave him a sour look back. Coming out after Christmas on the Firebolt had been a surprise to everyone. Harry had absolutely creamed the remaining teams.

After the final game in the locker room with great ceremony Oliver had pinned the Quidditch Captain badge on to Ron's chest. Harry didn't think he'd ever seen Ron happier than in that moment. Of course the twins then soaked both captains in butter beer they'd acquired from somewhere. Afterwards they'd trooped their freshly washed selves up to the common room where a great party was held into the wee hours of the night.

Hermione had congratulated Ron with one of her customary huge hugs but after only a half an hour of the party drug Harry into a corner and disappeared into his bag. Parties weren't really her thing. Later he'd come into his bag to find her and Crookshanks in her bag with a music sphere whistling unheard to a sleeping Hermione.

Dumbledore stood and most of the hall fell quiet quickly. Once he had everyone's attention the Headmaster spoke. "And so concludes another year at Hogwarts. Congratulations to the Gryffindors for their smashing victory and at long last Professor Snape concedes the Quidditch trophy to Professor McGonagall."

The Trophy in question had been sitting in front of Snape on the Great Table. Solemnly he stood and handed it to Professor McGonagall. Only someone who knew the Professor exceedingly well could detect the softening of his features as he gave the trophy back to his old Transfiguration Professor.

Professor McGonagall accepted it with a triumph smile and a nod to Professor Snape before turning and holding the trophy above her head to the cheers of the Gryffindors. Oliver threw back his head and roared followed by most of the Quidditch team.

"The awarding of the House cup however goes to Ravenclaw this year with 456 points. Gryffindors are second with 425, Slytherin third with 380, and Hufflepuff fourth with 350." The Gryffindors might not have been as loud as they would have been had they won but they still cheered mightily for the Ravensclaws actually drowning out the cheers from the blue house itself.

"Now some sad news. Professor Lupin will be leaving us due to the illness of a close friend. Please know Professor that should your friend recover you are welcome to return to

Hogwarts at any time. I think I speak for everyone when I say that we loved having you here.”

The cheers this time came from the whole school. It was undeniable that Professor Lupin had been the best teacher in a number of years. Professor Lupin stood shyly and gave them all a small wave and smile before sitting again.

At the Gryffindor table Harry looked at the Professor with a furrowed brow even as he smiled and clapped. The man still hadn't given Harry the slightly hint as to his status as Harry's Unca Moony, a pet name Harry only knew due to Professor Snape sharing some letters his mother had wrote about his first words after Dada and Mummy being Moony as apparently this Uncle had been his favorite as an infant. He supposed he could have opened the conversation with the man as he had with Professor Snape but he still had mixed feelings about the Marauders even though Snape had admitted Lupin had been the least vicious of them ironically. Harry had a different opinion though. Lupin had been their prefect apparently. Hermione, who he knew would become perfect no matter what, would never have allowed such disgraceful behavior to continue. She didn't allow the twins to get away with it now despite being two years their junior. The letters were also the first time he got hear good things about his father and the source was Snape of all people. From his mother's letters he gathered his father was a bit goofy with him but loved him greatly. James was really enthusiastic about teaching him to ride a broom. Apparently his mother screamed herself hoarse the first time James had taken him up on a broom. It was nice to finally hear something good about him. He was careful not mention that to Professor Snape but he thought the man probably knew or else he wouldn't have shared the letters at all.

Harry packed his trunk into his bag after all but Ron had left for the train. He'd written to the Dursleys a month ago saying that he'd be by to renew the wards quietly and unseen and that there was no need to pick him up this year. There was no reply of course. Harry just hoped they hadn't changed the locks.

He walked out of the dorms and threw an arm over the shoulder of an excited Ron and an exhausted Hermione as they made their way to the train. It was the end to another year at Hogwarts and the beginning of another long summer.

Chapter End Notes

I love the headcanon that Snape and McGonagall have a mutual respect for each other that over the last decade has developed into a friendship.

No last minutes thrilling heroics for Harry so no unexpected points for Gryffindor.

It should be really really really obvious what close friend Remus is leaving to take care of.

Of all people SNAPE is the only one who's starting to tell Harry about his father in a good light through Lily's letters. There's not a huge focus on it but I wanted to show that

through Harry Snape is finally beginning to heal.

Prepare for time skips

Chapter 37

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 37 - July 11 th , 1994

Basilisk Mars strode down a dirt track in France with a long rolling stride. After stopping by to see Chelsea and the other friends he'd made in the Alley he'd dropped by Hermione's suggested muggle bookstore to pick up a number of field guides on venomous snakes around the world. Then he'd quietly returned to Number Four Privet Drive, hung his bag up in one corner with his invisibility cloak hanging out the top. A monitoring rune was perhaps one of the simplest things to hook up to a ward configuration. He put one on the wall of the shed and checked it every few days. In only ten days he'd fully charged the wards and took off to look for Carmen.

He'd found her in the library of course. After a hug, an admonishment to write, and a map Basilisk set out to travel. From the Knight Bus to the ferry to France. He'd already found his first snake. The common adder, a grey chap named Slate, had been found complaining loudly about a mouse he'd missed due to a hawk and had been more than happy to join Basilisk's knot of venomous vipers and more importantly his ready supply of food. He mostly kept to himself curling up on one of the bookshelves unlike the friendly basilisk family. Kichaka preferred the top of the wardrobe where she spent a majority of her time sleeping.

He'd been looking for an Asp Viper when an older woman burst out of the tree line and spotted him. "OH Thank heavens. Please Great Sorcerer! You must come with me! You must help my son!" Her voice was heavily accented English but Basilisk understood the cry for help well enough and Gryffindor-like quickly followed her through the brambles.

They came out in a clearing with many modern caravans. Basilisk didn't notice his clothes maintaining their muggle guise as the woman pulled him into an impeccably clean caravan where a young man was sweating and moaning in pain on a couch.

"What happened?"

"He was bitten. By a snake. Down near the river." The woman told him ignoring the disapproving stares of the others in the caravan. "Please Great Sorcerer you must help him!"

"I will. Where was he bitten?"

The young man weakly turned his hand revealing blackened flesh near his wrist.

"Okay. Hold still." Basilisk pulled out his wand and called Aqua to curl up on his wrist. He ignored the sudden silent fear behind him as he began to hiss. "Venom come back. Cleanse yourself of blood. Rise to the opening." Thick yellow and white fluid began to leak from the small holes on the young man's wrist.

Once the venom was out Basilisk began to heal the damaged tissue and nerves. He had to carefully check to make sure the muscles in his torso were moving better before finally removing his magic. With his heart rate slowing, his breathing returning to normal and the pain abating the young man relaxed and fainted into sleep. Basilisk cast the simplest charm to bandage the wound before finally standing.

He turned to the woman's awed face. "He'll be fine. Plenty of water and I don't recommend he do any heavy breathing for a week or so. He'll be plenty sore but that should fade over the next few days."

"Oh thank you. Thank you!"

"Not a problem. I would like to know where the snake is. I'll make sure to take it far away from here."

"Down by the river. We were fishing and the snake bit him as he was pulling a fish from the water. I can show you where Great Sorcerer." Another young man looked at Basilisk with awe and it was only then he looked around the very muggle caravan and realized he might not be among his own kind.

"Yes thank you and please, my name is Bas." Basilisk smiled and began edging out of the caravan. He'd performed quite a lot of magic in what he was only now realizing was the muggle area. He needed to get out of here.

"Please Great One. Take this. As payment for your healing." The woman from before pulled a bright golden bracelet from her arm and gave it to him.

"There's no need. I was happy to help..." Basilisk frowned suddenly. "How did you know? How did you know I was a sorcerer? That I'd be able to help."

"The cards told me. I was reading them this morning and they told me a tragedy would be averted when the magician appeared."

That made sense to Basilisk now. "You have the sight then." A squib seer. Not terribly unusual he knew from his divination studies.

"Yes Great One. Please take it. You will need it on your journey. I have seen this."

"Take it." Delphi hissed.

Basilisk accepted the bracelet and bowed touching the golden bangle to his forehead before slipping it over his hand and letting Aqua curl around it. "Thank you. I'm glad I was able to help. Now where did you see this snake?"

Basilisk followed the young man as a path cleared through what Basilisk assumed was the woman's family who had gathered both in and around the caravan in concern for the young man. Many of them looked at Basilisk with a queer mixture of awe and suspicion.

Down by the riverside Basilisk sent the young man away as he began to hiss loudly. "Hello. I'm not here to harm you. I have food and safety. Please come to me."

Basilisk was expecting an asp viper perhaps even a meadow viper but the long pale snake that reared up from the bushes with its hood flared was a surprise. “Who are you? What are you doing here?”

“I am Basilisk, for I am the slayer of an ancient one and the Creator of six more. I’m looking for friends to travel with me. In return for your venom I offer food and shelter. I am surprised my friend. You are a long way from home.” A very long way. If Basilisk wasn’t mistaken this was an Indian Cobra who should be nowhere near France.

“I was born in a glass cage. My memories say I come from a place of heat. The Feeder moved me to a very small glass cage and put me inside a loud rumbling thing. There was a big sudden boom and my cage went flying and shattered. I escaped with only minor injury. I have settled here where the fish are plentiful but the other snakes speak of a cold that comes. Will you take me to the place of heat Speaker?”

Return the cobra to India? Basilisk stood quietly for several minutes. Calypso told him he would be going on a great journey. He’d assumed she meant going to France but India? That would be an adventure.

There were a lot of snakes in India. It wasn’t that far really. Not with magic. If he mounted his broom and kept his cloak on he’d make good time. Finally he spoke. “Yes my friend. I will take you to the place of heat.”

The cobra lowered itself and relaxed its hood as it slithered to Basilisk’s hand and after some more coaxing into Basilisk’s bag. The young man who had shown the way later reported that the Great Sorcerer had disappeared soon after that leaving nothing but the wind as it rustled the trees.

Chapter End Notes

If you can't tell from the cobra's story it's owner was transporting it when there was a car accident and the cage was thrown free and broke. Not that Harry/Bas knows it but there's actually quite the search on in the muggle world for this dangerous snake in an area unfamiliar with them. It makes the news all the way in Crawley in fact....

Next chapter has a very big time jump. I think a lot of you are about to be disappointed.

Chapter 38

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 38 - June 1995

The young man with travel worn clothes and messy black hair walked into the Great Hall whistling.

“HARRY JAMES POTTER! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?” came a shriek from the Gryffindor table as a girl with lots of curly brown hair barely restrained by her hair ornaments launched herself at him like a missile.

Harry grabbed her around the waist and lifted her from the ground using her momentum to spin them around. “Hermione! I missed you!”

A blonde missile had followed and got the same treatment. “Luna! Catch any Blubbering Humdingers?”

He slung an arm over both girls as he continued his swagger up to the Head Table. “How are my two favorite girls?”

Hermione gave Luna a confused look which she innocently returned.

“We’re fine. Where. Have. You. Been?”

“It’s a long story. Did I make it back in time for exams? I did grab my books before I got on the ship.”

“What ship?”

“It’s not important. It sank.”

“It was sunk?”

“By pirates.”

“Pirates?”

“I did manage to make it to India though. But by then Rupert had decided to stay with me.”

“Rupert?”

“The cobra.”

“What cobra?”

“He was lost. His crate fell off the back of his owner’s truck. He bit a traveler boy and they asked me to heal him, which I did, then I went looking for the snake.”

“So that was you on the news.”

“I was on the news?”

“For healing the traveler boy.”

“Oh yeah that was me.”

“Where’d you go after you left India?” Luna asked.

“Well I was kind of adrift after the pirates but I eventually ended up in Australia.”

Hermione put her head against the side of Harry’s chest and banged her head a few times.

“Did you see the Rainbow Serpent?”

“I did. It was incredible. I had a lot of trouble at first but afterwards I had a lot of fun. So did I make in time for exams? And who are all these extra students?”

Hermione groaned continuing to bang her head against Harry’s surprisingly firm side.

Luna answered instead. “Yes. Hogwarts is hosting the Triwizard Tournament. The students in blue are from Beauxbatons and the students in maroon are from Durmstrang.”

“Oh that’s awesome! I’m sorry to have missed it. Anything cool happen?”

“They had to steal a dragon egg from a nesting mother in the first task and retrieve a person dear to them from the lake for the second. Hermione is dear to the Durmstrang Champion. Tomorrow they must go through a deadly maze.”

“Sounds fun.” Harry tilted his head down to give Hermione a crooked smile. “Do I need to have a talk with this Durmstrang Champion? Mess with my Hermione and they’ll never find the body?”

Hermione glared at him. “He’s a complete and total gentleman and you will do no such thing.”

“Woo you’re right. You are much scarier than me even on my best day.”

“That’s cause you don’t try. You’re too...noble.” Hermione said unknowingly echoing her favorite teacher almost 14 years ago.

They’d had a good portion of this conversation in front of the Head Table. Harry looked up and smiled into the twinkling blue eyes for his Headmaster who flinched minutely after a second. “Sorry for the delay Headmaster. I’m afraid it was unavoidable. Can I still sit my fourth year exams?”

“You did self-study this past year?”

“Oh yes.”

“Then I don’t see any reason why not.”

Before any of the other professors could object he added.

“But Mr. Potter if you get anything less than an A, preferably an EE, on your exam you will have to take that 4th year class over.”

Harry nodded. “That’s reasonable.”

“Tuck in Mr. Potter. I’m sure you’re famished after your long journey.”

“You’re not wrong.” Harry steered both girls back over to where Ron and the twins were waiting with grins across their faces.

“Just one more thing Mr. Potter?”

Harry turned around to see Professor Dumbledore was flanked by an extremely tall woman and a man wearing much fancier version of the Durmstrang uniform. “Yes Professor?”

“Where were you on October 31st and the week leading up to it?”

“Uh.” Harry tilted his head up to the ceiling thinking back. “Somewhere in the Gulf of Guinea I think.”

“You think?” The heavily accented voice of the tall lady dripped with disdain.

“There was a storm during that time. We lost track of day and night there for a while. Let alone the dates. When we made port in Luanda it was November 4th.” Harry shrugged.

“I see. And your magic is intact and fully functional?”

“Oh yeah.” Harry grinned like he knew a dangerous secret.

“Thank you Mr. Potter.” Dumbledore turned to confer with his companions.

Harry sat down between the girls and grabbed a freshly baked bread roll. “What was that about?” He moaned after he bit into the roll. “Warm beer and bread they say can raise the dead.” He sang in a jaunty voice. “Oh butter! I ain’t seen butter in a year it feels like.” He yelled down the table. “Past the treacle tarts up this way please.” He moaned as he took a big bite out of the warm buttered roll and knocked on the table. “May the Serpent bless house elves.”

“On Halloween they drew the names of the Champions from the Goblet of Fire.” Hermione started to explain.

“And your name came out. But you weren’t here. Man everyone’s been looking for you. We came to get you from the Dursleys for the Quidditch World Cup but they were like ‘we haven’t seen him in years.’” Ron explained.

“Aww you had tickets for the World Cup? I tried to get my hands on two, just two!” Harry held up two fingers to empathize. “For you and me but they were completely sold out. Damn it I wouldn’t have left if I knew you had tickets.”

“I sent you a letter. Dad wanted to try the muggle post service so I sent it that way instead of by owl like usual. You didn’t get it?”

“Nah. I got a deal with the Dursleys. They don’t see me. They don’t have to feed me. They don’t get to put me to work. In exchange I spend a couple of weeks hiding out there each summer to recharge the wards. Man that sucks. Who won?”

“Ireland but Bulgarian caught the snitch. That’s who Hermione’s dating. Viktor Krum, the Bulgarian Seeker.” Ron gazed across the hall in a somewhat worshipful fashion.

Harry turned around and nudged Hermione. “Which one is he?”

Hermione turned and gave Viktor a little wave. He waved back.

“Hmmm...not a bad looking bloke. You could do a lot worse, of course you could do a lot better too.” He heard Ron sputter behind him. “He got a brain rattling around up there somewhere?”

“He’s very intelligent.”

“And a complete and total gentleman. He better be.”

“Harry.” She swatted his shoulder.

“I’m kidding Hermione. Good for you. Big, smart bloke. Older, more mature. That suits you.” Harry nodded shrewdly.

Hermione rolled her eyes.

“I’d watch out though. I think Ron’s got a crush on your boyfriend. Everyone knows gingers are wildcats in bed. He might steal him away for a fling.”

“Oi!” Ron shouted and threw roll at Harry’s head.

Harry snatched it out of the air and started to butter it and then drizzle honey over it. “All kidding aside I’m sorry I worried you. I tried to send a letter a few times via Hedwig but even she has her limits. About the time we passed Timbuktu I gave her a letter and she just looked at me like I was a moron before refusing to touch it.”

“When did the pirates come into it?”

“Back in January while I was in Singapore.”

“What I want to know is why you got on a ship to India in the first place?” Hermione asked with a frustrated tone.

“Well I was originally just looking for a ship to take the cobra back home. I didn’t think it’d be too difficult. I got on a ship heading to Egypt. The cobra figured he could get home from there. Anyway, there was a storm. I did some magic to keep us alive. When I wake up we’re in the Atlantic and heading south. I’d signed up as a deckhand. Mostly just for fun to be honest. Well after seeing me hold the ship together the captain wasn’t about to let me just leave. He made me a deal. I continued holding the ship together and he’d take me on any additional stops I wanted.”

“And instead of saying something like ‘Hey I’m a fourth year student. I’m gonna miss school.’ You just went along with this?” Hermione seemed incredulous.

“Well I did say that but the captain’s kids, when they were kids, did self-study while on the ship. He saw no reason why I couldn’t do the same. Said the only years his kids were actually in Durmstrang were their OWL and NEWT years.”

“Was he a good teacher at least?” Hermione asked.

“Yeah. I guess. He was from Durmstrang himself so he had a very different teaching style. Like think all Snape all the time but not as...” He waved his hand in Snape’s direction vaguely, “talented or powerful. He knew a lot but he wasn’t the greatest at handing it down. That said I did learn a lot. Calypso also insisted on me taking several books on divination and gave me a schedule to study by. At the time I assumed she just had a poor opinion of Professor Trelawney.

“Was this before or after the pirates?” One of the twins wanted to know.

“Before. We were in Singapore and most of the crew was on shore leave that night. Not me ‘cause the captain said I was too young to roam the streets of Jakarta at night. Anyway next morning when I wake up I find the ship’s already under way. I go up top and see a completely new crew. One that wasn’t too happy to see me there either. We had a bit of a fight and long story short I came to shore on a little island.”

“After you sank the ship.” Fred quipped.

“I thought it was pirates that sank the ship?” George asked with a chuckle.

“It was. Is it my fault they got scared and started blowing holes in their own ship? Damn excitable bastards. Anyway I transfigured a small vessel from some flotsam and jetsam and headed south. I wasn’t sure where I was but I figured if I hit Antarctica I’d have gone too far but at least I’d have an idea where to go next.”

“Did you see any Tengu?” That question came from Luna of course.

“I did not sadly but I did find a Creeping Death. Her name is Vy. Very sweet natured for a brain eating beastie.”

“Where’d you end up next?”

“There were a series of islands. I, of course, didn’t speak the language which made it distinctly difficult to get any assistance.”

“So what did you end up doing?” The other twin asked.

“Well Hedwig came to the rescue here. Ya see I know a guy who has family in Australia and I figured I could at least find someone who knew English there. So I wrote a letter addressed to the family in general and sent Hedwig off. After that it was as easy as following her as she flew slowly enough for me to do so.”

“So you ended up in Australia?” Ron asked. “Did you get to see the Quidditch team down there? Full. Female. Team.” He said dreamily.

“I did not. The people Hedwig was heading towards were Indigenous Australians so I abandoned my raft and flew inland on my broom when I could. The skies are so clear there and there was always a chance of a muggle seeing me. I tried to make myself a bicycle instead. That ended...poorly. I’d never ridden a bike and was not good at building one either. I walked mostly. Let me tell you. It may have been winter up here but it was summer down there. I nearly died in the desert but Hedwig came through for me. She flew on, got the people I was looking for and led them back to me.” Harry took a hearty drink of pumpkin juice and smiled. He fingered the dirty gold bangle on his wrist. The glinting bracelet had led the Indigenous Australians to his parched sunburnt form.

“And then?”

“And then I stayed with them for a few months learning stuff and getting familiar with the wildlife. Then I did what I should have done in the first place. I got some muggle money and hopped an airplane back to England. Then I caught the Hogwarts Express back up here to school.”

“An air plain?”

“Big metal bus the muggles use fire and science to send into the air and they control the fall of until it lands.” Hermione explained in an extremely abbreviated fashion. She was not attempting to explain mechanical aerodynamics to wizards.

“That sounds dangerous.” Ron sputtered.

Hermione looked at them like they were crazy. “I assure you an airplane is much safer than a sailing ship, pirates, a raft, or a desert! After this whole story the muggle airplane is what you call dangerous!”

“In their defense Hermione...” Harry started to say before leaning away from Hermione’s fiery eyes into Luna. “Magic can wreak havoc on airplane instruments. I had to wear suppression cuffs the whole way home to avoid a crash.”

Hermione thrust both hands into her curls and pulled in frustration. “Next year I’m coming with you. The whole summer. You are not missing your OWL year Harry. You hear me?”

“Sure we’ll go on walkabout. It’ll be fun.”

“Can I come too?” Luna asked.

“Sure sugar. I’ll need someone to keep me company while Hermione’s off necking with her seeker boyfriend.”

“When did I get invited?” A deep voice came from the other side of Hermione. Viktor had come over a few minutes ago unnoticed in light of seeing Hermione’s increasing distress.

“Well I just assumed anywhere Hermione’s going you’re going too. I mean once you catch the attention of a girl like Hermione you better be willing to crawl over hot coals to keep her. Or what was it he did?” Harry turned and asked Luna.

“Transfigured his head and most of his torso into a shark and dove to the bottom of the lake to save her. In February. In Scotland. In under an hour.”

Harry looked impressed and gave Viktor a slow clap. “Damn.” He nudged Hermione. “I approve.”

“Your approval fills me with joy.” She said deadpan.

Harry grinned but he looked at Viktor with a hard question in his eyes.

Viktor looked back just as seriously before nodding and holding out his hand.

Harry grasped his wrist in return and they shook on whatever it was. Agreeing on something that seemed lost on anyone lacking a macho attitude. Hermione was less than impressed but allowed the boys their posturing for now.

Chapter End Notes

Real talk: This story would have never been finished if I had to write 4th year. Fuck 4th year. I could literally write nothing for 4th year. No inspiration. No scenes. Nothing. Another fanfic author (Spoony and John I think) pointed out that if you get a more than halfway competent Harry in 4th year the whole story just goes off the rails. All I could think about was Harry finding that cobra and going to India but the inbetween? Just vague scenes, nothing coherent, just a sense of adventure. I know what happened and may revisit those places in Book 2.

What did come through SO strongly was the scene above. A swaggering pirate with sparkling green eyes (Harry lost his fake glasses and after a year without has completely

forgot about them as part of his disguise. He barely remembered to dig out the wig as he was walking up to the castle) walking into the Great Hall the day before the 3rd task.

I LOVE this scene. This scene is a big part of why I wrote this story at all but it's frustrating because there's a lot of foreshadowing in this chapter. A lot. Like single lines of dialogue and description that tell a much greater story later on. Things that happened this past year that literally change the course of the entire HP universe that you're not gonna see the true repercussions of until like Chapter 55. And it's all there in this chapter in the story Harry's telling them.

Chapter 39

Chapter 39 - June 22 nd , 1995

Harry sat between his friends on the stands watching as Viktor ran into the maze first. “So no Quidditch this year huh?”

“No.” Ron howled. “And one of my chasers graduates this year! We would have made a clean sweep of the competition if it wasn’t for this tournament. Well except for you being missing. Man Dad said the Ministry lost their minds for a while when you didn’t show up at Hogwarts.”

“Yeah Professor Snape gave me an earful last night. He drug me down to his office and made me call Chelsea too. I really didn’t mean to worry everyone. I figured I’d send a letter when the storms died down cause I didn’t feel comfortable sending Hedwig out in that mess and when it finally did clear up Hedwig indicated it was too far.” Harry shrugged.

“We know you’d never risk Hedwig like that Mate. It’s okay.” Ron offered as they watched Cedric, the Hufflepuff Seeker and Hogwarts Champion run into the maze.

“Captain said owls don’t like to fly over water. He had another way to keep in touch with his suppliers and such. I asked him to send a message back to Chelsea but well... he told me out right that it was illegal for him to keep me on the ship like he was. No guardian, underage, not to mention the fact that I’d in essence been press ganged. He didn’t have a choice though. The ship was in bad shape. It was an old schooner. I’d gotten on it just because it looked cool. Like an old pirate ship. It was only supposed to take me to Egypt. I was working my way on it instead of paying and I had picked up a lot of spells to do with sailing because the ship needed constant maintenance. During a big storm though she started breaking up and I used all those spells I learned.” Harry smirked. “Not to brag but getting the Patronus Charm so quick wasn’t a fluke. I literally saved the ship. After that there was no way Captain was letting me off. It was his farewell voyage. One last trip before his retirement.” Harry shook his head.

“And he lost his ship anyway? How sad.” Luna had approached them during this tale.

“Fortunately he had actually sold most of the cargo he’d brought from Europe already and the gold went everywhere with him. That’s why I didn’t feel too awful bad about losing the ship to pirates.” Harry pulled Luna over to sit in his lap her back against his chest. The tiny blonde was the perfect height for Harry to hook his chin over her shoulder. He crossed his wrists over her lap and took a deep breath of honeysuckle and lavender. Harry was glad she was still using the conditioner he’d made for her hair.

Hermione looked at them with a bemused smile. “And when did you meet Luna?”

“I was in France with Father when...Harry came down out of the sky.” Luna paused and shared a look with Hermione. Both intelligent girls agreed for the first time to not mention Harry’s Basilisk persona.

“I was getting frustrated trying to fly my broom over the countryside. Here in Britain there’s cloud cover. Clear days in the French countryside however? Even my invisibility cloak didn’t help. You could see my leg or arm or broom bristles just floating in the air for miles. I saw the unusual coloured smoke and landed hoping I’d find a witch who knew how to travel and there was Luna.”

Luna giggled. “Father and I travel by the Lovegood family carpet which has a number of cloaking enchantments woven into the fabric. It’s been handed down for generations and as you might imagine was unhelpful to Harry.”

“I thought magic carpets were illegal?” Ron asked. His father spoke fondly of the Weasley Family Carpet on occasion. Apparently it was a massive thing of beauty. Aunt Muriel had it up in an attic somewhere.

“In Britain they are. But not in France. We take the muggle ferry to France and then roll out our carpet and away we go.” Luna reached up and behind her head to pet something unseen just above Harry’s shoulder. Her and Delphi had gotten along quite well.

“I spend a week or so helping them look for Blubbering Humdingers. We came close a few times.”

“What are Blubbering Humdingers?” Hermione asked. In the days since Harry had returned she’d found her and Luna did not see eye to eye on many things. Harry had revealed the Luna was a seer which calmed Hermione somewhat. While she still found the practice fascinating Hermione’s divining was the everyday sort. Luna’s allowed her to see hidden things and Hermione accepted that.

“Blubbering Humdingers are creatures that sit on your head and their tears make you tell fantastic lies.” Luna told her with a smile. “Many writers and artists seek out Blubbering Humdingers as muses in fact. I can see some of them in Dali’s paintings. Milton wrote about them too.”

Hermione frowned. “Okay. I’m afraid I’ve never heard of them.”

“No one can know everything. For then what would be the fun in learning?”

Hermione winced and rubbed her head. Harry flung out an arm to tuck her into his side. The three of them ignored the curious and jealous glances being shot their way.

Harry had shot up over his year away now a head taller than Hermione though still a head shorter than Ron. Everyone was a head shorter than Ron though. More than that though Harry had lost a bit of baby fat giving his face the harder angles of a man and he had gained a lot of muscle that last year’s Hogwarts robes did not do an adequate job of hiding. Especially since he tended to stride about loose jointed with an open collar and an easy smile. He had no idea just how much he resembled James at this point. His arrival in the Great Hall and subsequent tale of great adventure had cemented him as what Lavender Brown had declared was quite the fittest young man in their year if not all of Hogwarts. This had sparked a merry debate amongst not only the Gryffindors but the Hufflepuffs who pointed out the Hogwarts Champion Cedric as far superior and the Slytherins who had Blaise Zabini, the handsome son

of a famed beauty, to hold up. The Ravenclaws not to be out done had pointed out Roger Trent who had after all taken a Veela to the Yule Ball.

All of this completely escaped the pretty brunette, the petite blonde and the snake speaking vagabond who was cuddling them both. Eventually as the maze only provided the occasional roar or boom Ron began to talk about all the Quidditch Harry had missed by being at sea halfway across the world for most of the year. Apparently the Tornados were stirring things up. Meanwhile Harry shifted Luna over to his other knee as her and Hermione began talking runes. Ginny and Neville joined the Quidditch conversation as the night drug on.

Finally a singed Viktor emerged from the maze holding the Triwizard Cup high above his head. Hermione happily ran down the stands into his arms to give him a hug and a kiss. Almost no one noticed the expressions of pain and alarm on the faces of Snape and the Durmstrang Headmaster.

Author's note

Sorry for the delay. My power was out last night and half of today. Three chapters to follow. I started writing a brief author's note that got away from me so here you are. Just to give some clarity to reviewer's questions and complaints.

Since so many people are curious or down right confused here's what happened back in England while Harry was on the other side of the world.

First off it was a MASSIVE thing that Harry went missing. There was a HUGE manhunt that touched absolutely every magic user in the UK. That's what Ron means when he says "The Ministry lost their minds when you didn't show up for school." After dinner Dumbledore called the Ministry and called off the search, dealt with the press and sent Remus a letter letting him know. They primarily searched the UK and France because Hermione knew he was headed towards France but that's it. No one expected Harry would hop a ship and end up in Australia least of all Harry. Luna did speak up but due to her and her father's reputation no one listened. Mr. Lovegood even ran it on the cover that Harry was heading to India to return a lost cobra but because it was on the Quibbler no one believed it. Once again this is primarily supposed to be showing Harry's POV and he doesn't care about the trouble he caused. He didn't mean to go missing and it's far too late for him to fix it and he was literally press-ganged. What was he going to do? Hop ship and swim back to England? The captain of the ship Harry was on was aware the Harry Potter had gone missing because it made the international news and his family mentioned it off hand. No one onboard connected Bas with the missing Harry Potter.

Sirius and Remus aren't a big part of this story. At all. You can stop reading if you'd like now if you're expecting them to show up. They're mentioned from time to time but that's it. JKR may have handwaved it but Sirius was physically, mentally, psychologically and emotionally tortured 24/7/365 for the last 12 years. He's in no way ready to take custody of Harry. In fact he's in no shape to take custody of himself. That wasn't a lie at the end of 3rd year. Remus really was leaving to take care of a sick friend, Sirius.

For everyone concerned about Sirius and Remus even though it has no bearing on this story here's what's happening to them. After Sirius was very reluctantly brought in he stood trial. Three drops of veritaserum later he was cleared of all charges. Although he was very insistent (frantic in fact) on seeing Harry Dumbledore and Remus convinced him to go to St. Mungos instead. There the healers were completely appalled at his condition. He was admitted to the hospital and kept there for months to slowly recover. Physically healers are amazing. Mentally? Sirius was kept under psychiatric care in the hospital before being released into Remus' care. He sees a therapist every couple of days and lives in a quiet cottage far out in the country with Remus. They don't get the paper and Sirius was never told Harry was missing for fear of what the stress would do to his fragile mental state. Sirius writes letters but more than half the time he addresses them to James and Remus never sends them. He still gets kind of confused about what year it is and is on a long term set of potions to help his mind recover. While the healers are confident he'll eventually make a full recovery it will take years and

he'll probably never stop seeing a therapist. If anyone wants I'll put what's happening with them in an author note but for this, Harry's, story they're really not important.

If anyone wants to write a story following Sirius's recovery and Remus's caring for him be my guest. There's some real potential for fluffy wonderfulness in that little cottage as Sirius AND Remus slowly recover from over a decade of despair. Any author will tell you that there are plenty of scenes that never make it into the final draft. I chose this to be solely from Harry's POV so things like what's happening with Sirius and Remus or what happened with Viktor and Hermione aren't getting seen but they are happening.

Also just to clarify I do love Remus and Sirius but they're as flawed as any other person and unfortunately in this story those flaws and weaknesses and insecurities are getting empathized because it fits better with this story's narrative. I have other stories where they're great but this is not one of them.

As for Harry and Hermione and Luna and Viktor. *sigh*

For everyone out there who has never kissed a friend and then remained friends...*sigh* this is a thing that happens in real life. Sometimes you want a kiss but you're not dating anyone, sometimes you want to practice kissing with someone you trust. Sometimes you're just an affectionate person who frequently hugs and kisses your friends. Harry is the latter. Inspired by Chelsea and Hermione's easy affection and how nice they made him feel Harry decided to try that himself and found he really liked it. The extremely tactile nature of his snakes literally and constantly hugging him helps. He practiced it this for the past two years. To clarify he and Hermione were never boyfriend and girlfriend. Hermione did not cheat on Harry. There are no pairings in this story. There won't start being hints of pairings for Harry until like book 3 when he's in his thirties. There's no true love/soul mates/OTPs in this story. The focus is on close friendships not on romance. In a way I've even retconned Severus and Lily into close friends only. In a Severus wanted more but Lily saw him as a brother and after the huge 5th year blowup they talked it all out. Even without James they'd have never ended up together but they did remain each other's closest friend.

Hermione and Viktor happened almost exactly like in canon. But virtue of being a smart pretty girl reading and studying in the library Hermione caught Viktor's eye. Because she wasn't a fanatical Quidditch fan he actually felt comfortable approaching her. Even without the time turner Hermione's over 15 by Yule. With the time turner she's closer to 16. Viktor's 18 and from a country where the age of consent is 14. He's not gonna see anything weird about dating a girl Hermione's age. That being said Viktor's noticeably shy and Hermione's not ready for the level of physical intimacy fanfics tend to jump straight to. They kissed for the first time after the Yule Ball and towards the end of the year made out or snogged in Viktor's room on the ship a few times. They're much more likely to get lost in discussions on advanced transfiguration theory. The most intimate thing they did besides kiss was Hermione let Viktor play with her hair.

Harry met Luna over the summer in the south of France. They're just friends but as stated above Harry's affectionate and doesn't see anything wrong with pulling Luna over to sit in his lap. Luna might not be a seer in canon but here she IS. She knows her and Harry are going to be great friends and starts as she means to continue. Harry's cards told him just that and he

just accepts her. Accepts that this tiny pixie seer is going to be a part of his life from then one and welcomes her with open arms. The fact that Delphi adores Luna helps a lot.

Also a reminder that this book is finished. I'm not really happy with this last part though. I did so much built up in the first part that this last part is really just a rush to the end of 7th year. Because the way I built the first part sidesteps a lot of things that happen in the later years. Honestly it doesn't really resemble Harry Potter by the end but that's on purpose. This might be the closest I've come to publishing an original work. In fact that next books should stand as originals with some name and location changes and minor backstory tweaks. I had to write this first though. I needed to know where the character came from. I needed to build him before I could write the rest of his adventures. By the time I was done I had written 200k words and it seemed silly to let it go to waste. I've certainly read worst Harry Potter fix-it fics and I know through some reviews this has inspired more than a few of you to go write your own stories and you have no idea how happy that makes me.

I was inspired to write this because of Lomonaaren's A Brother to Basilisk's (<https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10748108/1/A-Brother-to-Basilisks>) which huge and vast and really really great and they're still updating it. It has 143 chapters (last updated 19h ago) and 583K words. It's really great but ironically I don't like how slow it is. That may be why mine is faster. Our stories start that same. Harry goes back down to the Chamber and finds a basilisk and then pretty sharply divert from each other. Still it's a great read and I highly recommend it. Fair warning. Those who hate Snape and Draco should avoid it. Otherwise those you didn't like how fast my story is going to end should go read it instead.

Chapter 41

Chapter 40 - June 25th, 1995

Harry took the Hogwarts Express back with the others but travelled back to Hermione's house inside her bag. He was much more exhausted than he'd been letting on and decided to have a bit of a kip on the way home. The curly-haired girl happily greeted her parents and introduced them to her boyfriend Viktor. The dentists were less than thrilled but put on a good face in public.

They took all three kids out to dinner and got to know Viktor. Thanks to some coaching from Harry Viktor empathized his well to do family as well as his family's service in the magical division of Interpol which he intended to follow his father and older brothers in once he retired from professional Quidditch. The Grangers were impressed with his pedigree but later that night as Hermione and Viktor descended into a complicated discussion about history spoken entirely in Greek they were endeared to a tall young man who clearly admired their daughter's mind more than her beauty.

With the blessing of the Grangers, Mr. Lovegood and Chelsea, the protection of Viktor, and the regret of Ron Harry, Hermione, Luna and Viktor out to do what Harry had intended to do last summer. Backpack across Europe looking for snakes in Harry, now Bas' case, and whooping lompers in Luna's case. Hermione and Viktor were just along for the fun with a joint destination of Bulgaria, Viktor's homeland.

Ron had fought both long distance and again on the platform itself to go with them but his mother had been firm. He'd grouched about it plenty all summer long only a bit consoled by the packet of letters coming from all four backpackers as Viktor had felt moved to write the redhead as well and got in numerous Quidditch debates and even started a long distance chess match with him. By the end of their trip Hermione was complaining that Harry was right and that Ron had stolen her boyfriend away.

August 15th, 1995

Bas slipped into the Dursley's shed taking note of the new riding lawn mower. A ridiculous thing for a yard the Dursley's size. Bas chuckled to himself at the thought of Vernon's massive frame on the poor vehicle. Bas found his hook undisturbed at the back of the shed and hung up his pack and arranged his invisibility cloak to hide it. According to the rune he'd set up last year he had returned just in time. After a single night the wards were already half recharged. Basilisk knew enough theory to know that it was a sign of how much stronger he'd gotten since last summer.

Inside his pack he completely missed the pops of apparition or the brief search and cast of a spell to reveal human occupancy cast on the house.

August 17th , 1995

Basilisk slipped out of the shed in the dark of morning walking with a ground eating stride towards the Poundland to refill his yearly supply of Mars Bars. It'd been sorely depleted over the last year. At least he'd finally finished eating all the basilisk jerky while out at sea. He'd be happy if he never had to eat basilisk ever again. His snakes were a little sad to see the last of it though.

He thought the menagerie of feed animals he had should be more than sufficient to satisfy them. He literally had a meadow filled with sheep for his biggest snakes. He was glad he had found that rancher as he was leaving Australia willing to sell his whole herd. Though the man had driven away laughing about tricking him. Bas just waited till he was out of sight before stunning and floating the whole herd into his bag. The grow grass spell might be the simplest spell taught in Herbology. Harry had to refresh it every couple of weeks because sheep could really eat but they were probably the cheapest feed animals he had.

Far behind him at Privet Drive there were numerous pops of apparition as wizards swarmed the place and woke up the Dursleys. Basilisk thought he caught sight of people flying on brooms too low over the town of Little Whinging but they ignored the auburn haired vagabond stuffing candy bars into a backpack.

Basilisk greeted Stan with a grin on the Knight Bus and accepted a cup of cocoa. A tap of his wand on the side of the cup kept the cocoa inside as Basilisk easily walked on the jerking swaying floor of the bus with no notice or care to the amazement of a little boy gripping the chair tightly beside his mum. Basilisk winked at him and took a seat in a chair as it slid under him at just the right moment and pulled out a worn paperback. As the chair slid to the back of the bus to crash into the back wall Basilisk merely stopped it with boot on back wall without looking up from his book or spilling his drink.

Chapter 42

Chapter 41 - September 1st , 1995

Harry was lying along the bench of the train compartment with his head in Luna's lap and his booted feet propped up on the wall of the compartment. Ron was gently rubbing Ken's belly. The blond rat at almost two years old was a fully grown adult, fat and glossy. He loved his belly rubs and lay in a stupor on his back in Ron's hand. Hermione and Neville were down the train at the prefect meeting.

The door slid open. Harry didn't bother to open his eyes thinking it was Hermione and Neville but as Ron growled out "Malfoy." Harry finally deigned to open his eyes.

"Weasley. Oh and looks like Potter has decided to grace us with his presence this year."

"I missed you too Malfoy. I do hope you intend to give me a challenge this year." Harry replied with a smirk. He didn't bother moving.

"I'll do more than that. I'm the Slytherin Captain now. The Cup will be coming home this year."

"Don't be so sure ferret. As Gryffindor Captain I can confidently say you ain't seen nothing yet." Ron stood up putting Ken up on his shoulder where the rat reared up and waved his massive balls at the blond in a show of dominance.

"Really? They gave the captaincy to you? A third rate Keeper?"

"Ron's a great Keeper but more importantly he's a fucking fantastic strategist. You won't know what hit you after Ron's through with you. The Cup will stay with us this year."

"We'll see."

"Shouldn't you be patrolling?" Came Hermione's voice from behind the tall blond.

"Granger. Longbottom. Just putting your pitiful Quidditch Captain on notice." Malfoy turned sideways allowing Hermione to pass. Harry noticed the blond's eyes lingering on Hermione for several seconds before sneering at Neville and leaving.

Interesting. Harry met Neville's eyes to see if he'd noticed as well. The budding herbologist quirked an eyebrow confirming. Harry smirked back at him. Harry took in Neville's taller form with an appraising eye. Neville was growing up nicely. He had big gentle hands Harry noticed and nicely tanned forearms revealed by his rolled up sleeves. He smiled at Neville who'd also noticed Harry looking and blushed.

Harry chuckled and looked to meet Luna's eyes with a smile she returned impishly. Harry leaned up and kissed her. She giggled.

“So are you two together now or what?” Ron asked.

“We’re just friends.” Harry said after a look at Luna. He sat up and pulled Hermione who’d just finished magically slipping her Hogwarts robes on into his lap. He cupped the back of her neck slipping his hand under her hair and kissed her deeply. When he pulled back they rubbed their noses together with a smile. “We’re just friends too.” Harry turned to the boys with a grin. “Ya know. You guys are my friends too.” He set Hermione down on the seat and grabbed Neville.

“Ohh gross Harry don’t-“ Despite Neville’s height, reach, and big strong hands Harry easily subdued him and kissed his jaw. Neville groaned and wiped his cheek with a sheepish smile.

“Oh no you don’t.” Ron shrunk back in the chair and tried to kick Harry but the laughing boy merely grabbed Ron’s legs and jerked him down on his back in order to lean in and lay a smacking kiss on the groaning redhead's stubbled cheek. He sat up with a disgusted face as Harry relaxed back into the bench between the laughing girls.

“How about a hearty handshake next time?” Neville said with a huff.

“Or just sticking with girls Mate. What the Fuck?”

“Language.” Hermione told him with a giggle.

“How was the rest of your Summer anyway Ron? You kind of went silent on us there near the end.”

Ron shifted his eyes from side to side looking at Neville and Luna before sighing. “You know how Dumbledore’s been saying You-Know-Who has returned?”

Harry blinked at him for several seconds. “Uh no I did not know that actually.”

“Really? It’s been in the Prophet.”

“I’ve not got a subscription to the Prophet and I’ll remind you I was out of the country most of the summer and then I spent the rest of it at Luna’s.”

“We’re rivals. Besides all they print is lies. No journalistic integrity.” Luna shook her head sadly over a copy of the Quibbler that proudly declared that a lost colony of flightless dragons had been found in South America under a time bubble along with several generations of Dutch settlers.

Harry turned to Hermione. “Did you know this?”

“No. I canceled my subscription after last year when they called me a slag for dating Viktor.”

“They what?” Harry’s voice dropped all hint of humor. His eyes seemed to glow and his tongue flicked out for a moment. His arm tightened around his friend.

“Relax. Viktor’s publicist skewed them and they printed a retraction.” Hermione waved it off with a roll of her eyes.

Harry frowned. "So what does that have to do with your summer Ron?" His voice was still too hard and flat. While it didn't seem to bother the girls Neville and Ron shifted uncomfortably.

"Ah well Dumbledore went in front of the Wizengamot and told everyone that You-Know-Who had performed a ritual to regain a body saying he'd been a wrath this whole time. He's trying to get everyone to prepare for war again and the Ministry...well they basically called him a liar and made him step down."

"Wow."

"My family believes him though. As does Sirius and Professor Lupin and a bunch of other people. We were in a safe house near the end of summer. Everyone was looking for you. They kept trying to get me to tell them where you were and I was all like 'I don't know. Bulgaria?' Mum was super worried about you and like she wouldn't let us go to the alley by ourselves. Went and got everything for us 'cause she's scared Death Eaters are gonna swoop down and grab us. Her brothers died in the last war. Most of my family supports Dumbledore except Percy who's all about the Ministry. So yeah that was the end of my summer." Ron shrugged kind of helplessly.

"Huh." Harry thought for a moment. "You met my godfather?"

"Yeah. He's cool for an adult. He can turn into a dog. Asked me all sorts of questions about you."

"What'd you tell him?" Harry raised an eyebrow.

"You know the usual stuff. You do good in class. You're a great seeker." Ron shrugged. He'd been careful while answering the manic former convict. "Professor Lupin tends to hover over him and remind him to take his medicine. Twelve years in Azkaban is nothing to sneeze at and he's not really healthy ya know? Was in St. Mungo I heard Mum say for most of last year and I don't think anyone told him you were missing last year. Professor Lupin asked everyone to not excite him if they could help it. I only met him the once when he opened his family home up for the Order to use. He couldn't stay there long. It's depressing in that house. I can't imagine growing up there. Professor Lupin had to pick him up and carry him through the floo after he started crying."

Harry thought that explained a lot about why he hadn't heard from the man. Dementors sucked. Harry couldn't imagine being locked in a prison full of them. He winced. The poor man. At least he'd been declared innocent and gotten the help he needed. Harry wished him well and then put him out of his mind.

"Do you think Voldemort came back?" Harry asked.

Everyone even Luna flinched. Harry hugged the girls into his sides.

"I don't know. Dumbledore says he did. Why would he lie about something like that? Everyone in the Order is super worried about it."

“What about you Neville?”

“I’m with Ron. Why would Dumbledore lie about something like that?”

“What Order?” Hermione asked.

“The Order of the Phoenix.” It was Neville that answered surprisingly. “They were this vigilante group fighting against He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named in the last war. My parents were in it. Yours too Harry.”

Harry raised his eyebrows.

“Mine too. And my uncles and your godfather and Professor Lupin. Loads of other folks.”

“But the Ministry doesn’t believe him?” Hermione asked.

“Nope. After the whole mistrial thing with Sirius the Ministry really doesn’t want any more mud on its face and they really don’t want to deal with another war. So the Minister just denies anything is happening at all.”

“It’s the Rotfang Conspiracy.” Luna shook her head sadly.

The newest Defense Against Dark Arts professor, Dolores Umbridge, Undersecretary to the Minister of Magic she’d proudly declared, had every snake on Harry’s body twisting as his magic fluxed. She’d interrupted the Headmaster to give a speech that filled him with unease. Most of it was drivel but there were several bits in there that gave him pause. Hermione looked more and more upset the longer she went on. As did quite a bit of the Ravenclaw and Slytherin tables. Luna even looked worried but when she met his eyes she relaxed and smiled.

Harry smiled back and gave her a wink. He leaned forward and hugged Hermione into him. “It’ll be okay.” He whispered against her ear.

“The Ministry is going to interfere at Hogwarts. How is this going to be okay?” Hermione stared at the new professor with narrowed eyes.

“We’ll protect the school. Don’t worry. I’m here.” Harry’s dark voice sent shivers down her spine. All the old stories Basilisk had told them over the summer of how Salazar had repelled dangers to the school ran through her mind and she relaxed.

She’d missed her friend greatly last year. She kept herself busy with the new third year time turner holder while trying to find the older ones as well. They expanded the Weasley’s closet for a proper club house with an insanely long password only three over achievers could come up with. She had barely spoke to Ron at all until she had started dating Viktor and then she’d alternated her time between the Time Turner Club and the subtle thrill of her first boyfriend, her first kiss, the first time she’d ever let a boy besides her best friend touch her hair. Her and Viktor had broken up amicably at the end of Summer. Between her schooling and his career it

just wasn't feasible to continue but they still exchanged letters and had plans to meet up on the 3rd Hogsmeade weekend for lunch and to catch up.

Ron on the other hand had instead become much closer to Neville. The shy pureblood reined the energetic Ron in while Ron bolstered shy Neville up. As such since Harry had been back Neville was being included in the group more and more as Ron drug him along whether he wanted to come or not. Harry didn't have a problem with that at all. Neville was a good guy and growing progressively more handsome as time passed.

Hermione reached back and grabbed Harry's hand lacing their fingers together and squeezing. "I don't think Madonna is big enough yet."

"We'll just have to divide the meal into smaller pieces. There are spells to keep the meat fresh."

Hermione smiled deviously as they continued to whisper suggestions to each other. Almost everyone thought they were whispering sweet nothings to one another. Ron and Neville on the other hand shifted uncomfortably across from them. They knew those looks meant trouble.

Chapter 43

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 42 - September 4th, 1995

Their first defense against the dark arts class was disappointing to say the least. Harry flipped through the book incredulously as Hermione's hand stayed ignored in the air but when Harry's hand raised the professor almost pounced on him.

"Yes. Mr. Potter. I believe you were absent most of last year. I find myself confused as to why you are in this class at all."

"I got an O on my exam." Harry told her off hand. "Is there a spell to call the aurors and will we be learning it?"

"Excuse me?"

"You say there's no need to practice these spells just know the theory because if there is trouble we can just call the aurors. Is there a spell to call the aurors?"

"Why ever would you need to call the aurors?" Her smile was sharp and her eyes bright. If she looked more like a lizard and less like a toad the expression might have been intimidating.

"Well what if I was gathering lichen in the mountains for a potion and a troll suddenly attacked me? Having never cast the spells to ward off or fight a troll I instead am in desperate need of an auror. As I begin to run away is there a spell I could cast that would alert the Ministry of my need for immediate aid?"

Professor Umbridge looked startled. Clearly this was not what she was expecting. "Uh, well. No."

"Then shouldn't we learn those spells we might need in such an event?"

Across the room another hand was raised and Professor Umbridge jumped at the chance to exit this line of questioning. "Yes Miss Travers?" Her smile was kinder this time.

"Professor Umbridge as you know my father is an auror and I hope to follow him in the profession. As this is my OWL year don't you think my father would be terribly disappointed if I entered my exams having never practiced a single spell?"

"Uh well..."

Another hand raised this one was pale and aristocratic. "I know my father would be furious if this is all we have to expect this year." Malfoy of course spoke without being called but the

Professor ignored the infraction this time to call on another raised hand this one big and sun brown.

“Mr. Longbottom?”

“With all due respect Professor Umbridge what are your qualifications to teach us this class?” Neville asked.

The professor looked quite insulted.

Malfoy loudly to his friends. “You’d think the ministry could have loaned Dumbledore an auror at the very least. It’s not like they have anything better to do.”

The professor turned red in the face clashing horribly with her pink robes. “No more questions! Read. Now.” She spun away to sit behind her desk where she took up a quill and furiously began to write something.

Harry cracked open the book reluctantly and leaned back in his chair. He reached up and pulled Hermione’s cold hand down and started to massage heat and feeling back into it.

Hermione tried to burn a hole through the helmet of curls on the professor’s bent head before finally letting Harry calm her down. She opened the book to a random page and pulled another book out to lay in her lap.

Harry palmed a stone into his hand from his pocket and frowned at isa before sliding it back into the bag.

Chapter End Notes

isa looks like this | and means ice. For divination it means "cessation of activities--a freeze. All plans should be put on hold for the moment to be resumed at a more auspicious time." (pg 62, The Runes, Peschel)

This was a problem for me in the book with Umbridge. Why are they arguing about Voldemort? There are PLENTY of things that they need to learn how to defend themselves from that have nothing to do with Dark Wizards. In the book, not here obviously, Harry would have spent all of last year learning to defend himself against all manner of dangerous beasts. It's what makes Harry qualified to teach DA. Why didn't they just ask her about how to defend against doxies and hags and sphinxes. Seriously act like she was the moron for bringing up Death Eaters when they're supposed to be learning how to defend themselves from vampires and werewolves. I imagine Umbridge has a LOT of inflammatory things to say about defending yourself against werewolves.

Another logic failing in Harry Potter. Do they have a 911 or 999 type of spell that'll call the aurors when they're in trouble? I mean if there was such a thing I imagine they'd

teach it to first years and wizarding parents probably authorized their kids to use mummy's wand to call the aurors in an emergency like muggle parents do in real life.

In another story of mine (LOOK. You've seen the weird geometry of our scribbling <https://archiveofourown.org/works/32056441>) Petunia gets a wand having grown into the minimal required magic level to have one and takes a home schooling of course for near-squibs. When the dementors come to Privet Drive in the 5th book she uses the Call Aurors spell because Harry's not there to stop them. The aurors come at once and Umbridge gets roasted for siccing dementors on the home of a pregnant witch.

Chapter 44

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 43 - November 10th, 1995

The DADA hour always passed slowly. The professor got up and started walking the aisles. She ignored any raised hands. Rather she seemed to be trying to intimidate them by looming over them. Perhaps it had worked in her first year class but in 5th year even sitting some of the young wizards were taller. Ron, Neville, and Malfoy for instant could look her in the eye while sitting. Malfoy of all people was defiantly not reading the book at all and stared at the professor as if daring her to chastise him.

The gossip from inside Slytherin was that Malfoy's request of aid from his father had gone unanswered for once. As had Miss Travers' father's aid. Neville the Gryffindors knew had received a letter from his gran that made the growing boy somewhat collapse into himself but he'd not shared the contents besides the fact that there would be no aid from that avenue.

She didn't chastise Malfoy but she whirled around red in the face and furious looking for anyone to punish and Harry felt his body coil as she ripped Hermione's book from her lap.

"What is this? It doesn't appear to be your assigned text. No. This is your potions text. Is this potions class Miss Granger?"

Hermione's eyes didn't leave her book. "No Professor Umbridge."

"Then why are you reading it in this class?"

"I have already read the book for this class."

"Have you now?"

"Yes."

"Yes what?"

"Yes Professor Umbridge."

"Then you can tell me what's on," she grabbed the other book from Hermione's desk carelessly dropping the potions text to the floor, "page 209?"

Hermione flinched at the careless abuse of her book. Harry thought he might have to hold her back if this continued. "As that's the chapter that covers theory of spell color I imagine it details that."

"But you don't know exactly?"

Hermione raised her eyes from her potions text finally. “You expect us to memorize this book?”

The professor smiled sweetly. “If you want to pass your OWLs I guess you better.” She tossed the book back on the desk and sniggered as it smacked into Hermione’s fingers. As she walked back to her desk she very deliberately stepped on Hermione’s potion book cracking the spine. “Detention Miss Granger! My office. Tonight at seven.” She sounded absolutely gleeful.

Hermione quietly gathered up her broken book as the bell rang. She looked like someone who was trying mightily to not show how upset she was and failing miserably. Harry gathered her other things up and gently took the book from her with a whispered assured that they’d fix it or he’d buy her another one.

That night when Hermione returned to the common room she tried to hurry up the stairs but Marine smelled blood on her and before she could get more than a few steps up the stairs Harry snatched her up in his arms and carried her back to the couch where Ron and him had been waiting.

“Bloody hell! What did she do torture you?” While Ron’s exclamation gained most of the room’s attention it was the fast and furious hissing from Harry that held it.

The twins came over just in time to see the words “I will not read anything but the assigned text in class” slowly disappear from the back of Hermione’s hand in a flood of black blood. Harry’s hisses rose and fell and Hermione hid her face in his shoulder as she tried to muffle her cries. The Gryffindors knew Harry well enough to realize he was healing her but it was obviously quite painful.

“Fred, George, bring me a blood replenisher.” Harry ordered in a terse and explicitly angry tone of voice.

The twins hurried over to the station they’d set up in the corner of the common room and returned with a perfectly made potion. Whatever their antics the twins were top notch potioners. Professor Snape had confided privately to Harry that he thought both boys could easily get their Mastery if they felt like trying for it. He’d apparently been dropping subtle hints to both boys about an apprenticeship. Harry knew he could trust the twins in this.

Fred cupped the back of Hermione’s neck and helped her drink the potion. Colour returned to her tear stained cheeks slowly.

The words were gone from her hand and George quietly cleared the area of the disgusting black blood with a wave of his wand.

Harry kissed the back of her hand. “I’m sorry it hurt so much love. It was dark magic. Like an infection. I had to burn it out.”

Hermione nodded as Fred let her head gently fall to Harry's shoulder again.

Ginny came over with Crookshanks who immediately climbed in Hermione's lap and began to purr.

Surrounded her friends Hermione slowly began to explain the detention. "She had me write lines. It seemed so standard but she insisted I use this particular quill. It was black and sharp and-and required no ink. The more I wrote the more it hurt and when I asked to stop she told me I must continue until the lesson had 'sunk in'."

Harry squeezed her tightly. His eyes were bright and angry. "Looks like I'm getting detention tomorrow." He said in a deep dark voice.

"What?! Harry no!" Hermione cried jerking her head to look at her friend.

Harry cupped her cheek and kissed her gently. When he pulled back he smiled. "Don't worry love. I won't let them bury the bitch on Hogwarts' sacred ground."

"That's not what I'm worried about."

Harry stood up with her in his arms. "Come now. I'll make you some tea. That and a good night's sleep and you'll feel right as rain."

Crookshanks pawed open the flap of his pack and disappeared inside as Harry followed him. Ron grabbed Hermione's own bag and headed inside. The twins followed but Neville stayed outside sitting on the couch with the pack beside him to protect it from curious onlookers.

Chapter End Notes

Ah Harry learned ruthlessness from Slytherin but he's in the house of the bloody minded Gryffs and Godric would have gutted Umbridge for what she's doing. Fortunately Salazar was a bit more subtle. Yeah blood quills are one of the nastier torture implements in HP. Next up. Harry gets detention. VERY VERY PURPOSEFULLY.

Chapter 45

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 44 - November 13th, 1995

The class filed in reluctantly. The gossip mill via Lavender Brown had churned with the result of Umbridge's first detention with the golden girl Hermione. Reports were coming from several different houses of similar detentions but none had been so bloody apparently. Malfoy paused at her desk glancing at her hands before sighing in relief and moving on without speaking.

As soon as the professor entered the classroom Harry spoke up without raising his hand. "Miss Umbridge you didn't answer my question in our first class." Unlike Neville's respectful tone or Malfoy's arrogant one Harry's voice was deliberately surly.

"You must raise your hand Mr. Potter."

"I raised my hand first class. You didn't answer my question. You can't answer any questions about defense can you? Anyway back to my question about your abysmal teaching style. If a troll was barreling down on you swinging its club its roars almost reaching you as fast as its smell what would you do? Where would your precious Ministry be then?"

"Mr. Potter your hand must be raised!"

"Can you even cast a tripping jinx or do you just sling out your disgusting toad's tongue across the path and hope for the best."

"DETENTION MR. POTTER!"

Harry was silent. He stared at her quietly without moving. He didn't even seem to breathe.

Professor Umbridge took a deep breath. "Tonight. Immediately after classes."

"Five o'clock then." Harry said quietly. Under the desk he took Hermione's hand and squeezed it.

The class was utterly quiet before the Professor finally ordered them to read their books quietly.

Harry didn't take out his book however. He simply sat there and stared at her seemingly unblinking for the entire hour.

In detention that evening Harry entered with a smile. "Hello Professor Umbridge."

“Mr. Potter. On time. How surprising.”

“I was unaware I had a habit of tardiness Professor Umbridge.”

“Yes well. Gryffindors in general have such a reputation.”

“I think Professor McGonagall would disagree with you Professor Umbridge.”

“Enough of your snark. Sit down. You will be writing lines with a quill of my own. I’m sure your girlfriend has told you of its use.”

“Oh yes. Thank you. Such a useful tool. One wonders why we don’t have more self-inking quills.”

Professor Umbridge smiled cruelly. “Oh its ink will become readily apparent very soon. You will write ‘I will not insult my professor.’”

“Very well.” Harry sat in the seat closest to the door and pulled out a piece of parchment. He began to write but hadn’t formed ‘I will n’ before the quill abruptly stopped working. He didn’t quite smile. He rubbed the quill between his thumb and finger listening as tiny fractures spread up the black shaft. “Oops. I’m sorry Professor Umbridge. It appears your quill has stopped working.” He innocently held the quill up.

“What?” She stood and came around her desk to snatch the quill from his fingers. “Ah!” The sharp fragments of the broken shaft cut her hand. Both black ink and bright fresh blood mingled as the shards seemed to aggressively dig into her hand.

“Oh dear. That looks bad. Would you like me to heal it?”

“Hfump as if I’d trust my health to you.” She awkwardly switched her wand to her left hand and cast a simple spell designed to seal the wound. Then she smiled down at him sweetly. “Don’t worry Mr. Potter. I have more quills you can use.” She retrieved another from her desk and handed it to him.

This time he got through ‘ot’ before it stopped again. “Umm Professor Umbridge?”

“What?!” She spat as she looked up from where she’d been rubbing her hand with some discomfort.

“This one is broken too.”

“Well bring it up here and I’ll give you another one.”

Harry stood up and brought the newly broken quill up to her desk.

She snatched it from him with her left hand this time and cried out as her hand was slashed open again.

“Uh oh! You should be more careful Professor. The broken shaft can be sharp.”

“Shut up!” She healed this slash again simply closing the wound. “Here’s another quill. Get writing and be careful this time.”

Harry returned his chair and got an entire letter written before the quill abruptly snapped in his hand. His blood fell across the few words he’d written. He brought up his wand and hissed the wound clean and close. “I’m sorry. Do you have any more?”

“What?” She looked up at him a bit dazed.

“I said do you have any more quills?”

“No, yes. In my drawer.”

“Do you want this quill?” He asked holding out the broken one to her.

“Yes.” She grabbed for it clumsily slicing her hand again. She looked at the bleeding wound dumbly.

“That looks bad. Let me.”

She tried to pull away but his hand was too strong as he hissed at the wound closing it. She began to sway and finally let her head hit the desk.

Harry stared down at her for several moments before waving his wand at the parchment on his desk. Lines filled the parchment in fresh red ink. Another spell saw the black quills repaired and returned to the drawer with the others. The palms of the professor were turning black with readily apparent necrosis. Another spell saw a glamour pulled over them and further up her wrists. Another glamour covered Harry’s hand making it look reminisce of Hermione’s last night. This all took a bit of time but still Harry waited until the dinner bell was about to ring before waking her up.

Finally Harry carefully transfigured one of his own quills into a syringe and filled it with an orange potion. One quick injection and the Professor jerked awake and upright.

“What!? What happened?” She looked at the still wet parchment surprised.

“You fell asleep. I guess it was pretty boring just sitting and watching me write lines.”

She looked up at him startled but smiled seeing his bleeding hand and the poorly hidden grimace of pain on his face. “Well I do hope you’ve learned your lesson.”

“Yes Professor Umbridge.” Harry held out his hand. “No hard feelings I hope?”

The dinner bell tolled through the school.

Umbridge ignored his hand with a sniff of disdain.

“Well you are dismissed Mr. Potter. Let this be a lesson that I will not tolerate rudeness in my class.”

“Yes Professor Umbridge.”

She continued to berate him as they walked to the Great Hall.

Harry went to his table and sat next to Hermione who cooed and worried over his hand. The twins made jokes and Ron talked Quidditch and it looked to the rest of the school as if nothing was wrong at all besides a hard detention.

Up at the staff table Professor Umbridge enjoyed her dinner with gusto trying and failing to engage Professor McGonagall or Professor Snape in conversation.

November 14th, 1995

Professor Umbridge looked decidedly odd at breakfast. She was pallid, almost blue looking and seemed to be having trouble breathing. After breakfast she waved off the healer's concern to attend to her classes. It wasn't until lunch time when she began to vomit bile at the staff table that she was rushed to the infirmary.

Rumors circled the school wildly but at dinner when the Headmaster stood and asked for silence it was given. “I regret to inform you children that your defense professor has succumb to the curse early this year. Professor Umbridge has been transferred to St. Mungos but I'm afraid the prognosis is not good. She appears to have been harbouring dark artifacts in her desk and several of them broke quietly. The leak of dark magic has infected her quite extensively. I ask now that any and all students who may have come in contact with the black quills in Professor Umbridge's office report to Madame Pomfrey as early as you possibly can for cleansing.” He turned and waved someone forward from the back of the room.

“I'm sure many of you recognize our former Head Boy Percy Weasley. If you don't, you only have to look at his four younger siblings to find the resemblance. The Ministry has graciously offered to fill the defense post for us once again. Professor Weasley will take over your Defense class for the rest of this year. For those of you that don't know Professor Weasley achieved a remarkable twelve NEWTs, the second of his brothers to do so, so he is more than qualified to teach you all you need to know.”

The Gryffindors let out quite the cheer but it was surprisingly copied by the rest of the school as well. Yes many of them did remember the Head Boy as a stuffy no nonsense sort of person but then weren't most of their teachers. Several of them recognized him as the impromptu judge of the tournament last year after Mr. Crouch abruptly disappeared. Whether they were cheering for him or the soon to be announced death of their former professor was anyone's guess.

“Quite a welcome Professor Weasley. This is the second time circumstances have drawn you back to our gates. Perhaps you're meant to stay.”

Professor Weasley offered an awkward smile. “If I may say a few words sir?”

The Headmaster held up a hand for silence and everyone watched with trepidation as Professor Weasley stepped forward. Given the speech of the last Defense Professor they weren't anticipating anything good.

"Good evening everyone. I'm sure everyone is hungry so I will keep this brief. The Ministry apologizes for the interruption of your schooling and I do hope you'll forgive me a change in curriculum so far into the year. As a gift to soften this blow the Ministry is giving every student a free copy of this year's new defense textbook. I will hand them out in class over the next few days. From what I have seen of your former professor's lesson plans you are all tragically behind so eat hearty and rest well for tomorrow we will begin a frantic battle to get you caught up. Tuck in."

"Well said Professor Weasley." The Headmaster put a grandfatherly hand on his shoulder with an approving pat as they sat down. The young red haired professor looked uncomfortable as the Headmaster began to talk to him.

Chapter End Notes

ding dong

Chapter 46

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 45 - January 14th, 1996

Harry was walking past Ravenclaw's table on his way to Gryffindor for breakfast when he smiled at Luna and then frowned when he noticed she didn't have any shoes on.

"Where are your shoes Luna?"

"The Nargles took them." She said in a dreamy tone smiling at him.

"Aren't your feet cold?" For how could they not be in a stone castle in Winter.

Luna was silent and blushed. She looked down at her toes and curled them under the bench in embarrassment.

There was giggling up and down the table that was stifled as Harry's gimlet gaze swept the table but the entire table indeed, as what was going on was noticed, the entire room was silenced.

Harry knelt on the ground at Luna's feet. He removed his shoes and as he reached out and cupped her cold foot covered only in thin, dirty, white socks he removed his own socks as well.

His socks, clearly gifts from someone who loved socks and colors and had decided to combine the two in the most garish manner possible, were multicoloured and neither matched. They fit Loony Lovegood much better than the Boy-Who-Lived. As he stripped off her thin white socks and replaced them with his own thick woolen ones he pulled them all the way up to and over Luna's knees which raised more than a few eyebrows of those who could see. Those that were still watching Potter that is.

Almost everyone's eyes were instead locked on Ravenclaw table or rather the air above the table where all the dishes and silverware seemed to be floating. Floating typically implies a lazy kind of drift but in this case the flatware seemed to vibrate with what can only be assumed to be the barely contained fury of the boy kneeling on the floor.

Once Harry had finished lacing up his shoes on Luna's feet he stood and offered her his hand with a smile. "Why don't you come eat breakfast with me Luna?"

She took his hand happily and seemed completely oblivious to the silent hall and the floating flatware. Then again Luna would have probably have attributed the whole thing to Nargles. She was happily sat down between Hermione and Harry at the Gryffindor table.

The Ravenclaw's table continued to be empty for several minutes before finally Dumbledore finished his tea and caught Harry's attention.

“Mr. Potter?”

“Yes Headmaster?”

“Hogwarts has never denied anyone a meal and we won’t be starting this morning.”

Harry finally turned and acknowledged Ravenclaw table. He’d been ignoring them despite some very pointed looks from Hermione and increasing whispers around the hall. He glared at them before speaking. “You will return all of Luna’s things by lunch time. You will put them at the end of the table. You will then turn yourself in to Professor Flitwick for punishment.” He waited a moment more for their compliance or just to let his orders sink in no one knew as they were all rather distracted when the tableware came down. Only they didn’t just fall down like puppets suddenly released from their strings. No. They came down as if slammed by the hand of a giant. Food didn’t splatter though. Everything stayed in its container held there by magic but every fork, spoon and knife slammed into the table point first and deeply embedded itself into the wood.

Then Harry turned around and ignored them again. In the silence he asked Luna to describe wrackspurts to him. She happily began to describe the insidious little vermin quoting, she claimed, a scroll written by an obscure Turkish author from the 3rd century.

The hall remained muted for the rest of the morning but quietly around the hall but especially at the Slytherin table alliances were on suddenly shaky grounds. It wasn’t until after 7th year Arithmancy class however that the shift truly began.

It started with one of the Hufflepuffs in class. “Professor Vector? Last week we learned about emotional magic, usually called accidental magic and how manifestation of such beyond the age of eleven is the sign of a particularly strong witch or wizard. On the typical range of power commanded by wizards where does Potter fall on that scale?”

The Weasley twins looked up from where they were apparently trying to figure this out on their own to see if the professor would answer.

Professor Vector had been pondering this very question since breakfast. Academically she had it figured out. It was the deeper implications she was having trouble with. She gave the curious class a tight smile as she picked up her chalk.

“The vast majority of the world falls on a scale of 0-10. Zero being muggles. Squibs are typically ones and it is a little known fact that after their magical majority they can reach two and even become capable of wielding a wand and performing most first year spells.

Now your typical witch or wizard falls between two and ten. From 11 to 20 they are called High Witch or High Wizard. From 21 to 30 we get Warlocks and 31 to 40 are High Warlocks. Warlocks is a gender neutral term. It originally meant oath breakers because you see a lot of these magic users go Dark. It’s theorized that they have the power but can’t quite control it. 41 to 50 are Sorcerers and of course Sorceresses. 51 to 60 are High Sorcerers and High Sorceresses. 61 to 70 are Mages. Another gender neutral term. 71 to 80 are High Mages. 81 to 90 are Magus and finally 91 to 100 are High Magus. From there we start talking about Gods and Goddesses.”

She turned to face the class. "Some examples. I myself am an eight as are most of the faculty. Mr. Filch is a two. Hagrid is a six. Professor Weasley being young still is a seven. Most aurors are typically eleven to thirteen. Professors McGonagall and Flitwick are twelves. Professor Snape is a firm High Wizard at seventeen. Headmaster Dumbledore of course is one of the most powerful in the world and is a Sorcerer at 45. The Dark Lord is believed to be about the same. The founders are believed to have been in the fifties. Circe was a high sixty. Morgana in the high eighties. Merlin was in the high nineties. Beyond that most of the gods as we know them were up in hundreds with Cosmic Gods such as Zeus, Poseidon and Hades being in the thousands even. As you can see there's no such thing as off the scale when the scale goes to infinity. Hence why we don't use that sign." She inserted the reminder again. She tried to get it in every week at this age. She had a three year streak of not losing a student to misuse of infinity and hoped to go for four.

"So Potter is where exactly?" one of her Slytherins asked. "Like fifteen or so?" He was willing to give Potter fifteen. No way was he stronger than Professor Snape who he was very pleased to see was the most powerful being in the school after the Headmaster.

"Well now we look at how we measure such things. Ability, range, duration, and most importantly, control. Now at its core what Mr. Potter was doing was a simple levitation charm wandlessly so that alone puts him in the teens. Now look at the range and control. The Ravenclaw table is approximately 70 meters in length and he restricted his magic to only that table. This immediately catapults him over twenty. Now we look at duration. Here we are a bit fuzzy. Headmaster Dumbledore interrupted him before we could truly see how long Mr. Potter could have held the spell but given his complete lack of struggle we can safely say he could have held it pass when he did especially when he cast yet another wide area, perfectly controlled spell to bring everything down in the fashion he did. Theoretically he's still in the twenties though he'd be very high up there."

The class was silent.

"Now here in lies the rub." Professor Vector's voice, which before now had been her typical teaching tone, now took a sardonic bend. "The examples I quoted above were all adults. Mr. Potter is fifteen. This summer on his sixteen birthday he will double in strength. Six years from now at twenty-one he will doubtlessly double in power from even that." Privately she wondered how they'd missed it. He wasn't in any of her classes but still she'd have heard about it if they'd had a potential mage in their midst. She could hardly wait till this evening's staff meeting because boy did she have some questions. She'd have given her eye teeth to have a potential mage in her class.

A former Slytherin herself even in her distraction she could hardly help but notice the reactions of the Slytherin's to this information. If the Headmaster was right and the Dark Lord had really returned he might find himself with a few less followers. Depending on how Mr. Potter chose to throw his allegiance or if he even chose to get involved at all. Some of the more powerful wizards abstained from fighting feeling they could do more harm than good. Nicholas Flamel for example only interfered in the most extreme of circumstances.

Chapter End Notes

This scale is what I use in my logic that Petunia could get a wand. I imagine that's what Mr. Filch was doing with his Quikspell course as well. Remember everything way back in the summer before 3rd year? All those changes and cumulative things happening to Harry? They're starting to become more apparent. He doesn't flaunt it a lot but there's a lot of power there. However this story does have a plot. A vague meandering thing but it's there. Pay close attention to the last lines in this chapter.

The story I had referenced before is no where near finished. It's a crossover with the video game The Secret World. I got Harry and Hermione (who are like siblings in that story so don't get your hopes up Harmony) back to school and then completely faltered. I couldn't decide if I'd like to follow the Hogwarts storyline or the game's storyline and yeah I haven't touched it in years. Is there a thing here on ao3 where you can put fics up for adoption?

Chapter 47

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 46 - May 25th, 1995

Dumbledore, in Harry's opinion, was acting like a nervous squirrel. Maybe he'd just been hanging out with his snakes too long but the Headmaster's jerkily eye movements whenever he was near Harry triggered a rather predatory response in the young parselmage.

The Headmaster had asked Harry, Hermione, and Ron to his office to ask in a rather distracted way as to their plans for the summer. After seeing them all with tea poured from a wandless teapot and a lemon drop each he had settled back in his floral chair stroking his beard and looking for all the world like a kindly old grandfather visiting with his grandchildren.

"I know Ronald's family intends to visit Romania this summer."

Ron looked surprised by this actually but given that's where his brother lived he obviously didn't think it was too unusual.

"What of you Miss Granger? I understand you backpacked across Europe with Mr. Krum and Mr. Potter last summer yes?"

"And Luna. Yes sir."

"What are your plans for this summer then?"

"My parents are taking me to Greece for a family reunion. My grandfather calls a big reunion every seven years. It'll last the entire summer. My parents are coming down for the first week and then I'll be staying down there for the rest of the summer."

"I see." The Headmaster looked somewhat disappointed but quickly hid it. "And you Mr. Potter?" Rather than the direct eye contact he'd maintained with Ron and Hermione he concentrated on his teacup instead as he spoke to Harry although contrarily he seemed to be paying more attention to Harry's answer than the other two.

"I'll be spending the first few days recharging the wards at the Dursleys. I hope you don't mind Headmaster but I attached a monitoring rune to the wards schema to tell me when it's charged. It took only two days this past summer so I should be finished in time to accompany Hermione to Greece."

"Of course you want to spend the summer with your girlfriend."

"Hermione's not my girlfriend. We're just friends. Extremely close friends but still only friends."

“In that case why don’t you accompany your friend Ronald to Romania instead? Keep it even.”

“Because Hermione has already invited me to Greece and I have accepted. Her parents have already brought me a plane ticket.”

“You will be stopping by the Ministry’s Department of Travel before you board the plane for your power suppressors I hope?”

“Yes Headmaster.”

“Alas I cannot travel by plane any longer. I would be very careful after your sixteenth birthday Mr. Potter less you find yourself strained. Happened to a friend of mine. Of course back then we took ships mainly but sonar was the new thing and at the time we did not realize our magic could interfere with it. The ship hit an iceberg. My friend was fine of course. He transfigured some debris into a skiff much like yourself but it was nonetheless a terrifying experience.”

“Hence why wizards still use sailing ships.”

“Indeed.” Dumbledore glanced up briefly staring at Harry’s chin instead of his eyes. “I would ask that you send me an owl once you return to England Mr. Potter. There are some people I’d like you to meet.”

“Yes sir.” Harry glanced at Ron with a quirked brow.

Afterwards as they walked three abreast down the hall Ron wondered aloud. “Think he meets the Order?”

Harry shrugged. “I guess.”

“It’s going to be difficult to meet anyone considering you intend to go to South America with Luna after a month with me.” Hermione commented dryly.

Ron looked confused. “Wait wait wait. Why didn’t you tell him that?”

“Slipped my mind.”

“No it didn’t.”

“Maybe it’s not the Headmaster’s business where I spend my summers.”

“Technically speaking Harry you are only fifteen.” Hermione pointed out.

“Right which means it’s my guardian’s business where I spend my summers. Meaning my aunt who I can assure you with absolute certainty does not care what I do as long as she never has to look at me again. We haven’t even laid eyes on each other in almost three years. It’s the healthiest our family relationship has ever been.”

“Who signs your permission slips?” Ron suddenly asked. “If your aunt doesn’t I mean?”

“Chelsea. She’s an old friend of my mum’s I ran into a few years ago. Her I do generally tell where I’m going but she’s cool. She trusts me to care take of myself.” Harry didn’t bother to mention Snape did too or that Harry usually ran his summer plans pass the Potions Master. Together Chelsea and Snape made it almost like having parents.

Together they had bought him a letterbook at the post office in Diagon Alley. A letterbook allowed Harry to write a letter in the book he kept which would be copied at the post office. Once finished the letterbook on the post office side would fold itself into an envelope and address itself before falling into a bin for owl delivery. Letters written to him would go to the post office and be magically copied and transferred to a page in his own book though packages would stay at the post office for pick up. They had done this after Harry’s missing fourth year and a severe tonguelashing about keeping in touch from now on. It was a very good thing they did. Someone had to watch out for him.

Chapter End Notes

I have a mental picture of Harry getting wrist suppressors and then getting tested and still setting off the instruments. So he gets ankle suppressors and is still setting it off. When he finally meets Hermione at the airport he's wearing ankle, wrist, waist, and neck suppressors. He gives Hermione his wand and a sleeping potion to put him under and further suppress his magic until they land. Hermione just gives him a WTF look as he shrugs sheepishly. It's not a scene long enough to be worth writing so I couldn't get it in but it amuses me greatly so I thought I'd share here at least.

Chapter 48

Chapter 47 - January 16th, 1997

The Great Hall doors creaked open just after most students had left for bed. Only a few of the staff remained chatting over cocoa and cake. They looked over to find a distinctly wet Harry Potter sloshing his way up between the Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff tables.

He looked up at them with vivid green eyes and a thoroughly done expression.

“Headmaster?”

“Yes Mr. Potter?”

“I have returned to England.”

“I see that.”

“Sixteenth birthdays suck.”

“Yes they do.”

“There’s a jormungandr in the Black Lake. It promises to play nice with the giant squid but you might wanna let the merpeople know.”

“Noted.”

Harry turned to leave the Great Hall continuing to slosh noisily into the hall and up the stairs.

Most of the staff seemed stunned and looked at the Headmaster who seemed more interested in his cocoa than the prodigal son who’d just return after missing more than half the year.

“Albus...?” Minerva started.

“Yes?”

“Are you really just going to sit there and accept that Mr. Potter just walked back into the school, almost five months late, soaking wet, implying that he rode a Midgard Serpent to get here?”

“Of course not.”

“Then what are you going to do?”

“Call the Apparition Office and see if they’ll wave Harry’s age allowing him to get his license early. If the boy knew how to apparate I dare say he’d have made it back to school in November.”

Minerva closed her eyes in a grimace that upstairs her favorite student was even now mimicking.

January 17th, 1997

It was lunch before most of the school realized that Harry Potter had in fact shown up this year. If they were expecting some grand display and story this time they were disappointed. While his friends seemed to know bits and pieces of where he'd been and what he'd been doing the surly youth was unusually closed mouth this time.

Honestly he was just exhausted. While he attended meals over the weekend he was more likely to be found sleeping in odd places than spinning yarns. By the time Monday rolled around he was seen following Hermione around from class to class like an obedient puppy. Wherever he'd been this time it appeared that he most certainly had not been keeping up with his studies. He had none of the required books and some said that he'd lost his wand as he didn't appear to be using the same one.

The only hint of his adventures seemed to be the absolutely enormous serpent now residing in the Black Lake. Its head alone was as big as a carriage and Harry was seen leading cows down to it on occasion. Otherwise there was the fact that he seemed to know how to cuss in Portuguese and when Blaise Zabini made some kind of derogatory comment about Luna in Spanish Harry had broken the other boy's jaw.

He was also much less self-conscious about how many snakes he had on his body. If he was alone and his lips were moving there was a better than average chance he was talking to a snake of some kind. Everything from cobras, and coral snakes to vipers of all shapes, sizes and colors with one or two people being absolutely certain he had a basilisk. With rumors of Voldemort's return growing more and more valid despite the Ministry's continued refusal to admit such some students began the whole "parselmouths are Dark" and "Harry is a Death Eater" rumors again.

Unlike in second year Harry barely seemed to notice or care but Ron, as the big, handsome, and popular Quidditch Captain, vehemently denied any such nonsense. Neville, who had grown into a handsome and burly blond man, tended to quietly tower near people who were talking badly about Harry until they were cowed into silence. Luna and Hermione were known to be quieter but much more effective at shutting people up about it.

February 1997

Around Valentine's Day Harry seemed to begin to regain some of his old pep taking both Hermione and Luna to Madam Puddifoot's fueling several rumors and making the scandal page in Witch Weekly. He began to smile more and in at least Defense, Potions, and

Divination he was catching up with the rest of the class. In no small part helped along by Hermione's diligent efforts and Snape's subtle encouragement.

In other news, most of the girls around this time were mooning over the oldest Weasley in the school. No not Percy or even Ron. Bill had arrived with an eye towards removing the curse on the Defense position so as to allow his little brother to stay on in a job he loved.

Chapter 49

Chapter 48 - April 1997

“Harry wait up.”

Harry turned from where he was making his way to the Black Lake. He was being hailed by a gorgeous redhead and was more than willing to wait. He took in the trail of long red hair, the gorgeous blue eyes, and the friendly smile with keen appreciation.

“I don’t know if we’ve been introduced. I’m Bill, Ron’s oldest brother.” Bill held out a strong hand liberally covered with so many freckles he almost looked tan.

“He’s pointed you out a few times. You’re here to try and remove the Defense curse right?”

“Yup. I’m hoping you can help me out. I’ve crawled over every inch of this place but Ron tells me you can access even deeper parts of the castle.”

“Yeah Salazar and the parsel tribe squibs built the waterways underneath Hogwarts. They can only be accessed by parselmouths though. What are you looking for?”

“Salazar’s ward stone. Do you know where it is?”

“Nope. Between school and my travels I’ve not gotten as much of a chance to fully explore the waterways as I’d like. What do you mean by Salazar’s ward stone? Shouldn’t the Headmaster know where all the wardstones are?”

“Not since the last parselmouth to be Headmaster. Salazar apparently never counted on one of his line not being available to help Hogwarts. While most of the rest of the stones are accessible by Headmaster Dumbledore apparently no one’s seen Salazar’s stone since Amond Gaunt was Headmaster.”

“Huh. Well I’m certainly down to go looking for it if you’d like. Does the Headmaster have any record? Any general idea where it might be?”

“The portrait of Headmaster Gaunt just talks about it being on the lower levels but it’s nowhere in the dungeons.”

“Well the dungeons aren’t the lowest levels. Hogwarts actually descends quite far beneath sea level. It’s almost as massive below the ground as it is above it.”

They were at the edge of the lake now when a massive snake’s head emerged and rested its chin on the shore. Most of the rest of its body remained below the surface but Bill could discern the waving tip of a tail near where the lake met the sea. It took all of his considerable nerve not to scream and leap away. If he hadn’t known this was precisely why Harry was heading towards the lake he might still have done so.

“Bill allow me to introduce you to Douglas Lokison. All jormungandr’s call themselves Lokison. It’s a point of pride. They’re incredibly long lived. Douglas here is only three generations from the original jormungandr.”

“Wasn’t that one supposed to devour the world or something?”

“Christian nonsense.” Harry waved his hand. What he knew of Christianity couldn’t fill a teacup. What he did know was that they hated magic, snakes, and any gods but their own and by virtue of being the victors of dozens of wars as they swept up through Europe they had liberally rewritten most of what the world knew of the old gods.

“If you say so.” Bill stood back trying to conceal his discomfort as Harry hissed with the enormous snake at length before he completely lost it as the snake opened its maw and Harry. Stepped. Inside.

“Umm Harry?” There was a definite tremor to the man’s voice.

“Hmmm?” Came the nonchalant response as Harry knelt to study the hooked bottom teeth of the snake, each one easily as long as Bill’s arm.

“What are you doing?”

“What?” Harry picked something up and walked out of the snake’s mouth with the same relaxed manner as he’d walked in. In his hand he held what looked like a bone as big as his fist. “Dougie got him a whale but the bugger thrashed so much he broke several bones. This one had gotten wedged up in his back teeth.”

The snake’s mouth snapped shut faster than a blink of an eye and with an audible slam.

Bill jumped before swallowing hard. He looked over the massive snake trying to imagine it swallowing a whale and feeling his stomach turn over. As he watched the snake focused one eye on him and flicked out a far too long tongue that was blue and of course forked. It hissed something to Harry.

Harry stopped studying the bone and looked over at Bill. “Alright there Bill?”

Bill nodded firmly.

“You’re not afraid of snakes are you?”

“Not typically but it’d take a much braver man than me to not be afraid of that one.” Bill nodded towards the huge serpent.

“Dougie? Oh he’s harmless. Well...” Harry shrugged, “he doesn’t like the taste of human anyway. Besides we’re not much of a meal for him. Nah. Of my snakes T’for is the one to watch out for. He likes humans.”

“And which one is T’for?”

“He’s an anaconda. Mean bastard. Honestly I picked him up mostly to put a stop to that. He’d been kidnapping tourists. Developed a real taste for human meat. Fortunately the taste of pig is nearly the same. At least according to him.” Harry was examining the whale bone in his hand curiously. “I’m gonna give this to Luna. She mentioned something about scrimshaw this morning at breakfast.”

“She can’t have known you were going to get a whalebone later today.”

Harry smiled. “Can’t she?” He tucked the whalebone away in the front pouch of his backpack. “Did you want to look for the wardstone now?”

“If you wouldn’t mind.”

“Follow me.

Chapter 50

Chapter 49 - May 1997

It took over a month to find the wardstone. Harry was doubly glad he took ancient runes and that he'd been studying Old English as much as he had. When he mentioned that to his friends they told him they were just glad his defense marks were as high as they were even if they privately wondered at the variety of spells and even swords he occasionally used to dispatch the creatures below. The enormous snakes that fell out of his clothes to help attack things was also cause for wonderment.

He'd lead the way down into the darkest, deepest depths of the castle with Bill at his back. They were joined by Hermione, Luna, Percy, Ron, and even Neville on occasion. The passageways were filled with all sorts of monstrous creatures which Harry dispatched with nonchalant ease but which gave everyone else extreme pause. Not even Hermione or Percy or even the well-traveled Bill could identify all the creatures they encountered. Luna thought maybe they'd evolved from some original creatures over the last thousand years trapped down here under the highly magical castle.

This led to a heated debate between the more studious among them. Neville was once again a surprise when he engaged them in noticing the plethora of unidentified fungus growing down here.

As for Harry he figured he'd have plenty of time to document it all later in life once he got the wanderlust out of his system. He might not have come out and said it to anyone but Hermione but he did intend to live under Hogwarts for the rest of his life. She advised that he'd need to make numerous trips outside for sunlight and he'd only smiled. "Of course I'll come visit."

Finally they came to a dead end and Harry called for a halt. "I think this is it."

Bill cast a few spells. "I think you're right. The power coming from behind that wall is immense. Definitely one of the Founder's wardstones. Salazar's was supposed to represent water." He looked around the massive black cavern with the black river running through it. Stalactites and stalagmites decorated a cavern that was surprisingly warm. Though bioluminescent algae grew along the walls and ceiling they were nowhere near bright enough to light the whole cavern. They only gave an indication of the size of the place.

Harry studied the wall for several minutes consulting in whispers with one or maybe even several of his snakes.

Bill shuddered as he looked back the way they came. They were alone today. It was Hogsmeade weekend and almost everyone else had opted for the sunny village to yet another plunge into the depths of Hogwarts.

There was a now familiar sound of moving stone as Harry opened yet another parseltongue warded door. What was beyond that was nearly blinding.

Salazar's wardstone was a truly massive emerald. Bill wouldn't be surprised if it were taller than him and nearly as wide. It hovered still and silent over a clear water underground pool turned green by the light that shone from within the stone.

Both men stood and stared in awe.

This cavern unlike the one before was manmade and full of intricate carvings. The wardstone floated over a manmade pool that collected the water from a spring further underground supposedly. The overflow poured gently over the sides of the pool to flow out into all the other caverns that surrounded this, their final destination.

Surrounding the pool on all four sides were white snake carved pillars that Harry recognized as being the same or similar to the ones in the central chamber. He looked up at the ceiling puzzling out their exact location. He had a sinking suspicion they were directly below the central chamber and wondered silently to himself if this place could have been accessed directly from there instead. He couldn't see Salazar going through all this trouble whenever he wanted to change the wards.

"Well I'm not sensing any traps." Bill said after coming out of his awe he'd started casting a great variety of detecting spells. He'd taught them to Harry and the others who joined them in the search but his own long use and understanding of them made his results superior to their own.

"No. I told the guardian who I was and what I was here for. It tested me but I am an heir so it let me pass."

"Wait. I thought that was just some weird rumor the twins were telling me. You're actually The Heir of Slytherin?"

"I'm an heir of Slytherin. My maternal great grandmother was a Gaunt squib. Technically speaking my aunt and cousin are heirs too."

"Okay?"

"The founders, with the exception of Rowena, were all fairly prolific. Salazar believed half of Gryffindor was filled with Godric's bastards. Salazar had seven or so children. Helga had fifteen. Rowena had only two children and her oldest daughter died young. The younger married one of Godric's sons and the Ravenclaw name was lost within a generation. Salazar tried to convince the younger one to name some of her sons Ravenclaw but her husband wouldn't let her. He was very sad about that." Harry spoke as if he'd known the founders and in a way through Salazar's journals he did. He still wasn't through all of them. Salazar had lived to be almost four hundred before his death. Despite what the history books claimed he was actually the last to die.

"So can you dig out the curse or should I?"

Harry stepped forward to peer at the huge emerald. "HMMMM...." He began to hiss.
"Wardstone Of Salazar Slytherin."

The emerald shined brighter and it seemed like the trickling water coming out of the pool hissed back to him in acknowledgement.

“A curse has been placed on the defense position. Do you know of it?” Bill had given him a great deal of theory as they looked. He explained that with the oldest wardstones there was a kind of sentience. Sometimes changing the wards then was more about cajoling the stone than changing it manually.

There was a pulse and another acknowledgement. A brief vision slide across Harry’s eyes of an adult Tom Riddle looking disheartened and deeply grieved. Harry knew as the Headmaster had told them both that Tom had placed the curse after the Headmaster had refused to give him the job. Harry wondered how different the world would be if they’d gotten Professor Riddle instead of Lord Voldemort.

The stone pulsed as if asking if Harry would like to change the past.

Harry shook his head lightly. He knew enough of time travel to know what a bad idea that would be. While it’d be interesting to see what a divergent world would look like he’d not risk this one to do it.

When the stone offered that as a possibility Harry laughed. The stone had gone unused for centuries. It seemed eager to please. It didn’t seem to think creating an alternate universe would be too difficult.

It pulsed again.

Harry realized the stone wasn’t offering to create an alternate universe just let him see one that already existed. One that spun into creation when Tom Riddle had been given the position of Defense Professor that day instead of refused.

Harry thought about it but aware Bill was waiting patiently behind him declined for now. He hissed at it again though that didn’t seem necessary. “Please remove the curse. It’s harming the school.”

The stone acknowledged his request and the malady that had haunted anyone who took up the mantle of Defense Professor disappeared. Far above their heads Harry saw a vision of Professor Percy Weasley suddenly sit upright at dinner with a start. He rubbed his head with a frown and then slowly smiled. The vision faded.

Harry thanked the stone. He asked if there was an easier way to reach it in the future and had a sudden vision from the balcony of Salazar’s apartment and the floor opening as the stone rose up from beneath it. He sighed. He knew there was an easier way. The stone indicated with some images and a complicated feeling of travel that all heirs must find the stone to earn the right to use it that way.

Harry understood and nodded before stepping back to where Bill was still standing cautiously looking at the stone.

“It’s done. The curse is lifted and next time we need the stone I can use it from the Chamber of Secrets.”

“I take it this stone is sentient like I told you about.”

“Oh yeah. Also very powerful. Are the other stones like this or is it just that this one doesn’t get as much use?”

“Like what?”

They turned and started making their way back up into the castle. It would take hours and Harry knew they’d have to spend the night in his bag rather than come upon habitable spaces any time soon. “Let’s talk later tonight.”

Chapter 51

Chapter 50 - June 29th, 1997

Basilisk sat the kitchen of Number 4 Privet Drive for what would most definitely be the last time. The wards had recharged almost as soon as he'd stepped on to the property. He knew enough about runes and wards however to know that in a little over a month the blood wards would fall and fall hard. Number 4 Privet Drive would return to being the nondescript completely normal house it'd had been nearly 16 years before on August 1st. Basilisk was eating a pear and staring down at a blank sheet of paper.

Dear Aunt Petunia,

He crossed it out immediately. His aunt had never been dear.

Aunt Petunia,

Better but how to convey what he needed to without sounding...concerned? He was concerned. To an extent. He was as concerned as he would be if he heard anyone was under threat of the Dark Lord. The Dursleys though? Basilisk was half inclined to say they deserved it. As much as the Dark Lord and his Death Eaters hated muggles the Dursleys most definitely hated them right back just as much. Given the sort of abuse they'd put him through Basilisk wasn't at all sorry to imagine them being put to the pain curse and killed.

He sighed. He'd faced some hard truths about himself last year. Namely that he was a much harder man than he felt comfortable thinking of himself as. As much as it pained him he knew he had more than a little of James Potter's cruelty in him. He hoped he was at least a little more even handed in his distribution of such.

Aunt Petunia,

The Dark Lord Voldemort, the same that killed my mother, your sister, has returned to power. While this has only occasionally been my residence over the years there is still a very good chance this location will be targeted. On August 1st the wards that have protected this house will fall leaving you and your family completely vulnerable to attack.

Basilisk wavered on writing the next part. Finally he sighed.

You could move but I can guess my uncle's reaction to being run out of his house by freaks. When they come I leave you with this one sole defense. You are an heir of Slytherin, one of the founders of Hogwarts. Specifically you are the granddaughter of Malica Gaunt, the oldest daughter of Marvolo Gaunt. Like you she was a squib and was disowned. Trust me. She was the better for not continuing to live in that house. You are the Dark Lord Voldemort's first cousin once removed as his mother, Merope, was Malica's sister. His birth name was Tom Marvolo Riddle. Do not say his birth name out loud to anyone but him as proof you are who you say you are. If you have any proof of your lineage I recommend you carry on your person at all times. There is a slim chance for the value of your blood you may be spared. Dudley as

well I suppose though I don't know if any magical blood could survive contact with Vernon's DNA.

I leave you with this warning and defense only because it is what my mother would have wanted. To be frank I hate you. I hate Vernon. I hate Dudley. I hate Marge. I hate Ripper. You made my early years a living hell and never showed me one iota of kindness. It's a miracle I survived you and you survived me. You know some magical children if abused become horrific monsters known as Obscura and destroy everything around them? You came very very close to evisceration through ignorance and hatred.

I do not leave you my regards. I leave you my sincere hatred. Burn this letter. If being known as the heir of Slytherin can save you being known as my aunt will see you dead.

With a deep sigh Basilisk finished the letter. In a way it was cathartic to get that out. He didn't sign it. Unless Marge had reproduced by some sickening miracle he was her only nephew. He spelled the paper to the table. Only Aunt Petunia would be able to pick it up. Maybe Dudley if he did in fact have any magic at all. He knew his aunt had magic. The wards couldn't have been tied to her if she had no magic at all. Dudley he had his doubts about. The children of squibs seemed to go one of three ways. Witch/wizard, squib, or muggle. He knew from the scrolls from the last of the parselmouths that many of them inbred themselves into muggledom. Dudley wasn't inbred but he seriously doubted the large boy possessed any magic at all.

Basilisk finished his pear and defiantly left the core and the sticky juice on the pristine table. He walked around the house silently as a ghost. He spelled many of the pictures to blow raspberries when no one was looking. He walked upstairs and left itching powder embedded in the guest room mattress. He short circuited all of Dudley's electronics and put a charm on the worn boxing gloves that would leave them growing 10 times heavier than normal as they were used. He added a hair remover potion in his uncle's shampoo. He smiled as put a tripping jinx on the bottom stair. He cast a corrosion spell on his uncle's work car. He also poured in variety of potions into his uncle's cut glass liquor decanters. Everything ranging from impotence to incontinence potions. Finally he put indelible spots randomly throughout the house. They'd disappear when rubbed only to reappear the next day. He'd be lying he didn't acknowledge that indulging in his father's favored manner of cruelty also feel cathartic. Finally he put a delayed spell on all the pranks. He didn't want them to immediately connect it to him given the appearance of his letter.

With a doff of his green gambler's hat he shook the dust from his boots and left Number 4 Privet Drive for the last time.

Chapter 52

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 51 - July 1997

Basilisk laid back in a hammock enjoying the sun and the light breeze. Greece in the summertime. Sweltering for almost anyone else. For Basilisk and his snakes though? Perfect basking weather. He'd once again joined Hermione for the summer. Last year when she'd been startled to discover her parents were squibs from two old pureblood families. Hence why the reunion was called every seven years to determine if any of the squibs had produced a magical child. Her great grandfathers, on both sides, now demanded she return each summer to spend a month with each of them. One month in Italy. One month in Greece.

Basilisk tagged along. Her cousins weren't any easier to deal with now than they were when she was a child but they were somewhat cowed by the man with snakes writhing under his clothes. Basilisk scoffed. He was still convinced Hermione was much more dangerous and always would be. She rolled her eyes when ever he said as much.

It probably didn't help that Hermione went from their smarty-pants muggle cousin to their great grandfather's favorite. Hermione was intelligent, beautiful, powerful, and ambitious. To say her cousins were jealous would be an understatement. The infusion of muggle blood from half her grandparents had super charged the two pureblood lines from the other half resulting in Hermione. The fact that she had brought along a parselmage who recharged the family seat's wards was just icing on the cake.

Basilisk twitched. Hermione was approaching quickly. He opened one eye slowly allowing both lids to peel back as his eyes changed from slit to their more natural human form. A body modification he'd gotten in Brazil last year among others. Even Luna though they were a bit weird. He reached out an arm and pulled Hermione up to lay across him.

"What's wrong?" He slipped a hand up to cup the back of her neck. Aqua slithered down to lay lengthwise down her spine her wedged head finding a place on Hermione's heel.

"What's always wrong?" Hermione groused as she reached out a finger to stroke the coral snake asleep in the curve of Basilisk's elbow.

"I could have someone bite her." Basilisk offered only half joking.

"Tempting but it'd pretty much immediately point back to you."

"Poison her tea?"

"I thought most venoms were safe to drink?"

“Most are but did you know you can replace the copperhead venom in the boil cure potion with cobra venom and it goes from a cure to a poison. The cobra venom is much stronger and more concentrated. You can make the potion as you normally would with much less venom and it comes out fine. Put the same amount of cobra venom in as you would copperhead however and the results are...unsightly.”

Hermione smiled a touch evilly. “How unsightly?”

The person in question was the worst of Hermione’s cousins. A tall brunette who went to Beauxbaton and was every inch the stuck up bitch everyone had believed Triwizard Champion, Fleur, to be. At least that’s what Hermione told him. Basilisk had never met the veelan beauty that Ron mooned over but Hermione had spoken to her on occasion and apparently her and Viktor were still quite good friends. Before Hermione’s return and the subsequent discovery of her heritage and the discovery by her great grandfathers that his wayward squib daughter/son had finally produced a magical grandchild this cousin had been the favorite. She deeply resented that she was not anymore.

“All pores on the body begin to burn and overproduce sebum. They leak out all the oil in the body including the good oils leaving the body as something of a dried out husk. It’s survivable. As you said most venoms are safe to drink as long as you have no internal bleeding.”

Hermione considered it as she laid there with her cheek pillowed on Basilisk’s chest. She ignored the heavy and scaly body that slid over her lower back. Most of her family was keeping their distance from this corner of the estate. That a squib-born great granddaughter had come and brought a parselmage was great in theory. In practice making a show of welcoming said parselmage meant welcoming all the parselmage’s snakes.

Basilisk had been given a traditional guest house to live in while he was visiting. It was only small by muggle standards as each guest was allowed to set up their own home within the structure. When the guest left the runes were stored until their next visit. It was the magical equivalent of changing the sheets on the guest bed. The guest house had a nicely kept garden with a fountain as well and Basilisk’s snakes loved it.

“Are you staying the whole summer this time?”

“Are you saying you’d allow me to leave?”

“You aren’t missing your NEWT year.” Hermione jabbed him in the side.

“Then you have me for the next year.” Basilisk sighed. “After last year I think I better stay close to you. You keep me out of trouble.”

“Luna didn’t?”

Basilisk shrugged. “She gave me a warning. I should have heeded it.”

“I was quite upset with her when she returned without you. Are you ready to talk about it?”

Basilisk stroked his hand over Hermione's curls with one hand. "I saw a child. A little girl. They were...hurting her. I stopped it but then I learned there were more." Basilisk stopped stroking her hair for a long moment. Finally he started again. "I wish I could say I stopped them all. That I stopped it permanently. I'm just one man though...That village won't do it again though. Those children are safe now."

"Bas? Should I...? Do you need to talk about it?" Hermione tried to push herself up to look at his face but he held her still.

"Maybe one day...but not now. I did what I had to do. I learned a few things about how...fragile muggles can be. I learned how far I was willing to go when it comes to protecting children. I learned how...cruel I could be when I had cause."

"Did you...kill anyone?"

"Yes."

Hermione was silent for a few moments. She noticed Basilisk had stopped stroking her hair again. "I trust you. If you had cause I'm sure whatever you did was justified."

He started stroking her hair again.

Chapter End Notes

I believe JKR confirmed that muggleborns are just born of squibs who are a few generations removed from magic and therefore don't remember it. In my own private headcanon I feel like China has been conducting a hundred study that gets published in the late 90s confirming this.

So yeah Hermione's grandparent were squibs. They came to live in England, married, had squib kids who married and produced Hermione. Hybrid vigor being a thing here (and in canon (Dumbledore, Voldemort, and Harry were all halfbloods and super powered)) Hermione's not only super smart, competent and ruthless she's also magically strong and now has been brought back into the fold of her magical families. There was a low key fight over which one got to claim her. Her father's family won cause patriarchy. There was talk of marriage contracts but Basilisk took a rather dim view of that when he heard about it knowing it would upset Hermione. They universally decided to let it be Hermione's decision.

Basilisk was in Colombia when he came across a village and hear a little girl screaming as female circumcision (FGM) was being performed on her. Being barbaric and horrific Basilisk put a stop to it in that village. Just like in the real world though he knows he's just one man. He knew that he couldn't stop it all permanently but he did mind blast the knowledge of how to do it from everyone in the village to prevent them from even thinking of it again.

Similar to what Salazar did to the muggleborns he took in. Basilisk is aware of Oblivate but he doesn't know how to do it. He learned how to mind blast from Salazar's notes. They're similar but different. The mind blast is much harsher and much more dangerous hence why it was replaced by oblivate.

Hermione's acceptance is extremely important to Basilisk. I hope that's obvious here.

Chapter 53

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 52 - September 1st, 1997

Basilisk woke up much later than he intended. He had spent the final week of summer in the Chamber of Secrets dabbling at alchemy and enjoying the last week with his natural hair. At least the James weave was new and Chelsea had cut it a little more rakish like his father had worn it as an adult rather than the sticky mess it was before Fleamont invented Sleakeazy.

He woke up in his bag in his bed and spent several minutes divesting himself of snakes that he curled up around his warm body for the night. It wasn't until after he had made himself a nice hot cup of coffee libelously mixed with cream and sugar that he cast a tempus and realized he had less than fifteen minutes to meet Hermione in the Great Hall for the opening feast.

The first years were very confused and scared when he tumbled out of a wall in the antechamber. He gave them a smile and a wink before dunking into the Great Hall passing Professor McGonagall who gave him a look and a sigh. He shot her a familiar roguish smile and the reminder of her favorite departed student lifted the corners of her lips for half a second. Harry really had grown up to be just like his father, she thought before collecting the first years.

Hermione sighed in relief. "I was worried."

"I overslept. Sorry."

"Hey mate. How was your summer?" Ron asked from across the table. His big keeper hands folded in front of him on the table and a friendly easy smile on his face.

Harry felt a twinge again. He and Ron continued to grow further apart. He'd perhaps exchanged two letters with the other boy the entire summer. Ron was being scouted by Quidditch teams and seeing what NEWTs he could scrap by with to graduate. He had friends in other houses and kept busy with the Quidditch team and an ongoing correspondence with Viktor and Oliver. After much coaxing Harry had even gotten him in touch with Marcus Flint. With three pro-athletes as friends to vouch for his skill and ability Ron's future was looking bright.

Harry was much closer to Hermione and Luna, his intelligent girl friends than Ron and Neville. Not that they weren't still friends but they weren't as close as they had been and Harry regretted that. On the other hand if they were closer Ron might know and disapprove of Harry's more extreme Slytherin methods of dealing with problems. Then again maybe not. Ron was a Gryffindor and they were bloody minded.

"Pretty good. Spend most of it in the sun down in Greece and Italy. Nice and lazy compared to my past few summers. You?"

“Spent half my time working in Fred and George’s shop and the other half working in that Quidditch shop where we bought my broom. Mum didn’t like it but I got a waiver. Lady I work with at the broom shop said Mum’s got empty nest syndrome or something. All us kids almost grown and gone. She’s going a little stir crazy.”

“Maybe she’ll get grandkids soon. Bill, Charlie, or Percy are getting older.” Hermione suggested.

“Nah wizards don’t typically marry until they’re in their thirties or forties.”

“Right.” Hermione winced. “The longer life spans. I forget about that sometimes. My great-grandfather is still hale and hearty at eighty while my grandfather and even my dad seem much older and weaker at forty and sixty.”

“Muggle bodies break down easier and faster. We think Dumbledore is old but he’s still strong and healthy. He might live another hundred years. Salazar lived into his four hundreds. Squibs age slower than muggles but still very fast compared to the rest of us.” Harry commented. “I didn’t know Fred and George opened a shop.”

“Yeah a joke shop. They started with owl orders and it was slow going but Bill floated them a loan from his commission breaking the Defense post curse here and they opened right at the beginning of summer. They’ve done mad business. Everyone knows them for Hogwarts ya see. They had Ginny and me hoping to keep up with sales while Lee and them stayed in the back making more product. It was crazy at first. Even Mum’s working for them now. Which is...I’m glad I got that other job at the broom store.” He finished up. “Working with your Mum specifically with her as an employee is rough. I don’t envy Fred and George. On one hand Mum knows everyone. She is friendly and loving and set a lot of parents at ease over the safety of Fred and George’s products because everyone assumes she wouldn’t allow her boys to sell anything dangerous. On the other hand trying to tell her what to do is an ongoing nightmare because Fred and George might be the owners and the boss but it’s Mum, ya know. Currently we’re trying to convince her to find a job somewhere more her speed. There’s a restaurant down the street from the broom store that was advertising home cooking and looking for a new chef. I’m thinking maybe two birds one stone. Give Mum something to do that she loves and get her out of the twins’ hair. We love her but she’s a bit much sometimes. Hopefully she’ll find feeding people other than her kids and our friends more satisfying.”

“I thought she was scared of the Alley. What with the Dark Lord supposed to be about and everything?”

Ron winced. “It’s not the we don’t still believe Dumbledore but if he is back he’s keeping such a low profile no one’s noticed. I guess everyone’s just kind of relaxed.”

The doors opened and dozens of tiny first years flooded in. There were more and more each year as the wizarding world had experienced a baby boom after Voldemort’s first defeat.

After the sorting and brief announcements Harry turned to Ron and Neville. “What is the word on the Dark Lord? Ministry still denying he’s back? Dumbledore still claiming he’s back? The Order?”

Run shrugged with a full mouth.

Neville answered after swallowing. “The Prophet doesn’t say anything one way or the other. There are some of what seems to be raids on muggles on occasion but...well....muggle raiding hasn’t ever really stopped whether the Dark Lord is active or not.”

Ron swallowed. “Dumbledore still thinks he’s back and the Order’s still meeting and everything but they’re not finding anything. The only indicator we have, since we’re looking, is that there seems to be more legislature getting presented to the Wizengamot. Dumbledore stopped shouting about the Dark Lord publically just so he could take up his position again and try and stop it. Sirius, very reluctantly, claimed the Black seats to help vote. He also reinstated Mum and Dad as part of the Black Family and cleared the liens against the Weasley seats so Dad could help vote on Dumbledore’s side. Even Mum is trying to claim the Prewitt seats.”

“Yeah Gran was talking about that. Says Mrs. Weasley can’t claim them because her brothers didn’t will them down to her correctly.”

“Yeah. Technically Bill is Dad’s heir but Uncle Fabian and Uncle Gideon designated Charlie as their heir. Charlie doesn’t wanna return a deal with it though. I can’t really blame him.”

“Can’t Charlie designate a proxy or something?” Hermione asked.

Neville shook his head. “Proxy’s can only be designated if there’s a good reason the true heir can’t sit. Like Gran votes with the Longbottom seats because I’m still in school. Charlie’s just working out of the country. Nothing preventing him from taking a portkey between here and Romania every month besides the fact that he just doesn’t want to.”

“Right. So the Prewitt seats just don’t cast a vote either way.” Ron looked at Harry with a grimace. “Has Sirius or Dumbledore talked to you about the Potter seats?”

Harry raised one eyebrow. “The Potter seats?”

“Yeah. Right now I guess Sirius votes with them as your godfather but when you graduate you’re supposed to take them up.”

Harry chuckled. His shoulders shook for several seconds before he threw back his head and laughed loudly drawing plenty of attention to himself. Finally he calmed down wiping his eyes and smiling. He shook his head. “As of thirty seconds ago I learned there were Potter seats. What makes you think I wanna sit in them?”

Ron and Neville looked shocked.

“How is that possible? Haven’t Dumbledore or Sirius talked to you about it?” Ron asked.

“Dumbledore’s never mentioned it and I’ve never met Sirius.”

Neville looked confused. “You’ve never met your godfather? How can he be your proxy then?”

Harry shrugged. "Don't know. Don't care either to be honest."

Ron frowned. "I thought...I mean Sirius asks about you all the time. How? Has he...? The fuck?"

"Language Ron." Hermione said with a roll of her eyes.

"Neither Sirius Black or Professor Lupin have ever contacted me. Even when Professor Lupin was here he never mentioned being friends with my dad."

Ron just looked confused. "That's so fu-weird. I mean why not? Sure you're kind of hard to nail down outside of school...and sometimes even when you are in school...and I can't remember the last time you were actually on the platform...or even the last time you took the train...Okay so you're really hard to pin down but I mean they could at least send you an owl."

Harry shrugged. "I have a mailbox in Diagon. Just cause I'm outside of the country doesn't mean mail doesn't reach me. They really have no excuse."

"You didn't reach out to them either." Hermione pointed out.

"Yeah but..." Harry paused. "I met Chelsea by chance. I learned about my mum's best friend through Chelsea and Mum's journals. I did contact him and we have a good relationship. Between him and Chelsea it's almost like having parents actually. Sure they told me about Lupin and Black but I was thirteen. Why is contacting them on me? Especially when Lupin was here, in the school. He even gave me special lessons and never said a word about my dad. Then Black gets declared innocent and I don't know? I expected something from them."

"You did disappear for a year after he got declared innocent. They might have sent letters that got returned." Neville pointed out logically.

Harry considered that. "I didn't have the mailbox at that time you're right." He sighed. "Do I have to contact them? I don't want anything to do with the war and it sounds like they're neck deep in all that Order stuff."

"You don't have to. You're right. They're older. It should be on them to make contact." Hermione said. She understood that. When she was just a distant muggle cousin her magical family was distant but after the family reunion she got a ton of mail from dozens of relations wanting to make connections with her. On one hand it pissed her off cause it suggested she was worthless without her magic. On the other hand most of the ones she did establish contacts with typically talked about things relating to magic. What could they have talked about while they were under the assumption she was muggle without breaking the law? Sirius and Remus didn't have that excuse.

Harry looked at Ron who'd had much more contact with the last of his father's friends than anyone else. "Next time you talk or write to Black or Lupin let them know about my mailbox. If they wanna write me...they can I guess. I can't guarantee I'll have as close a relation with them as I do Chelsea or S- Mum's other friend but they can try."

Chapter End Notes

Sirius has been out of Azkaban for four years now. He still sees a therapist and he can't sleep alone, not that he and Remus really mind sharing a bed, but for day to day activities or sitting on the Wizengamot he's fine and rational most of the time. He still looks about 10 years older than he really is.

They would like to talk to Harry. Very much so but guilt complexes coupled with social anxiety is a hellish thing. Remus never talked to Harry during the school year (although I don't know why I assume werewolf shame but that's canon). Sirius feels guilty about running after Pettigrew so long ago and they're embroiled in the war effort and despite Dumbledore's urging very firmly don't want Harry anywhere near the war the killed his parents. Especially since even privately amongst the Order there are doubts that Voldemort has really returned despite the Dark Mark on Snape's arm. The Order seems to be more dry political meetings that war room meetings and most of the Weasley boys have long since gone back to their lives rather than try to sneak in for a listen. Remus and Sirius want Harry to stay far away from it all regardless. Here one of Dumbledore's plans backfired. He convinced Sirius as Harry's magical guardian to take up his seats as proxy because "Harry's too young to deal with this" but also wants Harry in the Order to talk about Voldemort and he did not appreciate Sirius and Remus throwing "Harry's too young to deal with this" back in his face.

That and on their side they're thinking the exact same things as Harry. Why didn't they contact him? Remus didn't contact Harry during third year or any of the years leading up to. Sirius feels guilty about abandoning Harry and then about not getting in touch immediately after he escaped despite and because of his mental instability at the time ("if I'd been stronger I would have been better I would have gotten to know him" Sirius' therapist has a lot to work with convincing Sirius that his mental trauma was legitimate, inexcusable, and not his fault). Then time and distance has just made those feelings worse and worse. They've half convinced themselves that Harry hates them for abandoning him and will rebuke them if they try to contact him which makes it very difficult to put quill to parchment. They have tried waiting on the platform a few times and of course Dumbledore wanted to introduce them the summer before 6th year but Harry's adventures overseas got in the way. Now it's four/sixteen years with no contact. They want to talk to Harry but they acknowledge that he's a stranger to them. They remember a 15 month old baby and have trouble reconciling the 17 year old man Harry's become. It sucks but as anyone with social anxiety will tell you it's difficult to overcome and the feelings of self loathing will beat you down. That's where Remus and Sirius are right now.

Their problems with contacting Harry aside they still live quite happily in their little cottage out in the country under some impressively heavy wards. No one's asked if they're gay or not but a lot of the Order assume they are. I think they're somewhere between obviously pining for each other and hopelessly co-dependent. A lot of fluffy fic potential in that house.

Chapter 54

Chapter 53 - November 11th, 1997

Harry accepted a thick bundle of letters from Hedwig. She very carefully climbed his arm to the edge of his shoulder before making the final careful hop to the bunches of fabric that formed the hood of his robes. The bird dipped her head like she was going to preen Harry's hair and instead seemed to be rubbing her head in an odd way above the air over his shoulder. In reality she was scratching her head on one of Madonna's crests. Parselmagic had reinforced the order of Hedwig's safety to every snake that came in contact with Basilisk/Harry. As such Hedwig was remarkably lacking in fear toward her master's vicious pets. Her and Madonna got along the best however. Both had that motherly instinct that seemed to transcend language barriers.

Harry untied the string and started sorting through his mail. He had letters from all over the world. He originally thought he'd be skulking around alleyways selling his wares and that did happen sometimes when he had to meet someone discreetly but once he'd established contact sending the orders by his owl was much more efficient. He had a couple of parcelscript letters from Australia and Brazil. One from Viktor. One from Ade. He even had a rare letter from the old ship captain who'd pressganged him in his fourth year. He had settled in Singapore and spent most of his time kicked back on a beach with a drink in his hand. Calypso had sent a confusing letter he would have to sit down and scribble later to read. There were three letters from potion masters and two from healers requesting this or that venom.

The largest of the letters were from Gringotts detailing his account activity. He would have to start paying taxes this year but luckily most of that nonsense was taken care of by the accounting firm hired by his family decades ago after Fleamont's invention took off. Before that he got the impression the Potter's had been a fairly wealthy and respectable family but not super rich like the Malfoys or the Blacks. He had met with his accountant once he'd returned to England with Hermione and was quite happy there was someone else there to deal with all the paperwork and number crunching. He had also briefly met with the barrister his family kept on retainer. Both organizations earned every penny as far as Harry was concerned.

His apparition license from the Ministry finally came in. There was also a notice of his need to take up his seats after he graduated. He sighed. He was still on the fence about whether he wanted to get involved with that nonsense or not. Maybe he would talk to Neville about it. The Longbottom Heir clearly knew more about the process and what was required than Harry did. He also had about as much interest in politics as Harry did.

"Anything from Sirius or Remus?" Ron asked. He had let Harry see the letters he had sent the men back in September. It was a kind of open ended letter mentioning Harry's mailbox and talking about how much mail Harry got. Hermione had even approved it as being sufficiently subtle. Harry wasn't asking them to write him because he could honestly care less if they did or not. He had no reason to believe they were anything but gits from everything he'd heard from his mum's diaries, Chelsea, and Severus. On the other hand it seemed rude to blow

them off entirely. They had essentially ignored him since third year. Longer in Remus' case. He felt like he was being the bigger man here by giving them the opportunity for something. If they didn't respond this time he was washing his hands of them. Little did Harry know that Ron's letter mentioning Harry's many contacts around the world just made Remus and Sirius feel worse about their lack of communication. It made them feel like they had nothing to offer Harry now that he was almost grown and had many friends that wrote him frequently.

Harry flicked through the remaining letters quickly but he recognized the handwriting on all of them. None had the jagged jerky writing he'd seen on Ron's letters from Sirius or the sharp even writing of his former Defense professor. "Nope."

Ron shook his head. He looked through the letters he'd gotten. Something from his mum and at least one of his brother's it seemed. He opened the latest issue of Quidditch Monthly that Hermione had gotten him a subscription to for his birthday last year. "Hey Hermione. There's a featured article about Vik in here."

"Oh? I'll read it later if you don't mine." Hermione was hidden by a book larger than her that the occasional crumpet and tea cup disappeared behind.

Harry was glad he was here for NEWT year. Hermione was still taking all twelve courses plus healing and while she had a better hand on time turning she still occasionally needed Harry to kidnap her for wash days. The Time Turners Club was going well. It was even a semi-official organization now with Professor Weasley sponsoring it. Harry's accountant had been delighted at his charity.

Chapter 55

Chapter Notes

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

Chapter 54 - February 23 rd , 1998

Harry made his way up to the Headmaster's office. He hissed open the door behind the Headmaster's private sitting room. A passage Harry was fairly sure the Headmaster didn't know about. Luckily he had his invisibility cloak on as he moved into the Headmaster's office and around to the door.

He took a few minutes to observe the Headmaster. An old record player in the cabinet behind him was playing a bouncy saxophone tune that the Headmaster was gently nodding to and tapping his foot as he wrote something. Without anyone to observe him he was hatless and his beard was tucked into his lapel to keep it out of his way. Nevertheless there were a few spots of ink in the pure white strands.

The Headmaster looked up after several minutes to frown at the clock on the wall. He pulled out his watch and consulted it as well before sighing. He poured himself another cup of tea and added lemon and sugar before returning to his writing.

Seeing the man absorbed in his work again Harry finally removed his cloak and knocked on the door behind him.

The Headmaster looked up at the door over his spectacles and started quite badly seeing Harry inside the office already. His jump had him spilling his tea on his lap and his ink on his beard. "Harry! How did you get in here?"

"I walked. Sorry to have startled you Headmaster. Did you get burned?"

"What? No, no. Thick robes you know." The headmaster waved his wand cleaning his beard, then his robe before looking back up at Harry. "I-I didn't feel you come through my wards dear boy."

Harry shrugged. The Slytherin wardstone liked him. Probably because he was the first one to use it in centuries. He often didn't realize it had done something to make his life easier until it was already done. One thing he realized was that the wards of Hogwarts might as well as be water to him. He could even apparate out of the Chamber if he wanted though he preferred the walk and fight for the exercise.

Harry walked over and sat down in the chair across the desk.

"Tea?"

"Yes please." Harry leaned forward and helped himself making his tea how he liked it. He also stole a small lemon cookie. He smiled at the Headmaster. He liked this Headmaster. Off

guard, a bit disheveled, beard still eschew with his personal music playing in the background. He tilted his head. "You know you are quite handsome Headmaster. You must have been devastating as a young man." It was there in the jaw, the blue eyes, the cheekbones. When he had not known Harry was there his natural body language showed a still fairly fit man instead of the sloughy weak bodied old man he typically tried to personify.

"Uh well. Thank you Harry but umm...well while I enjoyed the company of handsome young men like yourself in my youth now a days I prefer a more mature vintage."

"Thank you Headmaster. I too prefer ladies and gentlemen my own age."

"Ah. Like both do you? I had wondered."

"Yes. I'm more attracted, physically that is, to facial features and form than I am genitals. If a beautiful woman happens to possess a penis I don't particularly mind."

"Or vice versa." The Headmaster poured himself another cup of tea. He took a drink and sighed. He looked like he would adopt his grandfatherly persona for a moment before relaxing back in his chair naturally instead. "Severus tells me you're quite the occlumens."

"I started learning the art in the second half of my third year on his suggestion. During my time with the Australian aborigines I learned a rather different method than the one used here in Europe. Parsel based as you may imagine. I have slowly mastered it over the years. Fortunately my mentor was willing to continue my training via correspondence."

"That's good. I was concerned given the return of the Dark Lord that he might try to do you a mischief."

"I don't see why he would. What am I to him? Besides another parselmouth? Another Heir of Slytherin? Especially when he has the greater claim. I even allowed it to very carefully circulate amongst my Slytherin classmates that we are cousins. The last of the Gaunts you know. No. If anything Headmaster I'm the last person he would target."

The Headmaster looked extremely discomfited. "Cousins?"

"Yes. Funny even though we both take after our fathers, and each other, it's our mothers we're related through. My great grandmother was Malica Gaunt. Oldest daughter of Marvolo Gaunt. She was a squib and immediately disowned and cast out. She never married herself but her only daughter married an Evans and of course had my mother and aunt. Technically speaking, though it matters not a whit to them, my aunt and cousin are also descendants of Salazar."

"Then you know Tom was, Merope, the youngest daughter's son?"

"I knew he was a Gaunt from talking to a few Slytherins. I didn't know Malica and Merope were sisters. So that makes Tom and me...3rd cousins? No." He pictured the chart Hermione's family had shown them when they explained how Hermione was related to all her cousins. He had already figured this out but put on a show for the Headmaster. "Marvolo

is the common ancestor and Tom was his grandchild and I'm his...great, great grandchild so that makes us...1 st cousins...twice removed? Yeah."

Dumbledore took a deep shuddering breath. Clearly this was news to him. "What you may not know Harry is that before you were born there was a prophecy--"

"Yes. Snape told about that years ago. I went to the Ministry before 5th year to listen to it in full. Scary thing to be hanging over someone's head. Luckily it was fulfilled when I was a baby." Harry took a sip of his tea to hide his smile from further disturbing the unflappable Albus Dumbledore.

"Excuse me? Fulfilled?"

"That's what the Unspeakable said. That when the prophecy goes dark it's been fulfilled. 'The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches, born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies.' My birthday being July 31st at 11:59 pm so of course and a friend of Mum said the Dark Lord offered to let Mum and Dad join him three times and they refused. 'And the Dark Lord shall mark him as his equal.'" Harry thumbed the faded scar on his forehead. "But he will have power the Dark Lord knows not.' Here I figure Tom didn't know we were cousins. The old magic law Merlin put in place to prevent filicide? The one about not being able to kill your only descendant? I've read about that and from what I remember happening it was pretty much textbook reflected filicide. Tom tried to kill what magic recognized was his only heir, for all intents and purposes of inheritance. After all he'd just killed my mother and my aunt and cousin aren't magical. So Merlin's old law was in play and it reflected the destructive force of the killing curse back on him. And boom! Literally. The prophesied child vanquished the Dark Lord." Harry gave the surprised looking Headmaster a smug grin.

"Yes but he was not truly defeated. He lives still. He's back. He anchored his soul to this world through an esoteric and horrific ritual."

"Slicing a bit of his soul off and sticking it in me?"

Now the Headmaster was truly flabbergasted. He'd had no intention of telling Harry about the soul piece in him. "How...?"

Harry smiled. "I learned many things from the Australian parselmages. Tom's soul hasn't resided in me for almost three years now."

"I-I see."

"So the Dark Lord has nothing to do with me nor I with him. After all the prophecy only said I'd vanquish him and I did. Almost sixteen years ago. It says nothing about me ending the war or destroying the Darkness. We both know that's a war that will never end. I was a one time use sort of weapon for a single battle. That battle was won. The prophecy fulfilled." Harry finished his tea. "Was there anything else Headmaster?"

"What? No. That will be all my boy." The Headmaster stared unseeing at the lemon cookies.

Harry thought about leaving via the door for a moment before taking advantage of the Headmaster's distraction to disappear under his cloak and leave the same way he came in.

When the Headmaster next looked up he frowned mightily to realize his wards still hadn't detected Harry's leaving. Questioning the gargoyle downstairs revealed that Harry hadn't come past him at all. Albus was almost inclined to dismiss that the meeting hadn't occurred at all if not for Philias Black smirking down at him from the wall.

"I love watching when all your plans fall apart Albus. It doesn't happen often true but that just makes when it does all the sweeter."

Albus glared up at the portrait before throwing himself down into his chair. Now what? Harry had neatly sidestepped all his plans for years now but he had let it slide. Sure he didn't go through the Triwizard Trials that would have seen his abilities grow but his time aboard seemed to have proven fruitful. His reaction to the others being hurt during 5th year was...a bit extreme but he showed forethought and planning that Albus thought would prove useful for the war ahead.

Albus hadn't gotten him involved in the Order the way he had wanted but he would graduate in a few more months. Perhaps he was right and the prophecy was already fulfilled. It would almost make things easier. He had several leads on the Horcruxes and Harry's skillset would be useful. He'd invite him to join the Order after graduation and get his plans back on track.

The Parseltongue thing concerned him but as Harry did seemed focused on using it for healing...

Chapter End Notes

yeah Harry's not been actively working against Dumbledore per say. He's just been kind of side stepping his plans in a seemingly accidental way.

Chapter 56

Chapter 55 - June 25th, 1998

Harry James Potter graduated from Hogwarts with little fanfare. As far as he was concerned at least. Declining to ride the train the last time he missed the reporters at the station. Of course he also missed his godfather and werewolf professor as well not that he cared.

He was pleased with his grades for the most part. Five Outstandings in Defense, Runes, Potions, Divination, and Healing, which he'd continued to study with Madame Pomfrey every year he was actually in the school but learned much of the craft from other parselmages in Australia and Brazil. Calypso actually came to the graduation ceremony and gifted him with a silver scrying bowl and Mr. Goyle had offered him some contracting work. Four Exceeds Expectations in Charms, Care of Magical Creatures, Herbology, and Transfiguration. His only Acceptable was in History. According to the examiner his exam paper included too much speculation reminding Harry that not everyone had access to a founder's journals like he did. It reminded Hermione that he still needed to translate them for her.

Hermione to absolutely no one's surprise but her own graduated with all Outstandings in all of her subjects. She was quite pleased to have beaten even Percy in this as she'd also kept up with Healing and so had 13 to his 12. She was to start working in the library in Diagon next week which pleased her to no end. She was dragging Harry apartment hunting in Diagon next week too.

Ron managed an Outstanding in Charms, Defense, and Care of Magical Creatures. His Transfiguration and Herbology Exceeded Expectations. Not that he cared a great deal. He'd led the Gryffindors to a final victory and had been scouted to a Canadian team. His portkey left almost immediately after the ceremony to the dismay of his mother. He gave Hermione, Luna, Neville, Harry, and his family all fierce hugs and a promise to send them tickets before he disappeared his lovingly maintained Cleansweep in hand.

Neville had actually achieved more Outstandings than Harry. Defense, Charms, Herbology, Transfiguration, Arithmancy, and to absolutely everyone's surprise but mostly his own, Potions. His Gran was almost beside herself in shock. She immediately began talking about the Auror program but for once Neville, who now towered over his gran didn't cringe in front of her demands. He was leaving with Harry in a month for Africa and would not be swayed. His gran looked almost as proud of him for standing up to her as she did about his grades.

As everyone began to head towards Hogsmeade and the train Harry stayed behind.

"Mr. Potter?"

Harry didn't turn at Professor McGonagall's call.

"Aren't you leaving with your friends my boy?" The Headmaster asked.

Harry turned around and smiled at them. “No Headmaster. I think I’ll stick closer to home for a little while.” With a turn he apparated from Hogwart’s front lawn to the Professor’s shock.

Down in the Chamber of Secrets Basilisk pulled the James Potter wig from his head and gleefully burned the thing. Harry James Potter was no more. Basilisk Mars climbed the stairs to his bedroom and ran himself a hot bath as he began to massage his scalp.

Hours later a tall man with long red hair and slit green eyes that glowed too brightly out of his dark hood scrolled along the streets of Knockturn Alley. His smile was too sharp and his tongue seemed forked and one hag who tried to rob him fell screaming in the streets after a flash of blue scales moved from beneath his robes. Sly men with daggers in their boots and women with potion stained hands bought little yellow vials he pulled from his cloak. He jingled when he walked his sibilant hiss of “Venom for sale” a song in time with his steps. The Venom Peddler was born.

End Notes

This is actually a completed work.

It starts immediately before Harry leaves school after second year and ends immediately after 7th year.

I'll try to post a chapter of it a day until it's all posted.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!