

The Fury Within

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The Fury Within

by [NinjaPandaScholar](#)

Summary

After an unexpected birthday surprise, Harry Potter finds himself suddenly very different from what he was just a day before, and somehow taking care of a baby in need. However, his short and painful life has taught him that no one is safe around Harry Potter. So, how else can he protect this innocent baby but to kill off Harry Potter and become someone new. And, who best to help him than the one person who would really like him to not be James Potter's son...Severus Snape.

Notes

This is actually the first fanfic I wrote, so I feel like it's also the one that needs the most work. It's completely written, but I'll be doing some major edits before posting to improve the quality.

No horcruxes in this fic, so sixth year was necessarily different. Dumbledore is still alive, and Draco was stopped before he could do anything drastic at the end of the year.

The Surprise Birthday

It was 10pm on July 29th and Harry Potter was lying in his bed and staring dejectedly at the ceiling. This summer had been one of the worst. Not because the abuse from his relatives had increased, though it definitely had since his godfather was no longer alive and the Dursleys had realized there actually wasn't anyone who was watching close enough to catch them, but it was the feeling of helplessness that plagued him most of the summer. This helplessness centered around 7 Privet Drive, more specifically, the new neighbors down the street.

It was a young couple that had moved in a couple months before Harry had returned from school, middle-class and clean cut with an adorable baby who looked to be around 6 or 7 months old. They looked like the perfect family on the outside, everything the Dursleys strove to be and just couldn't quite achieve, the pride of the *very* normal neighborhood. Harry saw the mum and baby at the neighborhood playground on the few occasions he was able to get out of the house and waved at them regularly when they walked by and he was doing yard work outside. They didn't look at him like he was a delinquent thankfully, so he figured Petunia hadn't gotten to them quite yet.

Harry was distressed because he could see all the signs of physical abuse he knew so well that the rest of the neighborhood just didn't see or was purposefully blind to on the mother. She wore long sleeves in the summer, had bruises just visible above her collar on her neck, and looked down instead of interacting with the neighbors when she wasn't being spoken to directly. He was sure they were in a *very* bad situation and that he was one of the few who'd noticed. He had no clue how to help them though; he couldn't even get himself out of his own abusive home.

Harry's first thought had been to get some kind of authorities involved, but he quickly discounted calling the muggle police or child protective services early in the summer when the family walked fairly close by 4 Privet Drive one day when he was trimming the hedges. He could sense their magic heavy in the air around them. He had never been able to actively sense magic before, but he could feel it rolling off of both of them in calming waves to his absolute surprise. By the feel of it, he was certain they must be some kind of magical creatures instead of a wixen like him and his friends, but surprisingly, or not depending on how you saw it, the husband felt all muggle to him. He didn't know how he knew this, but all his instincts screamed that he was right. There was no way he could turn in magical creatures to either the muggle or wizarding authorities and they be treated fairly. It was one of the main reasons he was stuck at the Dursleys himself, besides whatever stupid wards kept out Death Eaters supposedly.

So, he just felt...helpless. He tried to smile at the mother and look friendly so that maybe she would talk to him one day, but she never did. The more he tried, the more she looked at him in suspicion, unfortunately. So, that led to his sleepless night, two days before his birthday when the Order was planning to pick him up and finally take him away from his prison. He was getting out at long last but leaving behind the woman and her child...that was something which absolutely didn't sit right with him. Maybe he could try telling Moody; maybe the old auror would have an idea. It was in this indecision that a large, brown owl swooped authoritatively through his open window with a letter. Hedwig was out hunting, so the owl immediately hopped over to her water bowl after dropping the letter and took a quick sip before flying out again without so much as acknowledging Harry's presence.

"Er, thanks!" Harry called out in confusion after the owl who seemed in a hurry to get away.

The letter was in an envelope made of very high quality parchment with a Gringotts seal. Beyond curious, Harry broke the seal and found a sheet of similarly fine parchment inside and another sealed letter of lesser quality. He opened the parchment first, settling on his bed and excited to see what the goblins might want with him. Honestly, anything was more exciting than yard work and sitting in his room brooding at this point.

Mr. Potter;

The enclosed letter was left in our care by Lily Evans Potter to be delivered to you at exactly 2200, July 29th of your 16th year. In accordance with our instructions, this is the official notice of our final duties reaching completion for one Lily Evans Potter. We hope this finds you well.

May your gold ever increase,

Ragnok

Head of Accounts

Gringotts

Harry held the sealed letter in reverence with a dumbfounded look on his face. It was a letter from his mother?! She left him a message?! Whatever it said, it was her last words to him. Something to finally replace the ones he heard her scream every time the dementors drew near and that echoed throughout his nightmares. The instructions seemed beyond strange though and very random for this specific day and time. If anything, he would expect the letter to be delivered on his birthday or at least not as specific of a time as 2200 exactly, but regardless, it was there and from his mum. He reverently opened the envelope and pulled out the letter, seeing his mum's handwriting for the first time, not able to help the smile crossing his face as his finger traced the swirled lines of ink. Her handwriting was a little sloppy, not nearly as much as his own, but he thought it told him something about her...he didn't know what, but he appreciated it nonetheless.

My Dearest Harry,

I'm so incredibly sorry. If you are reading this letter, I must no longer be with you. Things have gotten more and more dangerous for us recently, so I decided I needed to leave you this safeguard for if all else has failed. I truly hoped you would never need to receive it, and I could tell you all this myself. Now that I'm writing, I don't even know where to start.

(There was a blotch of ink on the parchment there as if his mum had held the quill thinking. It caused Harry to smile, like he was with her while she was writing the letter. He continued reading, grateful for whatever it was she needed to tell him.)

I guess I will start with the most shocking to get it over with. Harry...James Potter is your father in everything that matters; however, he isn't your biological father.

(At this point, Harry dropped the letter as if he were burned and let out a strangled cry that he quickly stifled. James wasn't his father? He wasn't a Potter? Why? How? Hadn't everyone been saying since he appeared in the wizarding world that he looked exactly like James? He picked up the letter again in fear this time that everything he knew was changing yet again in his life. He had to know though...he had know what his mother needed to tell him)

James and I had a huge argument and actually broke up just a couple weeks before our wedding. I was absolutely certain that was the end for us, that we were never going to work through this one. The reasons are unimportant as we did, against all odds, get past them, but

the important thing is that I probably didn't make the best decision in my distress and sought comfort in my best friend, and you are the happy result. Your biological father and I knew that we couldn't be together; he was in a very dangerous situation as a spy in Voldemort's forces. If the Death Eaters even knew we were still friends, he would be in mortal danger, let alone that we had a child together. That would lead to his immediate death.

(Wait...the only spy Harry knew of was Snape. Surely there had been more spies though...right? Harry's jaw dropped and he prayed to everything that was holy that his mother wasn't about to write what he dreaded she was. There was absolutely no way his mum would have been friends with the dungeon bat...right? Let alone...yeah, no!)

James found me a couple days later and apologized, really groveled if we're being honest. We made up and continued with our wedding as we had planned. To my shame, I never told him about what I had done when we were broken up. If I had, everything may have been easier, or at least more honest. It was over a month later before I realized I was pregnant. I assumed that, after you were born, I would do a paternity test and know for sure, but it turns out that wasn't needed. Your father, Severus Snape...

(Here Harry once again dropped the letter, really tossed it across the room, and buried his head in his pillow and silently screamed. Snape! His father?!! Harry just couldn't believe it... didn't want to believe it. He wanted to kick something, to break something, but that would just bring the Dursleys down on him, and he had enough self-preservation to avoid that. So, he picked up the letter again with an angry groan and kept reading in dread.)

Your father, Severus Snape, had told me in the past that magical creature blood ran in his family though it had been several generations since the trait was dominant in a family member. When you were born, James was away on a mission for the Order of the Phoenix, and it was just me and the midwife. I remember the first time I saw you; you were absolutely perfect. Perfect fingers, toes, and a full head of dark hair. However, your eyes were completely black: pupil, iris, and the whites of your eyes were all pitch black. This was the sign of your specific creature blood being dominant. I quickly swore the midwife to secrecy and started doing research. You are an Erinys or more commonly known as a Fury my son, and I will tell you as much as I can in this letter.

(Harry frowned deeply in both confusion and concern. Was it possible someone was just playing a prank on him, and the letter hadn't come from Gringotts? It was a confusing and frankly reprehensible prank to fake a letter from his dead mother if so. His eyes were green, had always been green that he could remember. He didn't *feel* like a magical creature... maybe his mum was wrong? Maybe all this was some sick joke?)

I was looking to find a way to hide your eyes to keep you safe and claim you as James's son. I'm sorry, but I'm definitely not perfect and was frankly panicking at the time. I haven't always made the best decisions, and I never informed James or Severus as to your true parentage. Luckily, I found that after 24 hours, your eyes turned to a normal human's, and you ended up with my green eyes. All creature traits then will remain dormant until you turn 17-years-old when they will activate.

Since you were born, everyone has said you look so much like James. This always makes me laugh because you are under no glamour or potion. You actually look a lot like me and a little like Sev. I think it's mostly your hair that looks like James's, but very few people know that Sev's hair is just as wild. It drives him crazy though, so he always slicks it back. You have my eyes and nose and his cheekbones and ears.

(Harry walked over to the little mirror on the wall, took off his glasses, and pushed back his hair. Without the glasses and with his hair tamed, he could kind-of see it. This made his stomach clinch, aggravating his already bruised ribs. He carefully lowered his bruised and battered body back to the bed to finish the letter.)

Unfortunately, my son, I don't think you will look like either of us for much longer. The traits of a Fury are quite distinct. I don't know if Severus is still alive, but if he is, please reach out to him. I know he is bitter and rough around the edges, but he is a good man and will help you through these changes. I think you will need each other. With me gone, you will need someone to love, and Severus will too. It might be hard to get into his heart that he guards so well, but he loves fiercely those few he lets in.

(With this Harry snorted in disbelief. He couldn't picture the dungeon bat loving him, calling him son. That just wasn't going to happen.)

I have one last revelation, Harry love. Because of my research and not knowing what to do about your eyes, it was a day before I contacted James to bring him home from the mission. Because of that, everyone assumed your birthday was a day later. Your actual birthday was just after midnight on July 30th. Your creature traits will activate in just a couple hours. Good luck my son. I am so sorry. Remember, I love you and will love you always.

Mum

Harry looked over at the clock frantically. It was only 2230, so he still had at least an hour and a half before he turned 17. He started to pace the room frantically, thinking quickly. Assuming this all wasn't some sick hoax, his mother didn't say what the changes would be exactly. If they were too drastic, then the Dursleys would lose their damn minds. They already called him a freak, and he looked normal for an underfed and poorly dressed teenager. He decided to go with worst case scenario and started throwing all his things into his school trunk that was thankfully left in his room that summer. If he was about to turn 17, that also meant the trace would break, and he would need to leave since the wards around the house would also fall. Regardless of how the Dursleys took his changes. It was better to just head to the Burrow a day early.

Everything was ready and Harry laid back down on the bed to wait for whatever was going to happen to him. He stared at the clock, 11:30, 11:45, 11:55, 11:58...Just as the clock turned to 12:15am, Harry felt a pop. He was surprised to recognize this as the Trace leaving him. He let a breath out. *Maybe nothing was going to happ...*

Even before he was able to finish the thought, a blinding flash of pain spread through his body worse than the Cruciatus Curse. It was only years of experience with pain that kept him from screaming out and waking his relatives. That blinding flash of pain left and a feeling of intense cold spread over him followed by heat as if he were on fire and then another wave of intense pain. As soon as it had started, it was over.

Harry opened his eyes and took several calming breaths in and out. The first thing he realized was that he felt great even accounting for his suddenly extremely sore muscles! All his injuries from his family's 'tender loving care' seemed to have been healed. The second thought was that everything was exceptionally more blurry than normal for him. He reached up and took off his glasses. The room suddenly came into focus. Harry laughed a quick laugh. He'd always hated his glasses. At least that's one thing he wouldn't need anymore. His vision seemed a little funny still though. Everything was much clearer and crisper than what should be normal. If he focused, he could see each individual thread in the blanket on his bed and all the grains in the wood of his door. Well...so far, not so bad. It was a useful change at the very least.

Harry stood and walked stiffly back over towards the small mirror, his leg muscles seeming to be screaming at him. The mirror oddly seemed much lower on the wall now. Harry bypassed it to walk to the window and measured himself by the window frame. He was only about 5'4" last the boys in the dorm decided to measure each other, probably because of malnourishment in his formative years. He seemed to be well over 6 ft. now though if his guess about the window height was correct. Walking back to the mirror slowly and tentatively, he finally took in his appearance.

His eyes were just as his mother had described in her letter, completely black and, frankly, a little off-putting or a kind-of cool-looking creepy, in his opinion. Shockingly his hair was straight, which had never happened in his life, coming to just below his shoulders now that the crazy curls had straightened out and because of his lack of a haircut since school. Even more shocking though was that it was now steel gray. It was most definitely not a natural color, but Harry decided he really liked it. It was probably part of his genes, but he just couldn't get past the feeling that this was how he was supposed to look, eyes and all. He had always felt that something was wrong with his appearance when he looked in the mirror before...not that he could bring himself to care enough to change anything, but now...it just seemed right.

That's when his gaze went to his ears, which were definitely pointed now. After feeling a strange sensation, he opened his mouth and realized he could lower and retract a set of razor-sharp fangs over his own teeth. The whole combination summed up to look...dangerous. The best thing though, the scar was gone! The lightning bolt scar that everyone knew him by had disappeared. After a quick inspection of his body, he saw that actually, all the scars he had collected over the years had disappeared from his numerous beatings, the basilisk fang, Voldemort's ritual, everything.

Harry scratched an annoying itch on his back and felt something strange beneath his skin. Ok, all the other changes seemed excessive but things he could deal with. Whatever the bloody hell was going on under his skin though was about to send him into a panic attack. He quickly removed his shirt and saw what looked like a large tribal tattoo taking up his entire back. He touched it with a tentative finger, it felt like something was moving right under the tattoo. He took in a deep breath, willing there not to be an alien or parasite or something inside of him. He opened his eyes and poked at it harder. As he willed whatever it was to come out of him, the tattoo started moving visibly and unfolding until it came off his back into a set of large, bat-like wings with razor-sharp edges.

He stared dumbfounded at the new appendages which were threatening to knock over the lamp on his bedside table. "Bloody hell!" He breathed out, both relieved it wasn't an alien or something and still stunned he seemed to have wings of all things. He focused and folded them back into the tattoo. *Brilliant!!* Was Harry's thought once he realized he would probably

be able to fly with the wings. All things considered, he was freaking the fuck out, but of all the insane things that had happened to him in his life, this still wasn't on the level of being attacked by a basilisk or fighting off magical zombies who wanted to drown him. He could handle this...maybe...

He had the oddest feeling that he should be freaking out even more than he was about all these changes, but instead, it felt like this was him, who he really was or was meant to be. It felt good, powerful, and like he was finally at home in his own body. Harry felt that he should maybe be concerned about this feeling of peace that was growing stronger by the second, but he hadn't felt peace in so long...he wanted to keep it for as long as he could hold onto it. His body felt strong now, and *right* for once ever.

Realizing that he really should be getting a move on before anyone noticed the wards were gone or his family woke up. Harry shrunk down his trunk and put it in his pocket. He was about to leave the Dursleys and never look back when something clicked instinctually in his brain. Some part of the creature, the Fury, was awakening, and it was calling for vengeance to be wrought on his deserving prey. His family had promised to care for him, and they had betrayed him by abusing and starving him. It was his right to punish! He didn't think he could stop himself. His fangs lowered over his teeth and the wings ripped out of his shirt. He *must* punish the oath breakers. He began to walk to the door to leave his room until something even more powerful stopped him.

Something really bad was happening right then! Something close by that was calling to his instincts even more strongly than the wrongs done to him. An innocent, an innocent was being harmed. He *must* protect! Protect overrode vengeance as the more insistent concern. There was a hierarchy it seemed to Fury emotions and protect was at the very top or at least the most pressing. Harry had no bloody clue what he was doing by this time. Instinct had completely taken over his thoughts and pushed his conscious mind to the side. He focused on the one who needed protecting and felt space being folded around him. He wasn't apparating; it was like he took a step and he was suddenly in a new location.

Harry found himself in a living room eerily similar to the Dursleys' though a little less floral than Petunia's taste. He growled and claws started growing from where his nails used to be as he realized what was happening. He was standing in 7 Privet Drive and watching the new neighbor man viciously kick the prone form of his wife who was curled up on the floor, unmoving in a pool of blood. A blast of magic surged from Harry, sending the man flying into the wall hard enough to leave a large dent and knocking him unconscious.

“No, no, no, no!” Harry exclaimed frantically when he seemed to come back to himself more. He ran over to the woman and knelt down. She was still breathing. “I need to get you help. I’m crap at healing spells. We have to get you out of here! I’ll get you to St. Mungo’s. Can you move?”

The woman raised her hand and grabbed Harry’s arm in a bruising grip. “Fury?” She asked with a surprised gasp and wide, pleading, blue eyes.

“Yes, I am, but where is your baby? I need to get you both out of here before that bastard wakes up again. I’m not sure how hard I hit him.”

“Take...care of my baby,” the woman gasped, having trouble breathing but staring in Harry’s eyes insistently. “Promise me! Promise me you’ll take care of him!”

“I will, of course,” Harry said instinctually. His magic immediately flared around him, binding him to an oath he didn’t realize he was making. He distractedly pushed it aside as something about his Fury nature that he’d have to figure out later. “We can get you help though. You just need to stay awake for us. You can’t leave your baby now.”

“Take him, please,” the woman said almost frantically and shoved a small piece of what felt like leather into Harry’s hand. He put it in his pocket, not really even registering it since he was panicking at the situation and instead went to lift the woman. “No,” she shook her head. “Not...going to...make it.”

“Don’t talk like that!” Harry begged as tears started to flow freely from his black eyes.

The woman pointed at herself. “We’re...Selkie. Take care of...” With that she collapsed and stopped breathing. Harry stared at the lifeless form through his tears. He felt her neck for a pulse that was clearly gone. Her hand was completely limp from where he was still holding onto it as her death slowly sank in for him.

Here he was sitting by a dead body with her unconscious murderer beside him. What was he supposed to do? He couldn’t call the cops or the aurors, not with him looking the way he did and both the woman and her child being creatures. As he was starting to panic again, the

body just suddenly disappeared...the hand leaving his hand with him suddenly holding nothing. Harry cried out in shock and wiped his eyes and looked around frantically; the woman was nowhere to be found. Maybe it was a Selkie thing, he wondered.

Harry knew very little about Furies, let alone Selkies. The only thing he could remember ever hearing about Selkies was that they lived in the ocean or something like that, and that was only vaguely from a mythology lesson he'd had in primary school, not even at Hogwarts. They definitely weren't covered so far in Care of Magical Creatures or Defense Against the Dark Arts. He guessed you wouldn't need to care for a sentient race and you probably didn't need to defend yourself from them in general, so they didn't fit either class. He was starting to see a serious lack in his education at this point.

It didn't take but another second for his Fury instincts to kick back in. Vengeance. He must seek vengeance on the man. He took two steps towards the unconscious murderer before a baby's cry broke through his instinctual haze. Protect. The most important emotion, his mandate. Harry quickly stunned and obliterated the man so that when he awoke, he wouldn't remember Harry being there.

Harry then rushed towards the crying and found the little boy with large, blue eyes crying in his crib, having been awakened by all the shouting. Vaguely recognizing, and then not caring, that he was about to basically kidnap a child, Harry shoved as many clothes and diapers as he could find quickly into the diaper bag on the chair by the crib. He picked up the crying child and then took a deep breath. He focused on the feeling that he had when he moved to the neighbor's house, and then took a step into Diagon Alley.

Even though it was dark, Harry ducked beside a building and took several breaths as he retracted his wings, teeth, and claws. He took a moment to briefly acknowledge that he had just kidnapped a baby and used some form of magic he had never even learned. He acknowledged it but wasn't quite capable of actually processing it at the time, not knowing what he should do about it anyway. After a second, he pushed everything to the back of his mind to avoid the nervous breakdown he felt it starting to trigger.

"Solve the problem, Harry. Don't think about what just happened...shhh, baby, it'll be ok," he told himself and the baby as he bounced the crying boy on his hip, a baby who was definitely wiping snot on his tattered t-shirt. He pulled his trunk out of his pocket and unshrunk it to change his shredded and bloody shirt quickly while he also attempted to calm the distressed child.

It was a challenge to get the new shirt on while holding the baby, but he eventually managed it. The baby seemed to also cry himself out about that time as well and cuddled up to Harry's chest, falling into an exhausted sleep. Harry sat on his trunk to think, clutching the baby to his chest like a lifeline feeling so ridiculously out of his depth. What did one do when you witnessed a murder and then kidnapped a baby? That was after he had suddenly turned into something definitely not human anymore...Merlin, it was a long night.

What was he going to do with a baby?! He had a strong feeling that his promise to care for the little boy was somehow magically binding. What did that mean though? If the child's family was in the middle of the ocean, he couldn't take the baby to them, and on that note, why were the mother and child on land now? There was no way in hell he would give the child over to muggle social services being a creature, and it wasn't a good idea to take him to wizarding social services for the very same reason. Creatures, himself included now apparently, were not treated well in either world, just look at how Remus Lupin was treated for being a werewolf. Ok, so he supposed he was keeping the child...he was raising the child as his own...this was his son. Instead of freaking him out, that thought seemed to oddly feel right, just like the changes in his body had earlier. He thought he probably needed to see a mind-healer at some point about all that.

Harry sighed tiredly. He had started the day as a 16-year-old wizard who had never had a real girlfriend (he and Ginny had decided fairly quickly they weren't right for each other as anything besides friends); now within 24 hours, he was 17, a single dad, and a Fury. Deciding that he was too tired and emotionally drained to make any important decisions in that moment, Harry shrunk his trunk again and walked into Gringotts, knowing he'd at least need money to get them a place to stay for the night. It was a simple step forward, something he could do without having to process everything.

After an intense and overly interested stare at his eyes from the nightshift goblin behind the counter, Harry produced his key and made it to his vault where he collected enough galleons to last him a very long time. They surprisingly made it back to the lobby with the baby still asleep. He had no clue how the baby, no his *son*, had slept through the cart ride to the vault and back, but he had. Probably too exhausted from his horrible night to bother waking up to scream again.

Harry and the baby made their way to the Leaky Cauldron where a bleary-eyed night manager checked him into a room under the name James Black, not seeming to notice or care about Harry's eyes. The Leaky had always seemed a bit on the seedier side, so he didn't question it much. Harry passed up the little cot placed in the room for the baby and instead lay on the bed and placed the baby on his chest, wrapping them both in his wings. He didn't know why, but it just felt right and like what he needed to do. So, they both slept deeply in their little cocoon on their first night together.

The next morning (waking up way too early from a screaming baby), after fixing a bottle for the baby from what Harry found in the diaper bag, and a harrowing experience figuring out how to change a dirty diaper where he was most definitely peed on by a giggling little boy, Harry finally set down to a breakfast from room service. Now, he needed to figure out what to do, their next steps. It would be midnight before anyone realized he was gone from Privet Drive when the Order went to pick him up. So, he had until then to make his decisions and learn to live with them, whatever they were.

He decided that they couldn't stay in the muggle world since he had essentially just kidnapped a baby that the police would eventually be looking for. That left the wizarding world, but life with Harry Potter was anything but safe. How in the world would he protect a baby when a maniac was trying to kill him every year? It was then that a crazy thought started to form in the back of his mind. It was probably an insanely horrible idea, and his friends would never forgive him, but it made a weird type of sense. He no longer looked *anything* like Harry Potter, and no one knew that Harry Potter was a Fury. If he "killed" Harry Potter and started over as someone new, then there would be no one for Voldemort to go after nor someone the Light begged to fight for them.

Harry needed more information before making any drastic life decisions though, so he put a new, soft yellow bodysuit on the baby who seemed much calmer than the night before and got ready to go out. He changed his own clothes yet again as he once more had a huge patch of drool on his shoulder...Merlin, babies were messy! The baby played with the long strands of his hair as he was being changed, surprisingly not scared of Harry's eyes at all. Harry smiled and kissed the baby's forehead, surprising himself at the action. He suddenly completely understood what his mother wrote in her letter, that he was perfect. He looked at this little baby with soft brown hair that stuck up at odd angles and bright blue eyes, and he was...perfect. His little fingers and toes, his button nose, he was the most beautiful, adorable little thing he had ever seen. Apparently, he'd completely lost his mind in the last 24 hours to some kind of mushy over-emotional parent-thing.

"We need you a name," Harry said with a smile as they walked down Diagon Alley to Flourish and Blotts. He quickly conjured a pair of sunglasses and made sure his hair covered his ears. "What about Albert...Jonas...or er, Stephen...?" The baby seemed to be ignoring him as his eyes darted to all the people, colors, and goods for sell throughout the alley.

When they got to the store, Harry found several books on magical creatures and some parenting books which he bought and took back to his room in the Leaky Cauldron. Deciding that Selkies were actually more important to know about at this point than even Furies, Harry

quickly skimmed through the books. It was the second book before he found the information he was looking for. The irritatingly small passage read:

Selkies are highly magical creatures that can live on land or at sea. While in the water, they have a skin resembling a seal which they shed while on land. Selkies have similar but milder attraction auras to Veelas that lead less to lust and more towards protection and care. Those who encounter these creatures feel a strong pull towards them, to be close to them and care for them. If the Selkie's seal skin is stolen and hidden away, the Selkie must serve the one who has it.

The Selkie is unable to leave the person holding their seal skin. They will serve that person for as long as their master retains their skin. Selkies in their human form can be identified by a small mark of a seal on their right hip. If a Selkie dies in their human form, they will return to their seal skin as their final resting place. Nothing else is known of Selkie magic or abilities. They are understandably secretive considering the danger of being forced to serve others.

Well, that explained why the body disappeared, Harry mused with a deep frown. He tickled the baby's tummy, getting him to laugh as he then turned the baby over and checked his back. There was a tiny birthmark in the shape of a seal. "Well, that answers that," Harry said poking the baby on the nose, eliciting a happy giggle and hiccup. This all just added to their danger. Not only was he Harry Potter, number one target for psychopaths, but the baby was a highly sought after creature for enslavement! This was absolutely a terrible situation.

Remembering something from the night before, Harry stood up and fished around in the pockets of his jeans he'd thrown onto the floor when he'd gone to sleep. He removed the piece of leather that he had forgotten about as soon as it was given to him. After rolling it out, Harry gasped. It was the baby's seal skin! He had to make sure it was safe!

Frantically, Harry folded the skin as if he was being watched from hundreds of unseen eyes and emptied out a pouch containing quills and ink. He put the skin in the pouch and hid it under everything at the bottom of his trunk. His son was in danger if anyone were to find that skin. He had a sinking suspicion that was what must have happened to the baby's mother. It must have been a reason why she couldn't leave that monster.

First things first, the baby needed a name. He couldn't just be called *the baby* for forever. Harry figured that there would eventually be fliers and news articles about the missing baby

where he could find out his real name, but he would need a new one for now. He thought about the dual nature of a Selkie and how it was two beings in one, the seal and the human.

“How about Castor?” Harry asked the baby. “You know, like Castor and Pollux. Your seal form can be Pollux, like a Marauder name. They were twins and pranksters, like your uncles Fred and George. You’ll really like them.”

The baby cooed, so Harry took that as his agreement. “Castor it is then! Now, what are we going to do, Castor? Where do we go from here?”

Help in Unexpected Places

As the day progressed, Harry wasn't sure if it was the binding oath he seemed to have inadvertently taken, the Selkie attraction aura, or just the fact that he was already falling in love with the tiny bundle of drool, but nothing was more important to him than protecting his son...and wasn't it odd he was consistently thinking of the baby as his son now too? After a thought, he decided that it was probably a part of his Fury self as well since protecting seemed to be the overriding emotion to everything. Regardless, his plan of killing off Harry Potter and becoming someone new to keep the baby safe moved up to THE plan over his friends, his other responsibilities, even over killing Voldemort. He was a father now. The wizarding world would just have to learn to take care of itself instead of relying on an abused teenager to throw himself in front of them. It's not like there weren't an entire force of aurors and hit wizards where it was their *literal* job to protect. No, Castor needed him more than anyone else. The baby had no one else in the world, like Harry, so he was determined to be the baby's person over anything else.

Now, how to do it? This was the part where he was floundering and needed help drastically. It was then that he groaned. He was definitely going to need help. He couldn't just disappear and people not look for him. With his fame, the entire ministry, Order of the Phoenix, and Death Eaters would probably be involved, and faking a murder was a bit beyond his capabilities. He needed advice and someone to help him plan. Unfortunately, there was only one person he could think of who had the capabilities to help, who would be sufficiently motivated to help him and the baby, and not insist that he remain Harry Potter. Most of the few people he knew who would help if he asked either couldn't or would never let him stop being the Boy-Who-Lived. He just really, *really* didn't want to go talk to his father though.

Remus, the Weasleys, even Hermione would insist that he stay Harry and not would not want to go along with his crazy plan. Snape was the only person who Harry could see wanting him to be someone else, anyone else but James Potter's son. He just hoped the man had enough good will left towards his mother to put their past behind them and help him plan his own fake death. He always did suspect Snape wanted to kill him...well, might as well give him the opportunity.

Harry quickly changed Castor and gave him a bottle while he planned their next steps. He realized he didn't even know where to find the professors over the summer. Did they stay in Hogwarts? Surely not! Did they go home somewhere? Did Snape have a house?

Finally, he figured that he could at least give that space folding thing a try again like he did before. He had never been to 7 Privet Drive, and it had worked unlike apparition. It seemed

that he either needed to know where he was going or have a person who he wanted vengeance on. At least, that's what he figured since that seemed like what his creature instincts had done before.

Harry really wished he had time to read up on Furies, but he had prioritized Selkies and the parenting books that day since he wasn't sure when to feed the baby, when he should take naps, or what the butt cream was needed for in the diaper bag. So, now he was swiftly running out of time before the Order discovered he was missing that evening. He packed everything back in his trunk and shrunk it down again, throwing the diaper bag over his shoulder. Regardless of how it turned out with Snape, it was probably best he moved to a new hotel with a less obvious alias. The Leaky Cauldron was the first place the Order would look for him once they noticed he was missing, and James Black wasn't exactly subtle.

Harry held Castor close to his chest and thought about something Snape had done that was unfair. Well, he hadn't treated him well over the years, but it was pretty mutual across the board. Frankly, as hard as it was to admit, Harry sort-of admired the man and the impossible position he'd been put in as a spy that both bloody sides knew about and thought he worked for them. He was brave and talented having lived as a spy for so long and one of the youngest Potion Masters. He had also saved Harry's life several times at this point. He couldn't even pull up those horrible Occlumency lessons since he had seen Snape's memories too.

Harry smiled as he had a thought. He focused on Neville and Snape's belittling of his potions when the Slytherins in class were the ones to destroy them. He focused on when Malfoy enlarged Hermione's teeth that time and Snape said he saw nothing different. They weren't earth shattering, but they absolutely weren't fair. It was petty and mean and not something Neville or Hermione deserved. It was enough; he *felt* Snape in his need for vengeance. Harry breathed in, took a step, and space folded around him.

With that one step, Harry and Castor found themselves just outside the wards of a fairly shabby two-story home in some town Harry had never been to in his life. He took a deep breath and kissed the top of Castor's head for luck while the baby just drooled over the lock of Harry's silver hair he'd grabbed onto. Knowing that Snape would immediately know they were there, Harry stepped through the wards and walked up to the front door. He didn't bother knocking but waited instead. Sure enough, a couple seconds later, the front door was thrown open to reveal the tall, lanky, and glowering form of Harry's potions professor...his father.

"Who are you?" Snape asked, more than a little suspicious, taking in the odd-looking teen and the baby. "What do you want?"

The man was dressed much more casually than he did at school, but he was still wearing black slacks and a black knit shirt, though he'd pulled his hair into a low ponytail, and Harry was amazed at how much younger it made his professor look. "I'm a Fury," Harry said simply and with a small shrug, hoping that would circumvent the 'who are you?' question. "And we could really use your help," He continued with a wince as though it caused him physical pain. As much as he didn't want to turn to this man, he would do absolutely anything to protect Castor, even if it meant groveling to his git of a father.

Snape narrowed his eyes but opened the door further as he took in the tips of the teen's ears poking out of his hair, visible tattoo coming up from the neck of his shirt, and the completely black eyes. "You have 10 minutes to explain," Snape said dryly, crossing his arms and threateningly tapping his wand against his shoulder. "I don't know how you figured out the Prince family has had dealings with Furies in the past nor how you found me, but I'm curious enough to listen for now."

Snape turned and strode into the house, making Harry follow him into a dark sitting room. The furniture was all older and the house showed some signs of neglect after having no one living there for months out of the year, but it was clean, and it was comfortable. Harry immediately decided he liked it much more than Privet Drive, not that the bar was high at all in those regards.

"First of all, this is my son, Castor," Harry said as he sat on the worn armchair and bounced a grumpy Castor on his knee. The baby was getting tired and starting to become a little fussy. Merlin, it seemed that babies were either always tired, hungry, or needing a diaper change in his one day as a parent.

Snape just inclined his head for Harry to continue. "Second, I have only been a Fury for about 17 hours. Yesterday, I looked much different than this."

This seemed to finally get Snape's attention as he leaned forward in curiosity. "You are only 17-years-old?" Snape asked with an air of shock. The man's eyes narrowed on the baby once more. "I imagine your *trouble* probably has something to do with the young lady who you were irresponsible with?" Snape raised an eyebrow with a pointed look at the baby.

"*Pot/Kettle*" Harry thought with a grimace and a shudder at that unwelcome thought.

Finally, with a sneer that must be a family trait, Harry answered between his gritted teeth. “Yes, and no. The trouble did start with my son’s mother, but he is not actually my biological son.”

Snape raised his eyebrow in surprise again at this. Harry continued, “Castor is also a magical creature like me. I will not tell you which one though, that is non-negotiable,” Harry said with finality. Snape might still scare him a little, but there was absolutely no way Harry would ever let it get out what creature his son was if it could even remotely put him in danger.

“His mother was being abused by his father close by where I lived. As soon as I turned into a Fury, I was immediately pulled to their house in time to see his father murder his mother. With her last breaths, she asked me to promise to protect her son. I said that I would...”

Snape breathed out in resigned understanding. “Idiot boy! You fool!”

Harry looked at him in utter confusion at the outburst. “You’re a Fury!” Snape explained slowly as if to a toddler. “If you make a promise to anyone it becomes magically binding. Furies are born to protect the innocent and oaths. It is a part of you now that if you promise anything at all, you must follow through. *All* oaths are unbreakable vows to Furies.”

Harry just waved him off unconcerned at the moment, though he figured this would be highly concerning later when he could actually think it through. “Binding or not, Castor is my son now, and I will protect him with my life.”

“Ok, why come to me though, why not go to your family? Since you must clearly now keep the child, I would assume your mother or caregiver would be a much better option than me, even if I have some knowledge into Furies,” Snape asked, looking at the teen in exasperation at the dismissal of the responsibility he had taken on. “You must have Fury blood in your family line. They would most assuredly understand and explain to you the changes you are encountering.”

Harry snorted humorlessly at the countless assumptions Snape was making about him and his life. “I just got him out of one abusive situation, there was no way in hell I was going to take

him right back into another. My family would kill him and myself too after seeing what I'd turned into. Luckily, I was healed when my inheritance kicked in, or I wouldn't have been physically able to rescue Castor after their lovely treatment."

Snape sucked in a deep breath in shock, his eyes hardening in anger that clearly wasn't directed at Harry for once. "How did you find me then? And what do you think I can do for you? My family has had Furies in our line in the past, but it has been several generations since we have had someone where the gene was dominant. I doubt there is much I can do to help to help you."

Harry smiled and leaned forward, appreciating this rare ability to shock his normally stoic professor. "I came to you *Professor Snape* because I want you to kill me."

"What?! Who are you?!" Snape exclaimed standing, his wand falling into his hand with a look of shock on his face.

"Metaphorically," Harry continued with a grin, loving Snape's confusion. Snape slowly sat back down as Harry continued to explain. "Castor's father will be looking for him..."

"I'm surprised he's still alive having encountered a newly turned Fury," Snape interrupted with a tone that showed he was actually impressed at the boy's restraint.

"Yes, he's still alive, unfortunately," Harry continued with a huff. If Castor hadn't been there, he was a little worried what he would have done to the man...or maybe he was worried that he *wasn't* more worried.

"So, since the bastard is a muggle, I believe it's best if Castor and I remain in the wixen world to stay away from any kidnapping investigations we may be the subject of. Plus, you know," he said motioning to the obviously not human characteristics he now sported. "I might stand out a bit in the muggle world...actually, maybe not in some areas of London, but yeah, still probably memorable."

"You are a student at Hogwarts," Snape said as a statement, not a question. He was obviously trying to figure out which student this was. However, with the changes to Harry's height,

various features, and even his bone structure that was a bit sharper than before, Snape just couldn't place him. The voice did sound very familiar though.

"Yes, I am. However, it wouldn't be safe for Castor to be my son in the wixen world just for his particular type of creature, but even more so as *my* son more pressingly. He would be in as much danger as if he had stayed with his father. I need a new identity to keep my son safe. I need to be a new person to be able to protect him," Harry emphatically almost begged the man to understand.

Snape mulled over the teen's words. Someone who went to Hogwarts, was entering his 7th year, and who put people in danger just by them being associated with him. Sinking realization settled over Snape's expression, making a horrified kind of sense, "Potter?"

"Professor," Harry nodded with a smirk.

"Why come to me, Potter? Why not your wolf or the headmaster?" Snape asked with a tired sigh, starting to get a really bad feeling about what the answer might be...especially about Harry Potter might have ended up as a Fury. He started doing some quick math in his head. *When was Potter born? How long after...? Oh, God...!*

"You were the only person I could think of who might be willing to help us and wouldn't insist that I remain The-Boy-Who-Lived...James Potter's son," Harry said with obvious derision for the moniker he'd been saddled with.

"As for why I believed you would help," Harry pulled his mum's letter out of his pocket, bouncing Castor more when he started to cry. "I figured you won't believe me, but you might believe her."

Snape carefully opened the letter and paled when he recognized the handwriting. Snape read the letter with a look of fear and disbelief on his face. He got to the end and immediately started reading it again. "You're my..."

"Yeah, yeah," Harry said, impatiently standing and bouncing Castor on his hip to calm the baby down since he was getting more and more fussy. "We'll deal with all that later. How are

we going to kill me off? We need both Dumbledore and Voldemort to believe it, and we only have until midnight tonight to do it. That's when the Order planned to pick me up and take me to the Burrow for Bill and Fleur's wedding."

Snape's brain was not working. He just couldn't process the fact that the teen in front of him was his son. *Harry Potter* was his son! The boy just kept pacing and bouncing the baby, *his grandson*, that thought just about gave him a stroke. Not just a *son* but a *grandson* as well. An hour before he was the chronically single, dungeon bat, and now he was a *grandfather*!

"...not enough time to stage one. Maybe suicide? I've had a shitty childhood, so Dumbledore would probably believe it. Do you think Voldemort would?"

"What?" Snape asked, only hearing the end of Harry's rant and even more horrified at the new knowledge of his son's childhood.

Harry sighed. It had been such a long day, and he really wasn't used to taking care of babies. He was tired and cranky and really needed to go to the loo. Snape was obviously processing and not listening to him, so he currently wasn't being any help at all.

"Here," Harry said with an eyeroll, putting Castor on Snape's lap and causing Snape to automatically reach up to hold him. Castor immediately laughed and started playing with the buttons on Snape's robes, surprisingly no longer fussy. He obviously liked this new person enough to stop his crying. "I'm going to go find your loo. Hold your grandson and process. When I get back, we need to get to business though, so get your head together," Harry ordered, striding out of the room to locate something resembling a washroom.

Snape stared at the gurgling baby in his lap. The baby pulled at one of his buttons in a hand covered in drool while looking up at him with bright, blue eyes. Something he didn't even know he had in himself melted. He turned the baby and held him to his chest in a more comfortable position.

"Hello Castor, good to meet you," Snape said awkwardly and a little too formally to the baby who was now playing with Snape's long fingers. "What are we going to do with you and your father?" They sat that way silently while Snape's brain spun with all the new information he'd been slammed with.

“Oh good, ready to talk?” Harry asked, returning to the room a short time later and sitting back down on the armchair. He left Castor with Snape since he seemed perfectly content where he was.

Snape cleared his throat, trying to focus. “What were your ideas again? Explain them again to me.”

“I was saying that we probably don’t have enough time to stage a Death Eater attack since we would have to fake spells and there would be magical residue left from an attack like that. We might be able to stage a mugging, but that would get the muggle police involved, and I don’t want to bring any attention to Castor being missing as well or there being a connection in the slightest. I was thinking suicide would be most plausible considering my horrible childhood and the fact I’ve been hunted for 6 years by a maniac who killed a friend of mine and my godfather. I think Dumbledore would buy it, but I was asking if you thought Voldemort would?”

“We would need to do it without a body though,” Snape said considering. He noted and stored the information about Harry’s childhood and the fact Harry believed Dumbledore knew about it in order to analyze later. The only reason he was still functioning right now was by not overly thinking about anything besides the problem, and by stroking a suddenly sleeping Castor’s back who had finally passed out mid-cry when he couldn’t stay awake any longer.

“I’ll owl them both a suicide note!” Harry decided, feeling antsy and needing to do something. “I’ll make it clear that I jumped off a bridge or something so they can’t find me.”

“They will still look,” Snape remarked, thinking it might actually work though.

“You are literally the only person who knows I look like this,” Harry said waving off the objection. “And I talked to you for a long time before you put the pieces together, even with me giving hints. I don’t think they’ll find me, even when they look. As long as you don’t turn me in that is.”

Harry didn't intentionally leave Castor with Snape to work his whole Selkie attraction aura thing, but Snape had been hugging his grandson for a while now and already seemed attached, so it was definitely working regardless. Harry was pretty sure that Snape would eventually be as wrapped around Castor's little finger as Harry himself was after only a day.

Snape gave him a look that nonverbally called him an idiot. "Ok, we need to write and send the letters so they get them before the Order goes to your relatives' house," Snape said summoning a quill and some parchment.

It took them three drafts of Dumbledore's letter and five drafts of Voldemort's (mainly because Snape objected to the sheer amount of insults in Voldemort's letter) before Snape deemed them ready to send. Snape summoned Misty, a Hogwarts house elf that served him and instructed her to bring an owl from the owlery. Surprisingly, Hedwig had shown up at Snape's house, tapping on the glass, around draft three of Voldemort's letter. Harry would always swear that Hedwig was not a normal owl, but something much more magical.

After profusely apologizing to the school owl and instructing him to get out as quickly as possible and not let Voldemort hurt him, Harry sent off both owls, the school owl to Voldemort and Hedwig to Dumbledore. "So, Harry Potter is dead. What are you going to do now?" Snape asked with not a small amount of curiosity.

"I'm going to change and feed Castor," Harry said, collecting the now smelly baby who was just waking up from Snape.

"You know what I mean," Snape sneered with an added eyeroll for emphasis.

"Do you think there's any way I could finish my education?" Harry asked with a small frown. "Under a different name, of course. I'd like to be able to get a good job since I'll need to support Castor now."

Snape thought about it for a minute. "We would need to enroll you as a transfer student and come up with a plausible story that would fool someone as nosey as Dumbledore."

“Would I be able to keep Castor with me?” Harry asked, knowing that was the deal-breaker. “I’m not leaving him anywhere.”

Snape nodded in thought about how they could pull this off. “You won’t be able to with your oath anyway. There are family quarters available. Remember when that Ravenclaw Veela found her mate about two years ago? They were assigned family quarters.”

Harry vaguely remembered a seventh year Ravenclaw who everyone found out was a Veela when she found her Hufflepuff mate. It wasn’t something he was super concerned about at the time though since it was during the Triwizard Tournament. His thoughts were busy elsewhere. “So, we just need a really good lie.”

“Yes,” Snape agreed. “We should wait a week or two though to separate this new student from being associated with a missing Harry Potter, just in case.”

“Good point,” Harry looked at the time. “Castor and I need to go and find a new hotel. It’s getting late.”

Snape looked at him darkly. “You are going nowhere. I have a perfectly good guestroom and can transfigure a cot. If you leave, you’ll just get yourself into trouble. No, I’m keeping my eyes on the two of you until you get back to the ‘relative’ safety of Hogwarts.”

Harry was beyond shocked. Did Snape just offer to let him stay at his house? Selkie attraction wasn’t that strong, according to the books anyway. Snape must be losing some sanity after being under the Cruciatus Curse so many times. However, as this was probably the safest place they were going to find though, Harry wasn’t about to complain. Harry quickly nodded in assent as Snape showed the two of them upstairs to a comfortable but generic guest room.

Snape took a throw pillow and transfigured it into a small cot. “Thank you, Professor Snape,” Harry said, temporarily placing Castor in the bed to play. He would sleep with Harry in his wings. Harry was beginning to think it was some kind of Fury paternal instinct, but he knew that he wouldn’t be able to sleep without Castor being near.

Snape just grunted. “The bathroom is the next door down, and my bedroom is across the hall. Only wake me if it’s an emergency.” Harry nodded as Snape swept out of the room and over to his.

“Well, Castor, welcome to your temporary home,” Harry cooed to Castor in his crib, only moderating concerned that Snape would end up killing them.

Killing Off Harry Potter

Chapter Notes

Warning: mentions of fake and real suicidal thoughts and actions.

Albus Dumbledore was sitting in his office, sucking on a lemon drop, while he listened to Alastor Moody run through the security measures for picking up Harry Potter in just a couple hours. Now that Harry was 17, Dumbledore had decided that it was high time the boy got some training in how to kill without mercy. He wouldn't be an effective weapon for the Light if he couldn't take that last final blow. Dumbledore cared for the boy, in theory, but he really didn't plan for him to come out of this war alive at all. He couldn't very well have a new Dark Lord arise by killing the last one.

No, it was very obvious to him that Harry Potter could not be allowed to live after killing the Dark Lord, besides, he just wasn't strong enough to survive the confrontation. The most Dumbledore hoped for was that he would take Voldemort with him when he fell. Harry just wasn't ruthless enough no matter how much training he was given. Dumbledore prided himself on his foresight to see to that by placing the boy with those horrible muggles and making him dependent on the school and Dumbledore himself most importantly. It was very good planning, if he could say so himself. Besides, if he did somehow miraculously survive, Dumbledore had many ways to ensure the boy 'succumbed to his injuries.'

Just as Moody was finishing up his relentlessly boring diatribe, a snowy owl flew through the open window and dropped a letter unceremoniously on Dumbledore's desk before immediately flying back out the window and into the night. "Guess they don't want a reply," Dumbledore laughed over to Fawkes.

"Wasn't that the Potter boy's owl?" Moody asked with a frown.

"I think it was," Dumbledore said musingly as he opened the letter. Harry was probably getting restless and asking to be retrieved even earlier. The boy was just so insufferable! They were coming to get him momentarily.

He read through the letter twice before sinking down in his chair and dropping it from limp hands onto his desk. The twinkle was completely gone from his eyes. Maybe his planning wasn't quite as well thought out as he had just been congratulating himself on. Maybe he had gone a little too far.

"Albus? What is it?" Moody asked, suspicion and concern now lining his scarred face.

Dumbledore found he couldn't talk, so he just handed the letter to Moody. It read:

Dear Headmaster Dumbledore,

I'm sorry to be bothering you over the summer, but I figured I should let you know before you sent people to pick me up. You see, I won't be there. I'm sure you know from our conversations, but I have no one who cares or will miss me. My relatives don't love me, and I'm sure Ron and Hermione are better off without me after all the danger I've put them in over the years. Sirius was the only one that cared, and well, it's my fault he's dead now. I'm sure Remus hates me for that. Everyone is better off without me. They all die. Just look at my parents and Cedric and Sirius. I've had a lot of time this summer to think, and I've come to the conclusion that the problem is me. If I were not here, none of this would have happened.

Anyway, I guess it doesn't really matter. I just figured I shouldn't be rude and give you a heads up that I won't be at Hogwarts this year. I know there was that whole prophecy thing with Voldemort, but I've been thinking about it, and I reckon it didn't say anything about him not being able to be killed if I wasn't alive, right? It just said I had the power to, not that I absolutely had to. I kind of already fulfilled it the first time I stopped him anyway. So, sorry to be leaving some unfinished business, but well, there's a whole department of aurors; I'm sure someone can handle it. I'd probably just bollocks it up anyway. Well, regardless, I don't want anyone to mourn my death, so I'll make sure there isn't a body to be found. Tell Ron and Hermione I'm really sorry, but it's better this way.

I'll send a letter to Old Voldy as well so he doesn't think he can still get to me through my friends. Thank you for everything, Headmaster. I'm sorry I was such a disappointment.

Harry James Potter

“Oh, good Merlin,” Moody breathed. “I’ll go see if it’s too late!”

Moody rushed off to Privet Drive at a run, but Dumbledore was already sure it was too late. No matter what he believed about Harry’s capabilities, when he made a plan, he made sure to follow through, for better or worse.

Lord Voldemort was not having a good day. Not that he ever really had good days. He was still dealing with the fallout from the failed fiasco on an invasion at Hogwarts last spring when he had lost several key Death Eaters, McNair and Rabastan Lestrangle included, as well as the Malfoy boy running to the side of the Light. His father had suffered for that immensely. So, he was already irritable when Lucius Malfoy ran into the study the Dark Lord had claimed as his own in Malfoy Manor with a letter.

“You have a letter, my lord,” Lucius said, bowing completely prostrate on the floor.

“You normally handle my mail,” Voldemort replied, patience running very thin with everyone and everything. He was certain he would be torturing Lucius again before he left the room.

“It’s from the boy, Harry Potter,” Lucius explained in fear, having only looked at the signature line and immediately taken off running to his lord.

Voldemort looked shocked, well as much as his snake-face could look shocked, and reached out to take the letter. “Well, this should be amusing anyway.” He opened the letter and burst out laughing, which was really very frightening. “Well Lucius, this turned out to be a good day after all. Call the others, let’s celebrate,” Voldemort ordered, tossing the letter to the ground before he swept out of the room, still laughing.

Lucius picked up the letter, not having read it before. What he read shocked him as much as it made him smile though.

Dear Voldy,

I don't feel much like playing nice today unfortunately. Since these are probably my last words on this earth, I would like to get as many insults in as possible actually if that is ok with you, old snake-face. I don't know if you knew, but I've had a pretty shitty life. Actually, our lives have been quite eerily similar growing up, mine was just abusive relatives instead of an orphanage.

Anyway, dung breath, I hear tell that when you concede in war, you need to actually tell the other side. Well, here's the official notice. I'm done. I'm sick and tired of this life. Dumbledore wants me to be some kind of weapon for the Light, but I just want to see my parents and Sirius. There is literally nothing I care for in this world anymore. I don't really care about you or this war or anything really. I'm just so tired.

So, mush for brains, I'll say it clearly, Harry Potter is dead. I will have killed myself by the time you get this letter. I don't want any desecration of my remains or public displays, so I'll make sure there isn't a body for you to find. Thank you for helping to make my entire life miserable. I hope you die a thousand deaths and spend an eternity in Hell.

Love and kisses,

Harry James Potter

Severus Snape couldn't sleep. He was finally processing everything that just happened as he lay in his dark bedroom and stared unseeingly at the ceiling. His son, *he had a son*, showed up on his doorstep, and with a baby. His son was down the hallway. He had bullied and belittled his own son for years. Severus groaned and closed his eyes in his shame. He had bullied and belittled an abused child for years. Severus had to finally admit it, had to admit something he had been intentionally not looking for and not seeing for years. After what Po...Harry had said, and the fake suicide letters he had sent, he knew it was true. Harry Potter was not the spoiled Golden Boy that he had always wanted to see...desperately needed

to see. This was a man who had grown up too similarly to his own life...much too similarly, but he had somehow come out of it a much better person than Snape had.

Po...no *Harry* was a person who would vow to care for a child who needed a home and not even *care* that he had unknowingly made an unbreakable vow. Speaking of, he was going to have to start training Harry in what he could and could not say and do quickly or he was going to get himself in even more trouble. Furies really had to constantly watch what they said and also their emotions or they could get themselves or others in a bad situation fast. He would need to go look in the Prince vaults immediately. There should be some literature on Furies in there somewhere.

The child still confused him...his grandchild...Merlin! Harry said that Castor was a magical creature too but refused to say which one. That seemed...odd. He couldn't figure out why Harry thought it important to keep that secret in particular. He had no choice but to trust the boy for now though, no not *the boy* but his *son*.

"Oh, Lily, why didn't you tell me?" Snape asked the universe as a whole as he turned over and buried his face in the pillow.

First things first though, he would have to talk to *his son* about what had happened to him at the Dursley's. And, most importantly, make sure he didn't actually believe all those things written in his 'suicide' letters. Oh, Merlin, he had helped to kill off Harry Potter! Maybe his son now actually had a chance at a little bit of happiness though. He could only hope.

Harry and Castor were both up before Snape due to baby feeding times. Snape was shocked to find Castor playing with two spoons in a transfigured highchair while Harry cooked breakfast in his old and slightly shabby kitchen. He hadn't known Harry was good enough at Transfiguration to make a highchair.

"Good morning," Snape said as Castor noticed him and started holding his hands out for Snape to pick him up to his utter shock and something that closely resembled joy. Snape really didn't know why he did it, but he walked over and picked up Castor, spoons and all, to sit in his lap while they waited on Harry to finish.

Harry looked over at them with a small smile lighting up his solid black eyes. “Do you like your bacon chewy or extra crispy?”

“Extra crispy, please,” Snape replied.

Harry just nodded as he started dishing up eggs while flipping the bacon. Castor was now banging the spoons on the table in front of him. “No, love,” Harry came over and took one of the spoons and set down a small plate of eggs. “I think he’s around 6-7 months. Do you think he could eat a little egg by now, or do you think it’s still too early?” He asked Snape as if he should know something like that.

Snape really had no clue. He was only used to kids older than eleven. “Maybe we just give him a little bit and see how it goes?” He shrugged. What could go wrong? It was only egg.

Harry dished up the rest of the food and then took Castor to see if he would eat a little egg. Unsurprisingly, Castor loved it, and it was all over himself and Harry and the wall behind them before breakfast was over with. “Erm, I bought some parenting books, but I didn’t get a chance to read them very thoroughly with everything yesterday, so I’ll probably spend my day doing that if it’s ok with you?” Harry asked, not sure how this situation was supposed to work with Snape. He was picking bits of egg out of his silver hair while waiting on the answer.

Snape just inclined his head. Harry took that as him being fine with the plan. “Ok, well, I’ll just clean us up then.”

“Wait,” Snape jumped in before Harry could stand. After what seemed like a very long time, Snape finally said, “Thank you for breakfast.”

“Yeah...sure,” Harry said with a very confused and surprised frown, noticing Snape’s nervousness. “Is that all?”

Snape let out a large breath, seeming to steel himself for a very unpleasant conversation. “No, we need to talk about those letters you sent yesterday.”

“You said they’d work. Do you think something’s wrong?” Harry asked, worried now. “Even if they don’t believe me, it’s not like they can find a body. Even if they try to track me, I’m a bloody creature now, so that should make it impossible, right?”

“No, I mean, yes, I think it will work out as intended,” he said, finally looking at Harry. He was absolutely not the right person to be having this conversation with the new Fury. Lily would have been so much better...Merlin, even James Potter might have been better!

“I just want to make sure you know that it is absolutely not true. Right? Black did not die because of you. People do care about you...Ronald Weasley and Granger and the other Weasleys...people care. I...did not know about your relatives. You should never have been left with them, but...” That was as far as Snape could get. He didn’t seem to be able to get out anything else and was floundering.

Harry realized this and decided to take pity on the man. He just hugged Castor closer to himself for emotional support. “I know,” Harry assured him with a sad smile.

“I definitely thought everything that we put in those letters for a while, more than just a while if we’re being honest. Ron and Hermione have always been a support for me whether they knew it or not...It was the Weasley twins though that found me when it was the worst...when I couldn’t *not* believe it anymore.”

Snape sucked in a shocked breath. He should have seen this! It must have been at Hogwarts if the Weasley twins were there. How did he not know it had gotten that bad?! He’d almost lost his...no, he couldn’t go there right now. “When was this?”

“It was right after everything that happened with the philosopher’s stone. I couldn’t handle the fact that I had killed Quirrell and that I was being sent back to the Dursleys. I kept thinking that I was a freak and a murderer and they had been right about me all those years. The twins were collecting some supplies they had left on the Astronomy Tower after a prank late one night. Well...they talked me down and stayed with me all night to make sure I was ok. I think that was why they were so worried about me that summer; why they went to rescue me from the Dursleys. They were the ones that talked Ron into going with them to get me. It’s never gotten that bad again, and they always check in when they get concerned now, sometimes annoyingly so.”

Harry smiled at Castor in his lap who was busily rubbing egg onto the table now. “Now that I don’t have to go back to the Dursley’s, and now that I have Castor, I feel like I’m in a pretty good place. Actually, now that Harry Potter’s gone, I feel freer than I ever have in my life. I was either locked in a cupboard by my relatives or my every move was watched and scrutinized by the wixen world. This is the first time I feel like I can do things for me, well for me and Castor.”

Snape nodded slowly...horrified, but also understanding. He knew vividly that they still needed to talk about the Dursley’s (and whatever he meant by that cupboard!), but just the admission that Harry actually had been thinking about doing what he wrote in those letters at one time was enough to send both of them to needing some alone time for a bit. Neither father nor son was that good with emotions.

Snape pushed forward though. “What happened with Quirrell, you know that also wasn’t your fault right?” Snape tried.

“I do,” Harry gave him another sad smile. “It doesn’t change the fact that I did kill him though. That’s a lot for an 11-year-old to handle, especially with no one there to talk to who could understand.”

“No one talked to you after? A mind-healer or a counsellor? Merlin, even Minerva?” Snape asked, confused.

“No, I was just sent back to my abusive relatives to be beaten, starved, and locked up. If it wasn’t for the Weasleys, I might not have made it back for my second year.”

Snape lowered his head into his hands, a look of utter dejection on his face. “I’m so sorry, Harry. I didn’t know. Even if I didn’t know you were my son, even if I still didn’t like you, I would have tried to have gotten you help if I wasn’t so willfully blinded,” Snape assured him. “We all failed you.”

“Hey! You called me Harry!” The teen grinned way too smugly at him, not even addressing the very real feelings the man was attempting to express.

“Well, I can’t very well keep calling you Potter,” Snape huffed, rolling his eyes at his son’s attempt to change the subject.

Truthfully, Snape was blaming Dumbledore most of all for knowing everything that happened and not trying to help his son. He wasn’t sure what all McGonagall knew, but he was blaming her to a lesser extent for not checking in on Harry after knowing that some kind of traumatic event happened. As Harry’s head of house and the headmaster, Snape had assumed they were looking after the Gryffindor, but obviously he was mistaken.

“Can you explain what you meant by the twins rescuing you before your second year?”

“Well you remember the flying car,” Harry smiled at his father who sneered back. “They flew the car to Surrey and pulled the bars off my bedroom window and took me back to the Burrow. It was brilliant!”

Snape scrubbed his hand over his face. “We need to talk more about your relatives, your time at the school, and everything that’s happened. Is that something you can talk about now, or should we ease into it a little more?”

Harry ran his hand through Castor’s silky hair. “I’ll tell you, but not right now. I’m not ready. We aren’t there yet, but I think we could be at some point. Not even Ron and Hermione know everything that happened.”

Snape gave him an understanding nod, promising to do everything in his power to convince his son that he could trust him. “I’ll hold you to that. But, since you brought it up, about the flying car...”

“What?” Harry smiled at Snape’s narrowed eyes, knowing what he was probably about to ask.

“I’ve been wanting to know for years, why? Why fly the bloody car to Hogwarts when you could wait for Molly and Arthur or send an owl? What in Merlin’s name were you and Ron

thinking?”

Harry shrugged with a chuckle. “I don’t know Ron’s reasoning, but you have to remember that I was 12 years-old and had never had an adult care for me at all. I was left several times before then when shopping or out in town by my relatives to find my own way home. I’m sure they were hoping I wouldn’t find my way. I knew how to navigate the bus system by the time I was seven. What reason did I have to assume that I wasn’t on my own to get to Hogwarts when that was all I knew for my whole life? Now, I can look back and see that the Weasleys or even a professor would have helped, but I didn’t know that was even an option at 12.”

Snape thought for a minute with a deep frown on his face. He found himself debating how much he could do to the Dursley’s without being sent to Azkaban. Though he had also had an abusive childhood at the hands of his father, he had never been left to find his own way home, and he knew his mother at least would have come to get him if needed. It was hard for him to imagine a childhood where adults were never viewed as a viable option for anything, but it explained so much of what his son had done at school and the trouble he had gotten himself into.

“Thank you for explaining, Po...Harry.” Harry nodded and got up to clean the egg off of himself and Castor while Snape went to wash the dishes.

Snape picked a pan up and then set it down with a groan. He suddenly realized he owed a life debt to none other than the Weasley twins for saving his son’s life. Harry was going to be the death of him yet.

Kids Are Hard, Parents Too

Chapter Notes

I absolutely have not forgotten my other story in progress. I'm just getting ahead on editing some of these chapters since I haven't had much concentrated time to write new material recently. I'm planning to get out another chapter for All Hail the Dark Lord this weekend or early next week though.

Things were relatively quiet at the Snape residence as the three settled into a routine. They all had breakfast together, which usually Harry cooked since Castor woke him early, then Snape went to his potions lab in the basement to brew the potions the hospital wing would need for the next year while Harry and Castor would read and play upstairs. The second day with Snape, Harry and Castor went out to muggle London to buy things for Castor like toys, more diapers, wipes, formula, etc. Most importantly (to the new father anyway), Harry made a trip to Diagon Alley to get a magical camera so that he could take pictures of every little first of Castor's and all the cute things he did. Harry was planning on taking a *lot* of pictures.

In the middle of all this settling in, Snape brewed a potion for them to pinpoint Castor's birthday to January 23rd. So, according to the parenting books, he was getting ready for solid foods. Harry then made another trip out to pick up some baby food as well. The residents of Snape's house at Spinner's End tended to fend for themselves for lunch, and then in the evenings, Snape would cook, and they would meticulously comb through the muggle and wizarding newspapers for any word on Castor's kidnapping or Harry Potter's death over their dinner. Surprisingly, they found no mention of either.

"As much as I appreciate not having the police after me, it makes me angry that Castor's, well *that* man, didn't report he was kidnapped," Harry fumed, his eyes starting to take on a dark glow and his fangs starting to come out.

"Calm yourself," Snape said soothingly but with a glare. He was really having to bite his tongue *a lot* with Harry around. His natural snark seemed to be shriveling up into a husk of irritation. Unfortunately, it was just too volatile to rile up a young fury.

Harry had realized what Snape was doing the third day they were living together after not having heard a single insult from the normally ornery man. Harry then, of course, yelled at Snape for babying him and treating him like glass. This then prompted Snape yelling in return about him being an ungrateful brat. Which then led to Castor crying and throwing a fit in his fear of the whole situation. Unsurprisingly, the outcome of all this was the two men sitting on the floor with Castor between them and apologizing profusely to the baby while trying to soothe him and make him happy again.

Snape was now trying to take a middle road. He was giving free reign to his sarcasm but avoiding any of the nastier insults. "I'm more concerned that there's nothing on your death in the Daily Prophet," he frowned at the paper.

"Yeah, what's up with both Dumbledore and Voldemort (oh stop flinching!) being quiet about that?" Harry rolled his eyes.

"There's an Order meeting this weekend. Maybe he'll say something then," Snape just glared at him in return.

However, it was a few days before the Order meeting when Castor suddenly started to not feel well. It was just a little summer cold, but Snape and Harry both were freaking the hell out of their Merlin loving minds. Snape was doing much better than Harry at holding it together since he did know more about healing and had fever reducing potions in case it got bad. But mostly, they had to wait it out and worried endlessly.

It wasn't good to give the baby the fever reducing potion unless it was very necessary since these little colds built up his immune system. Harry, however, thought it was necessary after the first hour, so Snape had to keep reminding him that a little fever was normal and Castor would be fine, as well as remind himself that exact same thing when he kept looking at the baby in concern.

So, the men ended up having to take caring for Castor in shifts since the baby wasn't sleeping well. One would hold him and walk while the other tried to get just a little sleep and then they would trade off. It was when Snape was taking over from him that Harry finally got a good laugh in the middle of all the stress. It was the first time in all the years he'd known him that Harry had seen Snape's hair not slicked back, and his mum was absolutely right, it was every bit as crazy as his used to be. When Snape realized what Harry was laughing at, he gave him a death glare, much less scary with the crazy hair and the bathrobe.

“I hate you,” he glared. Harry just passed off Castor and went to try to sleep for a while.

Castor was only under the weather for a little over a day before he stopped coughing and his fever broke. When he finally fell asleep, Harry placed him in his crib and went downstairs to crash at the kitchen table where Snape was already pouring him a strong cup of tea. “Finally,” Harry breathed out, seriously wondering if he could just sleep where he was sitting at the table. “Aren’t you glad you missed all of this with me?”

Snape really wasn’t sure how to respond to that and was too tired to try, so he just shrugged and drank more of his coffee. He was scared that he was about to say no and that he wished he had every minute of it. Merlin! He needed more sleep!

Instead, he brought up something that had bothered him for a while and now he finally knew the answer to...and it made so much horrifying sense. “I changed Castor’s diaper last night.”

“Congratulations. You deserve an Order of Merlin,” Harry snorted sarcastically into his tea.

Snape gave him the best sneer he could muster in his sleep deprived state. “No, I meant I saw the marking on his hip.”

Harry looked up at him suddenly very awake. “And, do you know what it means?” Harry asked with a look that was extremely serious and surprisingly terrifying with his jet-black eyes.

“Yes,” Snape said slowly. “I think it is best that we never tell anyone what Castor is. It’s much too dangerous. I also agree with you not telling me initially. You should never trust anyone with this information if you can avoid it.”

“Promise you will never tell anyone,” Harry demanded dangerously, crossing his arms and staring the man down.

“Harry, you know that if I make any intentional promise directly to a Fury, it’s like taking an unbreakable vow,” Snape said in the charged silence after Harry’s demand.

“I know that very well, you’ve told me, I’ve read the books, and I’ve seen it in action, case in point me having Castor now,” Harry responded very calmly and not breaking eye contact.

Snape nodded, acknowledging this new version of Harry was a little intimidating, though he’d die before admitting it out loud. However, he did actually agree with Harry on this one. They couldn’t be too safe with the life of his grandson. Knowing the very little he did about Selkies, he wondered just how strong a Selkie’s aura was because that little baby was worming his way right into his cold heart.

“I promise to never reveal what magical creature Castor is unless you or Castor himself agrees to reveal it, or if it would save Castor’s life,” Snape said as a flash of magic went from him to Harry.

“Thank you,” Harry said, sighing back into his tea and seeming to immediately deflate back into his exhausted state.

“It’s safe, right?” Snape asked next, worried for his grandson. “You do have it, correct?”

“Yes,” Harry said, knowing what he was talking about. “His mother gave it to me right before she died. I’ll make sure he gets it as soon as he’s old enough to care for it himself, and I guess I’ll probably need to figure out a way for him to put it on and turn into a seal at some point. I can’t raise a Selkie who can’t swim. He’d get laughed out of the ocean.”

“I doubt there are many books on that, but I can take a look in the Prince vaults. We do have some more books on magical creatures other than just Furies.” He had already made a trip to get the books on Furies for Harry, but he knew there were other books in there as well.

“We would appreciate that,” Harry said with a small smile. “This parenting thing isn’t easy, is it?”

“Not at all, and mine’s a 17-year-old brat, so I think you have the better deal,” Snape smirked. Harry threw a sugar cube at him, too tired to come up with a good comeback, and his brain a little fried at the realization Snape had made a joke.

Harry really wasn’t sure what he felt about Snape. They had definitely gotten past their overt animosity, especially with caring for Castor during his illness, but he didn’t know where they actually were anymore in their relationship. So, he was very taken aback when he found he was actually concerned for Snape when he left to go to the Order meeting. He knew it was just the Order, not even a Death Eater meeting, but he was still worried. What if he was sent off on some dangerous mission or told to convey something to Voldemort? Castor would miss him, is what Harry told himself as explanation. So, Harry almost jumped out of his skin from his stress when Snape flooed back in from Grimmauld Place.

“What did they say?” Harry anxiously asked as he took the teddy bear from Castor that he was trying to hit Harry with. Snape went over and picked Castor up with an irritated sigh as if to anchor him back to the world.

“I don’t know what Dumbledore is playing at. He’s telling everyone that Moody has taken you off somewhere to train and that’s why you won’t be attending Hogwarts this fall.”

“What?” Harry just asked confused. “But what about Voldemort? I told him in the note that I sent a letter to Voldy as well.”

“My guess is that Dumbledore won’t change his story unless the Dark Lord claims you’re dead,” Snape explained after some thought. “And, the Dark Lord can’t claim you are dead without a body on the chance that this is all some elaborate ruse or trap.”

“I’ve started a bloody conspiracy,” Harry laughed, shaking his head in mirth.

The humor was short-lived though when Snape hastily shoved Castor in Harry’s arms before doubling over and grabbing his left arm in pain. “Looks like the night’s not over yet,” Snape grimaced, apparating directly out of the living room.

If Harry thought his anxiety for Snape was bad during the Order meeting, he was at a whole new level after Snape was summoned to Voldemort. Castor eventually fell asleep for the night, but Harry ended up putting him in his cot, not willing to go to sleep himself until Snape was safe at home and where he could see him alive and well. Home...he wasn't sure when he had started thinking of Snape's place as his home. They had only been there a couple weeks, but it already felt more like home than Privet Drive ever had...not that Privet Drive had *ever* felt like home.

Harry was just checking on Castor in their room when there was a loud thump downstairs. He frantically ran down to find Snape crumpled in the floor, suffering the after-effects of probably more than one Cruciatus Curse. "Merlin's hairy balls! Are you ok?!" Harry asked, running to his side.

"He's not too happy with Dumbledore. Thought he would've told everyone you had died," Snape said through chattering teeth, his limbs spasming erratically.

Harry recognized it happening, but still didn't know how to stop it. Vengeance or Protection. It was the decision his Fury self was always making, or at least so far in his limited experience anyway. Luckily, it seemed that the creature was smart enough to not go for vengeance. Having only been a Fury for a couple weeks, Harry didn't think showing up and challenging Voldemort would go his way. He still didn't bloody know what all his new creature traits were! Protection is finally what the Fury decided. Protect his father; protect Castor's grandfather.

Harry had no clue how he did it or even what he was doing, but he just knew he desperately needed to protect Snape and nothing else matter, not even the laws of magic. His dark eyes started to glow, the wings ripped out of his shirt, destroying yet another one of Dudley's cast-offs, and his fangs lowered. Snape immediately started crawling backwards on the floor in his fear. He didn't know what he had done, but he had a Fury who seemed beyond angry advancing on him. He was too weak to get away when Harry fiercely grabbed his left arm.

Harry remembered placing his hand over the Dark Mark when he thought back later, though he didn't have much conscious thought at the time. He could feel the magic, just like he had been able to feel magic around him starting that summer as he began to change. He had felt it with the family down the street, Snape's wards, and just magic in general. He could see all the connections and how they were woven together.

In his righteous anger, he destroyed, no obliterated, every single connection coming to Snape. He annihilated Voldemort's connection to his father. He didn't realize until he started coming back to himself that Snape was screaming in agony. Harry let go of Snape's arm in horror at what he had done and quickly backed away while the man calmed down. Eventually, catching his breath, Snape looked at his left arm, his *unmarked* left arm. It didn't look like a Dark Mark had ever been there. That's when his eyes rolled back into his head and he promptly passed out.

He had to take a few deep breaths and steady his heartrate before he was able to think clearly, but Harry finally found himself mentally back in the little, shabby sitting room of his new home. It was another minute before he could retract his wings back into his tattoo and focus on the unconscious man before him. Harry worriedly verified that Snape's vitals were good and that he did actually seem to be fine, so Harry tiredly levitated him to the couch and went upstairs to sleep since he was now beyond magically exhausted.

It was very early in the morning when Snape crept upstairs and opened the door to Harry's room. He saw Harry asleep with Castor on his chest, opening and closing his mouth and scrunching his little nose in his sleep, and them both cocooned in Harry's wings. Snape just watched them for a minute. His son, yes, we would definitely call him his son now as long as Harry would let him...his son amazed him. He performed magic that no one, not Dumbledore himself, had been able to figure out, and he did it without even planning or knowing how to do it. He knew that Harry had taken himself out of the war, and Snape would never begrudge him that, but if Voldemort ever went after someone Harry cared about, well, Snape was starting to think Harry's chances were drastically improving.

Snape had already made breakfast when Harry and Castor came down to join him. "Good morning," Snape said to them both with a small smile that had probably never graced his face before.

Harry warily entered the room, highly suspicious of Snape's smile. "I'm not going to apologize for what I did," Harry started tentatively. "You need to be here for your grandson... you need to be here for me. I'm not ok with you continuing to be a spy for the Order when it

puts your life in danger, when you come home in pain. I will not apologize for protecting those I care about.”

Whatever Snape had planned to say was lost in Harry’s words and the fact he had called Snape’s house ‘home.’ “You...you care about me?” Snape asked, his small smile widening.

“Erm, well...yeah, I guess so,” Harry said awkwardly. “Don’t be a git about it though.”

“I was going to say...thank you,” Snape breathed out in almost a chuckle when Harry finally joined him at the table, holding Castor close. “I have been a slave to either the Dark Lord or Dumbledore since I was your age. You have set me free. I can never repay that.”

Harry shifted Castor in his lap uncomfortable at all the emotion. “Well...just help me take care of Castor, and we’ll be even.”

Snape laughed, something Harry had never heard from him before, and it was oddly horrifying. “I’m going to blame the Selkie aura, but I think Castor has claimed me for good.”

“Yeah, yeah, their auras aren’t really that strong,” Harry laughed himself as he piled enough eggs on his plate to share with Castor who was already grabbing for them with his hands and making cooing noises.

“I had a thought this morning while I was waiting for you two to finally get up,” Snape began a little nervously in anticipation of rejection. “What if you went to Hogwarts as my son?”

Harry almost choked on his bite of eggs. “I thought we were going to come up with a *fake* story?”

“Well, it would still have to be partially a lie since we can’t let them know you’re Harry Potter, but it would be adding in some truth as well. Then you could come see me, and I could watch Castor for you when you need me to,” Snape offered, turning slightly pink in his embarrassment. “Well, not all the time, of course, but you know...”

Harry thought about it while Snape floundered. As much as he had originally been against the idea of Snape being his father, it was starting to not look quite so horrible anymore. “Ok...I think I could live with that. Should we go ahead and send in my application?”

Snape barely concealed a pleased smile and a sigh of surprise and relief as he waved his wand and summoned a thick stack of parchment. “Yes, I already pulled the forms. We need to start with a name. What would you like to be called?”

“You’re my father. What would you have called me if you got to name me?” Harry asked, curious since he really had no idea. “I do reserve the right of veto though.”

Snape thought for a few minutes. “I got along well with my grandfather, what about his name? It was Arcturus.”

“Am I allowed to go by Artie?”

Snape sighed more fake though than actually exasperated. “If you must.”

“Ok, so James is currently my middle name, how about Arcturus Severus Snape?” Harry offered.

Snape smiled again, more than he probably had in his entire life over one breakfast, honored Harry thought to add in his name. “So, what is Castor’s middle name? I’m assuming Castor Snape?”

“I think I would like something close to my original name if that’s ok. Maybe Castor Harrison Snape? It’s not like people are generally going to ask his middle name anyway,” Harry suggested.

“I think he would like that.”

Snape immediately started filling out the application. It took over an hour for them to iron out all the details and get their story straight to finish the application. When they finally finished filling out the parchment, Snape promptly sent it off with a flourish of his wand.

“Did that go to Dumbledore?” Harry asked in concern. He didn’t want the headmaster to learn about him for as long as humanly possible.

“No, it went to the board of governors,” Snape explained. “It’ll probably be when I get back to Hogwarts to set up for the semester in a little over a week before we actually hear from him, unless he calls another ridiculous Order meeting. I would think we’ll hear about your application the same time as the normal Hogwarts letters go out, which should be in a couple days.”

“Brilliant,” Harry stood to go change Castor. He paused in the doorway as his face fell and he turned back around, a grimace on his face.

“What is wrong now?” Snape asked in concern.

“I just realized my initials are ASS,” Harry groaned dramatically. “Is it too late to change it? Can we get it back? Please say we can get it back!”

For the second time that morning, Snape burst out in laughter, this time not being able to stop himself. “I don’t see the problem!” He managed to gasp out between loud barks of laughter. “It’s just descriptive is all!”

Harry made a very rude gesture at the man before his eyes went wide and he quickly looked down at Castor. “Now, baby...sometimes daddy says things or does things we don’t want to learn or do ourselves...” He explained as they walked up to their room, causing another round of laughter from the potion master still in the kitchen.

Sure enough, a couple days later, one Arcturus Severus Snape was admitted to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Severus and Harry did have a bit of a fight over his classes, but Severus finally convinced Harry that Divination was a joke and to drop it in favor of something more useful. He also insisted that no son of his would be allowed to drop potions. So, Harry ended up taking NEWT level Potions, Transfiguration, Defense Against the Dark Arts, Charms, Astronomy, and OWL level Ancient Runes.

“So, I guess you broke the curse on DADA, right? Two years in a row!” Harry said, checking out his book list.

Snape chuckled. “Actually, I didn’t. Slughorn refused to return after the Death Eaters invaded last year, so I’m back to Potions.”

Harry groaned. “The evil Potions professor is back!”

“And, I’m not going any easier on you! Nor are you allowed to use my old textbook at any point in time!” Snape smirked and jabbed a finger threateningly in his direction. “Frankly, I missed potions when I was moved to Defense.”

“Would you consider holding Castor during class so that I don’t blow up my potion?” Harry asked, actually wondering how he was going to deal with an 8-month-old in a potions class. “If it helps, remember that you saddled me with ASS for my initials for the rest of my life, so you *could* do me a solid here on this one.”

“I guess I can set up a little play area for him behind my desk,” Snape smirked at him unrepentantly.

“Who’s teaching DADA this year then, and will they try to kill me?” Harry without any humor and all seriousness while he petted Castor’s head who was sitting on the floor and shaking a very annoying rattle.

“Your wolf was asked to return, and he’s already tried to kill you once, so I would hope he has learned to take his potion by now,” Snape sneered dangerous out into the world to

wherever Lupin was currently. “The board only approved him because there were literally no other options.”

“Remus is back!” Harry happily exclaimed. Immediately his smile faltered though. “I think we’re going to have a problem, Professor. Remus has werewolf senses. I doubt my smell has changed enough for him to not recognize me.”

“At least he doesn’t think you’re dead, just off in training somewhere. Should we talk to him before the semester starts? Head off the questions.” Snape absolutely did NOT want Lupin to know anything about his son or grandson, but Harry was right. Werewolf senses were not something he knew how to get around in this situation.

“I don’t like bringing more people into this, but I do miss Remus,” Harry said thoughtfully. “I know you don’t have good experiences with him, but I think he can be trusted. I can get an oath from him though if it makes you feel better about it.”

Harry appreciated that Snape really did think about it before responding. “I’ll put forth an effort if the wolf is important to you. I do suggest we don’t tell him what Castor is unless he can smell it, and then an oath similar to mine.”

“Agreed, and thank you,” Harry said happily. He didn’t want to literally cut out everyone from his past life in the long-term, but he wanted to be extremely selective in who was let back in. Making those few people promise some oaths didn’t seem like a bad idea either.

“How about I floo him. Because of his living situation, I assume he has already moved into his rooms at the school. If you would like, he can go with us to Diagon Alley to get your school supplies and do a test run for how he will interact with you and Castor?” Snape asked, very magnanimously.

“Sure, let me go get Castor changed first,” he said to Snape with a thankful smile. “We want to make a good impression on Unca Moony right?” Harry said in baby talk to a giggling Castor as they went up the stairs.

Building a Family

Snape chuckled at Harry's insistence on constantly using baby-talk with Castor and walked over to the fireplace, throwing in a handful of floo powder. "Defense Professor's office, Hogwarts," he called out. "Lupin, may I speak to you?" Snape asked from the floo when his head appeared in an office filled with boxes and books yet to be unpacked. He saw Remus walk over from where he was looking in some kind of trunk.

"Hello Severus. I thought you weren't back to the castle until next week," the werewolf walked over, a picture of surprise and curiosity.

"I'm not, I'm at my home now. Would you have some time today to come through and talk?" Snape heroically didn't grimace at the fact that he was inviting the man over.

Remus looked shocked at the question. He had never been invited to Severus Snape's house before. Actually, he didn't think *anyone* had ever been invited to Snape's house before. "Of course, Severus. Just leave the connection open, and I'll walk through now."

Snape pulled out of his floo, closely followed by the rather worn looking werewolf. Remus found himself looking around the house with a similar reaction to Harry's. It was comfortable if not stylish. Remus much preferred it this way though. It looked like a place one could live in and not feel like you had to be on your best manners. "How can I help you, Severus?"

"With the way gossip flies through Hogwarts faster than a snitch, I'm sure most of the faculty will be hearing about this shortly, but my son will be attending Hogwarts this year. He was just accepted," Snape said with his usual mask of no expression nor offering a chair for the man to sit in.

Remus however was now beyond shocked. He had absolutely no clue the potion master had a kid at all. "I didn't know you had a son! Congratulations on him getting in. At least you'll have one new first year interested in potions, right? I'm sure you've prepared him well."

“Actually, he’s a seventh year and frankly hopeless at potions,” Snape clarified with an exasperated eyeroll at Harry, deepening Remus’s shock. “He will be attending and bringing my grandson with him. They have requested family housing for this last year.”

Remus looked like he would either pass out or start laughing at this point. He chose laughing. “Severus, you’re a grandfather?! I don’t believe it!” he said between chuckles. “We are not old enough for this!! How...I mean, I know *how*, but a grandchild?! How old are we?”

“Yes, very amusing,” Snape sneered at him.

“Why did you want to see me then? I assume you want me to avoid your grandchild and probably your son too? I will do what I can outside of classes,” Remus asked, trying to calm himself from his earlier laughter.

“That is unnecessary,” Snape waved him off to Remus’s surprise once more. Snape was known to be afraid of werewolves, Sirius’s and his own fault of course, but the man didn’t seem to be concerned at all for him being around his child or even his grandchild.

“Er...why then?” Was all Lupin could get out at that point.

“Unfortunately, we needed to head off questions from you since you are a werewolf and have senses much stronger than the average wixen.”

“Oh really,” Remus said, his interest peaked. “And, why would that be?”

“My son and my grandson are both magical creatures, but we do not plan on spreading that around the school,” Snape explained with a warning look in his eye.

“I understand,” he said slowly. “Are they werewolves?” That would explain a lot with Snape’s uncharacteristic unconcern about him.

“No neither,” Severus responded crossing his arms and looking behind Remus suddenly.
“You may talk to them yourself though; it looks like Arcturus got the baby changed,” he said as Harry came into the room carrying a happily clapping Castor who seemed enthusiastically excited to meet a new friend.

“Remus Lupin, meet my son Arcturus Severus Snape and his son Castor Harrison Snape.”

“Pleased to meet you, Professor Lupin,” Harry said offering to shake his hand with a large smile lighting up his completely obsidian eyes.

Remus’s jaw almost dropped to the floor. “Harry? Who? What? Why are you here? What happened to you?!”

Harry sighed. “I told you he would sniff me out,” he said smugly to Snape. “We should have bet money on it.”

“Yes, you are a genius; now explain to him before he decides to get angry at *me*,” Snape drawled and sat in his normal armchair.

“Hi Moony,” Harry said with a tentative smile. “I wasn’t expecting you to be teaching DADA this year, so you kind of caught out our plans.”

“And what plans are those?” Remus asked, still confused.

“Why, to kill off Harry Potter, of course,” Harry laughed.

“You really have to stop saying that to people,” Snape sighed in exasperation. “Not everyone has your sense of humor.”

“You appreciated it,” Harry laughed at him. Snape just rolled his eyes.

“Er...why don’t we have a seat?” Harry motioned to the couch. “It’s a bit of a long explanation.”

“I can imagine,” Remus shook his head and dazedly followed Harry to sit on the shabby couch.

“Anyway,” Harry continued, bouncing the baby on his knee. “I couldn’t put little Castor here in danger from the massive amount of people who want me dead, so I sent suicide letters to Dumbledore and Voldemort. However, instead of telling everyone I died, Dumbledore told everyone I went away training somewhere, and Voldemort can’t tell anyone because there wasn’t a body. So, the plan went a little sideways, but at least no one is expecting me at Hogwarts when I return as Arcturus instead of Harry.”

“Ok, so, when did you have a child, with who, why are you pretending to be Snape’s son, and how in the world did you become a magical creature because you definitely don’t smell human anymore?” Remus rattled off, not being able to pull his eyes from both the baby and Harry’s slightly off-putting eyes.

“I sort-of adopted Castor,” Harry started with a wince. “Don’t ask.”

“So, he’s not your biological son?”

“No, but that doesn’t matter, he *is* my son for all intents and purposes,” Harry said warningly and with a seemingly subconscious flash of fangs in his mouth.

“Of course,” Remus agreed, seeing the protective instincts flare in Harry and realizing it would be dangerous with whatever creature Harry now was to press the issue. He was starting to get the feeling that Snape’s unconcern with him being a werewolf might just be because whatever creature Harry was could be more dangerous than a werewolf.

“Um, ok, next I’m not pretending to be Snape’s son, I actually am. Sorry Remus,” Harry said with a wince. “Mum and Snape were together before she and James got married, so she was

already pregnant.”

“Oh,” Remus said breathing out a deep breath and leaning against the back of the couch.
“James isn’t your father?”

“Not my biological father, but I do still love him...or at least the idea of him,” Harry explained quickly as he reached out to pat Remus’s hand. “Mum sent a letter on my birthday. She said she and James broke up right before their wedding...and well...” Harry absently waved towards Snape with a smirk.

“I think we can leave it at that,” Snape responded tersely.

“I remember that...” Remus trailed off with a frown. “James came by my place right after the fight, ranting about how she misunderstood the situation...”

“What happened? What was the argument about?” Harry asked, needing to ask the question but also wondering if he might not want to know. “It wasn’t in her letter.”

Remus’s eyes cut over to Severus, but the man was wearing his normal mask of no emotion, so there was absolutely no help coming from that side of the room. “Well, er...she found out about the werewolf incident.”

Harry frowned in confusion. He didn’t exactly see the big deal since no one had gotten hurt in the end. He looked over to Snape who gave him a small nod. Apparently, his father *had* known the reason for the break-up after all. “Ok...so, you talked him around and James went and explained his side to Mum then...?”

Remus was already shaking his head firmly before Harry finished though. “Absolutely not! I explained to him that he was a bloody idiot and Lily was right! I knocked as much sense into him as I could. What Sirius did to you, Severus, was just unforgiveable. It was attempted murder plain and simple. And, if that wasn’t enough, if I had actually hurt you, I would have ended up in Azkaban, probably for life. I never trusted Sirius after that. We eventually got back to being friends, but I never just implicitly trusted him anymore, and he knew that. It’s

probably why we both suspected each other could be the spy in the Order back during the first war.”

Snape looked surprised at Remus. “I didn’t realize...it is probably the only way Lily would have taken him back though, if he really did understand finally.”

Harry was still frowning. “Er...that does sound really bad. Erm...guys, I think I might have a skewed view of acceptable amounts of danger,” he glanced down at Castor in concern. “When Professor Lupin told me that story back in third year, yeah, I thought it was really bad and a dick move, but I’ve almost been murdered every year at Hogwarts. I didn’t really grasp that other people might expect a level of safety at school...but if it had been Castor...”

“Merlin, Harry...” Snape ran a hand down his face and sighed out, seemingly sad all of a sudden.

Harry hugged the baby closer to himself as Castor shoved a lock of his silver hair in his mouth. “You’ll both tell me if I’m not seeing danger around Castor, right? You’ll tell me if I’m putting him in any danger, please?”

“Of course!” Remus responded promptly.

“Always, you idiot,” Snape said just as quickly, with softness in his eyes that undercut the harsh words.

“Oh good!” Harry smiled broadly at them both. “Right, well, what questions for me do you have then, Remus? We brought you here to fill you in and all.”

“How long have you known? About well...everything?” Remus asked, still in a daze at all the revelations.

“Since this and Mum’s letter on my birthday,” Harry said motioning to his new look wryly. “Apparently, Professor Snape has creature blood in his ancestry, and it decided to come out as a dominant trait in me. Lucky me, huh?”

“This is a lot to take in, Harry,” Remus sighed, massaging his temples like he had a headache. “So, what are you exactly?”

“You can’t smell what either of us are?” Harry asked, genuinely curious.

“No, it doesn’t work that way,” Remus explained. “I could tell if you were werewolves or not, but all other magical creatures just smell ‘not human’ to me unless I’m very familiar with the species. I will always recognize your scent as ‘Harry’ though since Moony basically adopted you as his/my cub when you were a baby.”

“Wow, er, thanks Remus,” Harry looked at him sheepishly, not really sure how to process that information. “Erm, well, I’m a Fury.”

“Merlin! But, we haven’t had one in Britain in at least a century!” Remus exclaimed in almost awe. “Do you have wings?”

Harry smiled at him fondly before lifting up his shirt in the back to show the tattoo that transformed into wings. “I was hoping to find a tailor today when we go to Diagon who could make me some shirts that wouldn’t be destroyed by my wings opening. I’ve already killed two shirts.”

Snape snorted with a look of disgust. “All your shirts, and trousers too for that matter, deserve a horrible death. I don’t even want to speculate about your undergarments. I’ll be getting you all new clothes today when we go to the tailors.”

“I can buy my own clothes and school things,” Harry protested.

Snape just gave him a stern stare. “As your father, it is my responsibility to buy your clothes, food, school things, and all incidentals, regardless of whatever those worthless excuses for humans told you growing up. I would also like to help in providing for Castor,” Snape said firmly. “I know my house doesn’t scream wealth, but I’m not a poor man.”

Before Harry could continue the argument, Remus jumped in. “How is this all going to work?” He asked. “I mean, you as a Death Eater and Harry Potter being your son?”

“First of all, Harry is dead. Remember, I’m Artie,” Harry protested in glee. “Secondly, and this is the best part, he’s no longer a Death Eater! He’s definitely not spying for the Order anymore either, Dumbledore just doesn’t know it yet. Show him your arm Snape!”

Snape gave Harry a long-suffering look, covering a small grin, before rolling up his sleeve to show his unmarked arm. “Harry went all over-protective Fury on me and erased the mark.”

Remus whistled. “Does You-Know-Who know yet?” he asked with a raise of his eyebrow.

“Most likely,” Snape shrugged dismissively. “I have taken great pains that no one knows where this house is on either side though. Harry still won’t tell me how he found me.”

Harry laughed. “I might need to do it again. Besides, it wouldn’t work unless you’re a Fury.”

Snape sneered menacingly but with good humor. Remus looked between them in open shock at the change in their relationship. Frankly, just the change in Severus was shocking in itself. He seemed much more at ease, freer.

“I would love to be there when you tell Dumbledore, or at least be able to see the memory,” Remus asked with a gleeful look in his eyes that showed the Marauder he used to be.

“The old man called yet another Order meeting for tomorrow night, should I tender my resignation then?” Snape asked, an equally mischievous look on his face. He hadn’t forgiven Dumbledore for placing his son with *those* people, not to mention what happened Harry’s first year. “I’m sure he’ll have many questions about his new student for me then as well.”

“I can’t wait!” Remus laughed not too kindly. “I know Albus is the leader of the Light and all, and possibly a good person, but the way he has kept me away from Harry all these years, and your home life couldn’t have been good, cub, no matter what you say. Well, I have some ill feelings towards him.”

“He wouldn’t let you visit me?” Harry asked, shocked. He had thought that Remus just didn’t care to visit. Not that he blamed him, no one seemed to care. He had stopped believing anyone really cared about him years ago.

“I asked all the time, Harry,” Remus said with an emotional catch in his voice. “It hurts so much being kept from my cub, from you. I’d have raised you in a heartbeat if Dumbledore and the ministry would have allowed me. I wasn’t even allowed to know the location of where you were. I didn’t even know you were with your aunt and uncle until you mentioned it in your third year.”

Harry just held Castor tighter as the baby happily slobbered on a lock of his long, silver hair. Harry was regretting his decision to bow out of the war less and less. “Well, erm, Remus. We were going to get all my school things from Diagon Alley today and pick up some more baby things as well. Would you like to join?”

“I would love to, but how are you,” pointing at Snape, “going to get away with showing your face in public if the Death Eaters know you aren’t with them anymore?” Remus questioned with a concerned raise of his eyebrow.

Snape downed a potion with a grimace that he retrieved from a pocket in his robes. Immediately, his hair changed to blond, he shrank a few inches, his eyes turned hazel, and he seemed to get slightly older. “Polyjuice,” he explained. “I summoned a hair from a muggle in the street the other day.”

Remus frowned, really taken aback for some reason at the changes. “I don’t like the new look; don’t keep it.”

Snape looked at him confused but then turned to Harry. “Now your eyes, put this on.” Snape rifled through a pocket before handing Harry an old, silver ring with a crest of crossed swords over a snake. “It’s the Prince family crest. It’s a family heirloom. For now though, it’s

spelled with a very strong glamour that focuses just on your eyes. You'll have to work to keep your ears covered yourself."

Harry slipped on the ring and his black eyes returned to the way they looked before his change with the emerald green irises. Harry then checked his hair, pulling the soggy bit out of Castor's hand, and making sure it covered his ears.

"The ears might be a problem, long term," Remus mused. "I think it'll be difficult to always make sure they're covered, especially if the baby likes to tug on it."

Harry shrugged. "I'm only concerned that no one finds out I'm Harry Potter. I really don't care if they find out I'm a Fury at some point. I'd just like to start out with no one knowing in order to cut down on all the questions, especially if anyone even thinks to ask if Harry Potter might've had creature blood in him. However, I don't want my son to see me hiding who I am, saying that we aren't good enough as we are. I want him to be proud of me and of who he is."

Remus's face broke into the largest smile Harry had ever seen from him, and Harry thought he might even have caught a glimmer of pride in Snape's eyes. "You are going to raise a proud little Fury there," Remus said, smiling at Castor.

"Indeed," Snape agreed, impressed that Harry kept any look of guilt or deception off his face at Remus's assumption. "We should get going. I only have enough Polyjuice for a few hours and we need to spend quite a bit of time at Gringotts."

"I'll meet you both over by Gringotts," Harry grabbed the diaper bag and said to them as they walked to the floo.

"Of course," Snape responded right before Harry seemed to step forward with Castor and disappear.

"That wasn't apparition!" Remus exclaimed. "What did he just do?"

Snape grabbed the jar of floo powder. "I'll let him explain. I'm sure he would love to do the honors. He's all for the drama. At least that's one part of his personality I had correct all these years."

Snape and Remus found Harry and Castor looking in the window of Weasley's Wizarding Wheezes. "They've done some really great things with the store," Harry said as the two joined them.

"You can stop in after we handle things at the bank," Snape said, knowing that Harry missed his friends. He assumed those two at least would eventually be let into the secret, especially if Harry's 'death' ever came out to the public.

Harry finally turned away and they all made their way into the bank. Snape strode up to the first available teller booth. "We need to speak with the account managers for the Prince family and the Potter family."

"The Black family as well," Remus spoke up. Both men turned to look at him. "Sirius left him everything," Remus explained.

"I thought I just got the house."

"Nope, pretty sure you got it all," Remus nodded.

"Ok, then we need to see all three," Harry confirmed to the goblin. "You're coming with us Remus," Harry said as Lupin turned to walk away. "You're part of this family now and there's no getting out of it."

Snape just rolled his eyes as he followed a happy werewolf to the conference room the goblin was leading them to. Shortly after they entered the room, three goblins joined them.

“Why are we all here, Mr. Snape?” one goblin asked, presumably the Prince family account manager.

“We’re making some significant changes that affect all three accounts, so we figured it would be most expedient to do it all together,” Snape explained to the goblin respectfully.

“First of all, could one of you give me a summary of what I have access to in the Black family accounts?” Harry asked. “I didn’t realize I had inherited them until a minute ago.”

“You are Harry Potter, I presume?” one of the other goblins asked with a stern but interested frown.

Harry nodded, not having any idea how they could have recognized him, but they also seemed to recognize Snape under Polyjuice, so he figured it must be a goblin-thing. “You have access to all the vaults, several properties, and are the sole account owner,” the goblin explained. “I can provide you with a full summary of the account if you would like?”

“I would,” Harry nodded as he sat Castor down on the floor on a playmat with some toys he pulled out of the diaper bag he was carrying.

“I would also like a full summary of the Potter accounts,” he told the third goblin in the room. “Do I still have access to the Potter accounts? Erm...I just learned James was not my biological father, but Snape here is.”

“Everything was willed to you, so it is still yours,” the Potter account manager confirmed. “Learning of new parentage will not change the designation of the accounts.”

“Now the changes,” Snape began as all the parties took seats and the goblins each opened file folders and took out quills. “First of all, Steelhelm, I know it’s possible to change someone’s name here at Gringotts for the purposes of all interactions with the bank, is that correct?”

“It is,” Steelhelm, the Prince family account manager confirmed.

“I will need to change my name for you all then,” Harry told the goblins.

The Potter account manager, Windstrike he introduced himself as, waved his hand summoning a long parchment. “Confirming the change of identity and account information for one Harry James Potter,” he said as he wrote on the parchment. “What is the new name?”

“Arcturus Severus Snape,” Harry told the goblin, still only slightly wincing at his initials.

Steelhelm started shuffling through his papers as Windstrike and Speardeep (the Black account manager) also made notes in their files on the name change. “I’m assuming you are changing your will, Mr. Snape, since you are claiming your son now,” Steelhelm said as he pulled a page from the folder, presumably Snape’s original will.

“Yes, on the occasion of my death, all of the Prince and Snape assets will be left to my son, Arcturus Severus Snape. In the event he dies before me, which you are forbidden to do by the way, everything is left to my grandson, Castor Harrison Snape.”

“The changes will be made,” Steelhelm said. “Would you like to give him vault access now?”

“Indeed,” Snape said. “Full access.” He waved off Harry’s protest before he was even able to make it. “You are an adult, and I expect you to use good sense and discernment in your access, or I will revoke it. I trust you though, and you may need something for Castor or there might be an emergency.”

Harry just sighed. “I need to make a will too then,” he told the other two account managers.

“I should be the one that handles this, correct?” Windstrike asked Speardeep who nodded his agreement. “Ok, tell me the provisions you would like me to include. I’ll then put together a draft to send to you in a day or two. You will then let me know the changes you would like made, and when it looks good to you, we will sign off on it.”

“That sounds good,” Harry said. Returning a toy to Castor that he had thrown. “In my will, I would like to leave everything to my son, Castor Harrison Snape.”

“One moment,” Windstrike said as he stood and walked around the table. “As the primary beneficiary, we just need to verify the type of relationship you have before we add him into your will, for tax purposes. You were already in our records as Mr. Snape’s son as communicated to us through Lily Potter, but we have yet to see young Mr. Snape.” Harry grimaced, getting ready for trouble, as Windstrike waved a hand over Castor who momentarily glowed gold.

“Ah good, I see you have magically adopted him,” Windstrike nodded as he promptly went back to his seat.

“Excuse me?” Harry couldn’t stop himself from asking. “I don’t remember a magical adoption.”

“You must have made some sort of binding vow to his parents, most likely sealed airtight because of you being a Fury,” Windstrike explained with a raise of his eyebrow as if Harry should have known this.

“Yes, we can tell you are a Fury,” he grinned a toothy grin at Harry’s shocked expression. “Whenever you made said agreement with the child’s magical parent, it legally bound the child to you in all documentation. It is the most secure form of adoption, but only possible with either a very complex ritual, or...a Fury.”

Harry let out a breath he didn’t even know he had been holding. That could have been a reason Castor’s kidnapping hadn’t been reported. His ‘father’ no longer legally had custody of him. No one could take his son from him. Snape put a hand on Harry’s shoulder, sharing in the moment of relief they were both feeling at this news.

“Now that we have that out of the way, what other provisions would you like in your will, Mr. Snape?” Windstrike asked Harry.

“In the event of my death, I would like custody of my son to go to his grandfather, Severus Tobias Snape. If he were to die before me, I want to name Remus John Lupin as his godfather.”

Remus gasped and smiled over to Harry, happily. “As both Remus and Castor are magical creatures, there shouldn’t be any issues with custody if my understanding is correct?” Harry asked.

“You are correct,” Windstrike confirmed.

“To be *absolutely* safe,” Harry continued, not wanting his son to ever be placed in a similar situation to himself, especially if the ministry made a stink about Remus being a werewolf or if it wasn’t safe to out Castor as a Selkie. “I would also like to name Fred and George Weasley as godfathers to my son if Severus or Remus are unable to care for him.”

Snape and Remus both looked at Harry quizzically. Harry had thought long and hard about who to name after Remus. Harry explained, “Of my friends, the twins are the ones who are the most financially secure, most mature (even though they love their brand of chaos), have the least emotional baggage, they will be fierce in their protection of Castor, and well, there are two of them, which would be an advantage.”

Snape groaned and lowered his head into his hands. “The Weasley twins are now a part of my family. How did this happen?”

Theories and Explanations

Remus put a comforting hand on Snape's back that Harry was shocked his father didn't shake off and even hex him for good measure. "You are starting to build a very interesting mix of people in your family, that's for sure," Remus laughed happily.

"I guess we'll have to go and explain everything to them?" Snape asked sadly, seeing the next meeting now looming on the horizon. He wondered if there was a way to make the twins swear some kind of oath to never prank him again. He'd hoped to be rid of them when they had graduated, but it looked like there were going to be in his life for a very long time moving forward now.

"Probably best, especially before they hear too many rumors about what might have happened to Harry Potter. We'll do it after we finish everything though so your Polyjuice can wear off," Harry said after a thought and with a happy smile starting to tug at his lips. He knew the twins would never betray him and Castor, so he had no qualms at all in letting them in on the secret.

After filling out more paperwork and before heading to their vaults, Windstrike pulled Harry aside for a minute while the other two men waited outside the conference room. "Mr. Snape," he began, very officially. "I have a business proposition we at Gringotts would like you to consider. You created quite the stir in our nation when you stepped through our doors a few weeks ago. We haven't had a Fury in Britain in over a hundred years. We see great advantage in a partnership between you and our bank. We propose to offer your services for magical adoptions, marriages, and binding contracts if you would ever consider partnering with us. You would be well compensated, of course."

"Having people promise things to me is that official?" Harry asked in amazement, trying to keep Castor from reaching out to the goblin. The baby seemed overly interested in wanting to touch the goblins' faces and hair.

"It is the *most* official we are able to get any type of bond or contract. It supersedes anything on file at the ministry or here at the bank," he explained solemnly.

“Wow, I didn’t realize.”

“Think it over Mr. Snape,” Windstrike nodded and he put all his parchments back into the folder. “Maybe after your graduation we can work out some agreement.”

“Thank you, Windstrike,” Harry contemplatively followed the others towards the vaults, now seeing more future career options than auror as possibilities.

Harry took Castor with him into the main Potter family vault. They walked to the back of the vault where no one could see them and where there was an antique desk. Harry pulled the pouch containing Castor’s seal skin from his pocket. He opened the pouch to show Castor. “I know you don’t understand all this right now, but this is yours,” Harry explained very seriously.

Castor giggled and clapped his hands and touched the skin with a large smile. “Well, maybe you understand some,” Harry continued with a smile of his own as he sealed the pouch back up and put it on the table. “I am not hiding this from you. It’s yours, and whenever you ask for it you can have it. We just need to keep it safe and where no one can get to it, ok?”

Castor giggled again, which Harry chose to accept that as agreement, and they walked back out of the vault. Everyone met back up in the lobby to hurry through the rest of their shopping trip and visit to the Weasleys.

“May I take Castor to the baby store to get a few things while you and Lupin get your school supplies? We could meet back up to get your clothes,” Snape asked, his face showing no emotion, but his eyes sparkling with either excitement or mischief...Harry wasn’t sure which and didn’t want to find out.

Harry raised an eyebrow and smirked at the man who was definitely wrapped about Castor’s little pudgy finger now. “Sure, just don’t go crazy. We don’t want him spoiled.”

Snape snorted but eagerly accepted his grandchild who was already reaching for him. “Meet us at Thaddeus Smythe’s in Knockturn Alley for your clothes in an hour. He will be much better able to handle creature modifications and more discreet where your new alterations are concerned. Stay together though, and you take care of him,” Snape said, targeting the last to

Lupin. Snape watched in confusion as Remus and Harry both walked away laughing at his over-protectiveness.

After getting Harry's books and heading to replenish his potion supplies, Remus decided to quiz Harry on Furies as any good DADA professor and committed nerd would do. "Tell me all you know, and I'll fill in any gaps of information you might not have. You are now classified as a 'dark' creature, so I know a bit about Furies though no one has seen one in about a century, and she was probably your great-grandmother since the Princes are the only family I know of in Britain with Fury blood."

"Well, the physical changes are pretty self-explanatory I guess," Harry said with a little wave to his hair. "I'm thinking I should get more leather and punk-rock type styles of clothes so that I can pass this look off more as body modifications instead of creature traits."

Remus walked backwards in front of Harry, considering him for a bit. "It could work. Sirius ran with a crowd out in muggle London back right after Hogwarts that had a similar style to how you look now. The hair would have to have been spelled that color, with the ring, your eyes look normal, your tattoo doesn't look exceptionally magical...it's just the ears that are a problem..."

"Yeah, well...it'll stay hidden until it doesn't," Harry just shrugged, not really caring beyond his initial meeting of the students.

"What about your wings? Have you tested them out any?" Remus asked excitedly. Harry was a little concerned he was about to become some kind of research study for the man, but at least he was enthusiastic if nothing else.

"Well, I haven't tried to fly yet since there isn't a good place around Snape's house, but I'm really looking forward to it. It seems the main thing that stands out to me is our deal, or obsession really, with both vengeance and protection. According to the goblins, that somehow makes all oaths intentionally made to us magically binding as well as any oaths we ourselves make. And according to Windstrike back there, it's the most binding form of an oath."

Harry let out a relieved breath once more. "Remus, you don't even know. I thought I had kidnapped Castor! I made an oath to his dying mother to take care of him, but I just took him

from his abusive father. I'm sooo relieved he can't try to get him back! I don't even know what I would do, but I can guarantee it would not be pretty."

"So...that's why I wasn't supposed to ask questions about how you got Castor," Remus smiled, happy to finally understand where that warning had come from. "I get it. I would have taken him too. I would have taken you if I could have."

Harry looked at him, not able to find the words for his gratefulness. Remus just put a hand on his shoulder and continued. "I think technically oaths are part of the vengeance 'deal' as you said, but that one in particular did seem closer to protection," Remus mused. "Regardless, you'll have to watch what you say and what you let others promise you. Fortunately, it has to be intentional, so if someone says in jest that they swear to kill someone, then that wouldn't actually be binding. Merlin, that would be a mess at school!"

"Yes, I was very happy when I saw that," Harry laughed. "I guess the coolest thing is the tesseract or tessering. Apparently, Furies can't apparate except by side-along and have a very difficult time with the floo and portkeys as well because of something in our physiology. That's actually why I've always had a bad reaction to all of those. We can fly, of course, which is probably why I'm so good on a broom, and we can tesser. We fold space, so I can think about where I'm going and then fold the distance so that I just take a step into the new location. Castor never has a problem travelling with me, but when I tried to take Snape last week, he said it was extremely uncomfortable. By his description, it sounds like the same way I react to portkey and side-along apparition."

"That's amazing," Remus said with a look that promised he was going to be doing research into this. "I hadn't known those always bothered you in the past. What about your other instincts besides vengeance?"

"As I've learned, protection is highest or most important, at least for me, even if we might be more known for vengeance. Everything else comes second. We must protect the innocent. Hermione used to call it my 'saving people thing' I think I must have had that trait even before all my genes activated," he shrugged with a chuckle.

"Of course, you did. You were born a Fury," Remus explained knowingly. "You always had the protection and vengeance traits. The only thing your inheritance did was activate the power to do something about them. From my understanding, being a Fury isn't like you weren't one-one day and you were the next; you were always a Fury, the powers just came

later. Even as a child, your smell was always just slightly different...it didn't scream creature until I saw you earlier today, but it was always just a little wilder than others. I never questioned it, but it makes perfect sense now."

"Huh...that's interesting..." Harry filed that information away to analyze later. If he had always been a Fury, then that was a whole new way to look at himself and his life.

"Any other powers?" Remus asked, breaking into his thoughts.

"Besides tessering, I actually have no clue," Harry said with a shrug. "The books are all vague. It says that the more I grow and accept myself as a Fury, then the power to fulfill my duties meets this desire. I have no clue what the bloody hell that means though."

"Yeah, Fury powers have never been specifically written down that I know of," Remus nodded when they stopped at the entrance to the apothecary. "My understanding is that you can literally do whatever needs to be done as long as it fulfills your duties of protection or vengeance, but your ability to access that is limited to your acceptance of your duties and your belief in the actions you are taking."

Harry laughed with only a hint of derision in it, "You sound like Dumbledore and his 'your greatest power is love' spiel."

"To a Fury, yes, actually," Remus responded after a moment of thought, though still not liking being compared to Dumbledore. "If someone you love was threatened, then that would be an excellent reason for you to both believe in your duty and your actions."

Remus took a step towards the door and then paused as a thought crossed his mind. He immediately turned a sickly shade of green. "Remus, what's wrong?!" Harry asked, grabbing Remus's arm, worried he was about to pass out.

"You've *always* been a Fury...Lily," was all he said for a minute as his brain seemed to be spinning into some new line of thought.

“What about my mother?” Harry was so confused.

“She was killed in front of you,” Remus said looking directly into Harry’s green eyes.

“Someone you loved, killed in front of you. Don’t you see...? Vengeance for one you love... it could be how you survived the killing curse to rebound it to Voldemort!”

“But I hadn’t come into my powers then,” Harry said thoughtfully.

“The emotion must have been strong enough to activate your genes early. As I said, you have always been a Fury, even if you didn’t look like one. It makes much more sense than anything Dumbledore has spouted to us,” Remus’s eyes took on a sheen that Harry recognized from when Hermione went into one of her researching fugues. Harry saw many trips to the Hogwarts library in Remus’s future.

“I’ll have to think about that,” Harry said thoughtfully as he walked into the store. He frankly didn’t know how to respond to this theory. “Hey, Remus, explain your theory to Snape sometime. I think he would be interested and might have more ideas about its accuracy.”

“Sure,” Remus smiled, and then the smile turned into a smirk. “How’s it going with him by the way?”

“It was a little rough at first,” Harry laughed. “Apparently, it’s not good to anger a newly turned Fury or something like that, so he constantly looked like he was on the verge of a stroke by holding back all the insults he wanted to use. We finally got past it though, and Castor won him over almost immediately. I think Castor is really good for him. He’s chilled out a little since we moved in, I guess. Also, finally being free of the Mark and all his ‘duties’ has done him wonders.”

Harry gathered some of the ingredients he needed from the shelf and put them into a basket. “You know, he’s even been teaching me to meditate in the evenings, and I think it’s helped with both of our anger issues. It’s the first step for me actually learning something about Occlumency supposedly. However, since Castor has been sleeping in my wings, I haven’t had any of the Voldemort nightmares. I don’t know if it’s his power of part of mine, but I’m grateful regardless.”

“I’ve noticed that you both you and Severus seem to be more relaxed,” Remus laughed and put a hand on his shoulder. “I think both of you are good for him and he for you.”

They finished up shopping pretty quickly and made their way to the shady entrance to Knockturn Alley. It actually started looking less creepy the farther in they went, Harry noted. The businesses started to look more respectable and less like you might be kidnapped for potions ingredients. He wondered why that might be. No one bothered them though, but he did figure part of that was that he was now 6’3”, actually had muscles, and fit a stereotype with his steel gray hair and visible tattoos. He was pretty sure the werewolf beside him could protect them just as much as he could, if needed, even though he *looked* less intimidating.

Thaddeus Smythe’s was one of the more respectable looking stores on the Alley that Snape and Castor were already waiting outside of. Castor’s face was very suspiciously sticky with what looked like it might be ice cream residue. “If he has trouble sleeping, you’re handling it,” was all Harry said as he walked past an unrepentant Snape and a chuckling Remus into the store.

After a quick explanation of what they needed for Hogwarts from Snape, and Harry’s suggestion that his casual clothes be darker and maybe a bit more...leathery or rock-ish... which surprisingly the owner understood his disjointed ramblings about while Snape just rolled his eyes, after that they were well on their way to a new wardrobe. The small owner zoomed around Harry with his measuring tape commenting on cuts, colors, and fabrics that would look good on him. Harry also appreciated that he never batted an eye when Snape explained the alterations he would need in order to be able to let out his wings without destroying the shirts.

The little, elderly man breezily waved his hand. “It’s a simple spell to allow permeability,” the man explained as if this was something he did all the time...maybe it was, Harry didn’t know. “I’ll need you to unfurl your wings to measure them though.”

Harry took off his ratty old shirt and felt the tattoo lifting off his back and stretching out to form his wings. They were a good 10 ft. across when stretched out and reached from several inches above his head to his upper thighs. They were of a soft, leathery texture, but the edges were razor-sharp with hooked talons at the top of each wing.

“Wow, in all my years...I never thought I would see a Fury in here!” the man exclaimed. He seemed to catch himself and cleared his throat as if he’d made some inexcusable indiscretion. “Erm, sorry about that; that was very unprofessional of me.”

“It’s fine,” Harry assured the man who was now measuring his wings by having levitated himself up off the ground with his tape measure.

“It’s bloody brilliant, it is!” Remus called out from the corner where he was now holding Castor and bonding with his godson. The little boy was squealing and seemed to be pulling at the little bit of chest hair above Remus’s collar...it looked a bit painful, but Remus was just cooing at the baby like he was the cutest thing in the world.

“Thanks, Moony,” Harry laughed as Snape rolled his eyes at the two of them while he shopped for himself a new pair of leather boots that were potion resistant.

Harry left Smythe’s with an entire new wardrobe with school robes, formal robes, casual robes, slacks and shirts for every day, jumpers, undergarments, and even pajamas. And, no matter how much he complained, Snape refused to let Harry pay for any of it...even the leather jacket Smythe had insisted on throwing in because it fit the ‘aesthetic.’

“But Joe (they couldn’t call him Snape out in public or it’d blow their cover), I’m sure you bought Castor a dozen new outfits that are shrunk and hiding in your pockets, you shouldn’t have to buy me new clothes too,” Harry reasoned vehemently.

“Leave it cub,” Remus said, bouncing Castor who was now starting to get fussy. “Let your father take care of you for a bit.”

“Listen to the wolf,” Snape snarled as he shrunk down the clothes and placed him in his pockets (presumably with a lot of baby clothes).

Harry started looking up and flinching. “What’s wrong, cub?” Remus asked, looking up as well to see what was wrong.

“You two just agreed on something. I’m looking for whatever is about to cause the world to end,” Harry laughed as Remus gave him a little shove and Snape just sneered at him.

Snape’s last dose of Polyjuice was due to wear off shortly, so they quickly made their way back to Diagon Alley and Weasley’s Wizarding Wheezes. They wound their way through the packed store and avoided a few booby-trapped pranks in order to get back to the counter where Lee Jordan was working the register and looking quite harried among the swarm of Hogwarts aged students buying basketfuls of prank items.

“Mr. Jordan!” Remus called out over the chaos as the only one the man might recognize in the group.

“Professor!” Lee called out with a smile at him between customers. “How can I help you?”

“Are the twins here? I need to talk with them.”

“They just went upstairs for a break,” Lee explained as he motioned them around the counter and pointed to a staircase. “Walk up and knock on the door. I’m sure they’ll be happy to see you.”

As they got to the top of the stairs, Remus handed a sleeping Castor to Harry. He had fallen asleep somewhere halfway through the store, which was quite impressive with how loud it was. He must have been very tired, or maybe he was used to sleeping through loud noises... something that Harry didn’t want to think about since it made him extremely angry. Remus then knocked and they waited.

“Coming!” They heard a twin call from inside. “Professor Lupin! What are you doing here?” George asked with a large smile after whipping the door open.

“Hi, um, which one are you?” Remus asked, trying to puzzle it out. Even his wolf couldn’t tell by scent which twin was which.

“George,” Harry responded with a smirk from behind him.

George narrowed his eyes in confusion that a person he didn’t know just correctly identified which twin he was. Frankly, he forgot which twin he was occasionally!

“Right, George,” Remus smiled. “Do you have a couple minutes to talk?”

“Sure, come on in,” he said opening the door wider for them. “Fred put the kettle on, we have company!”

They made their way into a comfortable sitting room that was well lit and had a beautiful view of Diagon Alley out the windows. “Professor Lupin! Welcome!” Fred called as he joined them, a questioning look on his face at the group of people he didn’t think he recognized.

“Who are your friends?” George asked, voicing this twin’s question.

“Erm, hold on one second and you’ll get an answer,” Remus noted that Snape’s Polyjuice very noticeably was starting to wear off. A minute later, Fred and George gasped when their old Potions professor smirked at them from the armchair by their fireplace.

“Ok, who are you under the Polyjuice then?” George asked Harry, still wondering how he knew who he was when even their own mother was wrong a lot of the time.

“No Polyjuice here,” Harry laughed and rubbed a hand up and down the sleeping baby’s back.

“This is what I normally look like. Or, well sort of,” Harry took off the ring, changing his eyes back to black and causing the twins to lean a little farther away from him subconsciously. “I’m Arcturus Snape and this is my son Castor Snape. Please call me Artie though. It’s good to meet you both.”

“Snape?” Fred asked, looking between the teen and the potions master.

“You two related?” George continued.

“He’s my son, and my grandson,” Snape said with a nod of his head.

“Blimy!”

“What’s with the Polyjuice then?”

“I’m no longer in good standing with the Dark Lord,” Snape explained with a little smirk at finally being free. “We feared it best that I not be out in the open for a while.”

“Erm, congratulations?” Fred said with a quizzical look at the group.

“Definitely,” Harry nodded in agreement.

“To what do we owe this pleasure?” George asked the room, but mainly Remus who he knew the best.

“Actually, I’m the reason we’re all here,” Harry explained, giving them both a fond smile. “You see, we all went to Gringotts this morning, and I decided with the war going on and everything with my son that I should provide for him if anything were to happen to me.”

“Erm, ok, that sounds like a good idea...” Fred said, still confused about why they were in their flat.

“Well, anyway, Castor would go to his grandfather first if anything happened, but if he couldn’t, then Moony will be his godfather.”

“Good choice,” Fred agreed as if it were obvious, causing Remus to blush. “You can never go wrong with a Marauder.”

“Yes, and if anything were to happen to Remus, I named you and George his godparents as well,” Harry said with a smile.

“Yeah...er, we’re honored,” George started, looking at the baby a little fearfully.

“But we don’t know you, and you definitely don’t know us,” Fred finished.

“Shouldn’t someone you actually know be his godparent?” George added back in.

“I don’t know,” Harry laughed. “I knew you both well enough to give you the start-up funds for this little enterprise you have going on here, and you trusted me with the map when I needed it. I think we have a good history together started. Actually, I’m hard pressed to think of a single person I trust more than you two.”

The twins just looked at each other and then back to Harry.

“Harry?”

“Harrykins?”

“Yes?” Harry answered them both with a smile.

“Bloody hell, you look different,” George exclaimed as he stood up to look closer at Harry.

“Apparently I had some creature blood on my dad’s side,” Harry said indicating Snape.
“Came into my inheritance on my birthday. You can only imagine how shocked I was!”

“And, Snape is really your...”

“Father?”

“Yep,” Harry said, shifting a sleeping Castor to a more comfortable position.

They spent the next hour explaining everything that had happened to the twins and answering loads of questions while drinking their tea. It was finally getting time to go though. “So, do you accept; will you be my son’s godfathers?” Harry asked them seriously.

“Of course, Harry!” Fred started.

“We’d be honored!”

“We’ll teach him the fine art of pranking, with his Uncle Moony, of course.”

“And make sure he gets in just enough trouble, but not too much,” George finished for them.

“Thank you both so much!” Harry said, giving them one-armed hugs around the baby.

“Remember, you can’t tell anyone, not even your family,” Harry said again seriously. “Even if Dumbledore or Voldemort start claiming that I died. Harry Potter is no longer here.”

“Anything to keep our godson safe!” They disconcertingly said at the same time.

Harry and Lupin walked out of the flat, but Snape paused in the doorway and turned back to them. The twins almost took a step backwards at the intense look on the man's face. He just stared at them for a second before taking a breath and seeming to come to some hard-won conclusion.

"Thank you both," he said quietly. "I have been made aware of the fact that I owe you a debt for taking care of my son. I don't know everything, Harry doesn't want to talk about it yet, but I do know now that you saved his life at the end of his first year and rescued him before his second year. You are good men, and I thank you."

Snape paused. "I know we haven't gotten along well, and I know I'm still an evil bastard, but from here on out, to me at least, we're family," he said holding out a hand to them.

Fred and George looked at each other in shock before both shaking his hand. "We love Harry dearly," Fred said.

"It's what you do for family," George agreed vehemently. Snape just nodded at them and then followed Lupin and Harry down the stairs.

Happy Misunderstandings

Snape and Harry arrived back home from their Diagon Alley outing with Harry and Castor tessering and Snape through the floo located in the back room of the twin's shop, while Remus flooed directly to his office at Hogwarts to continue setting up for the new term. Overall, it had been an exceptionally successful outing. Harry had all his clothes, supplies, and could even stretch his wings out without destroying his new shirts. They had even stocked up Castor on all the essentials he would need for the next month, even though they knew they could go down to Hogsmeade and buy anything for him if they ran out.

Harry and Snape were having an early dinner before the Order meeting the next night while Castor was finally napping after a fussy day. Harry blamed the ice cream from the day before on his restlessness, but Snape just rolled his eyes at him since the coward had spent the day in his potions lab with a silencing charm up. Through all this though, Harry had been working up the courage ever since their trip to Diagon Alley to ask Snape a question and figured it would be the best time while they were finishing up their meal and Castor wasn't monopolizing their attention.

He took in a deep, steadying breath. "Erm, Professor, so...what should I call you at school? I mean, I assume you'll be calling me Arcturus since you refuse to call me Artie, or maybe Mr. Snape in class? What should I call you though? Calling you Professor all the time seems a little...I don't know...odd?"

Snape gave his usual shudder at Harry's use of Artie. "Yes, I think Mr. Snape in class and Arcturus outside class will be sufficient for you," Snape agreed. "As for me, Professor Snape in class still...would you feel comfortable with Father outside? If you don't, it is perfectly fine. Maybe Severus would be an acceptable alternative?" He asked with a little hesitancy.

Harry thought for a minute and smiled. "I will call you Professor Snape in class, but I refuse to call you Father."

Try as he might to hide it, Snape's expression still fell in disappointment that Harry refused him. Harry however, held up his hand to stop whatever Snape was about to say. "I won't call you Father because it's too formal; it creates a feeling of distance and separation. If I had grown up with you, I don't think it would be a problem. However, I think the two of us would be well served by not reminding each other constantly of separation. We're trying to blend three different magical creatures, a snarky potions master, and the natural disaster that is the

Weasley twins into some semblance of a family, so let's try to communicate more togetherness than separateness...at least for Castor if nothing else. Therefore, I offer a counterproposal. I will call you Dad and Castor will call you Granddad unless you would rather he call you Pops or Poppie or something."

"Granddad is fine," Snape quickly said to erase Poppie from anyone's memory. "And I would be honored for you to call me Dad."

"All right then, Dad," Harry smiled broadly. He rifled through his pockets for a minute and pulled out a clear crystal on a necklace. "I've been working on these for the past month we've been here. I found the spells in one of the magical parenting books and decided it was necessary, especially for when we're at Hogwarts. It's a baby monitor of sorts that you can activate different settings on. There's one in the room beside Castor now that, if he starts to cry, the one on my necklace will vibrate to let me know to check on him."

Snape gave the crystal an appreciative nod. "That is useful. I was just trying to listen for him upstairs, but the crystal would make that much easier."

Harry shuffled a bit awkwardly at the unexpected praise, and also at the next part he had to tell his dad. "Er, thanks...well, I've set this crystal for you. If you get in trouble at the Order meeting or wherever, just hold it in your fist and think of me. Mine will activate, and I'll tesser directly to you through whatever wards might be in effect and go full on Fury mode on whatever is on the other side. By my understanding, that is all entirely possible once my Fury part is activated."

Snape took the necklace and turned the crystal over in his palm with an impressed look. "The baby monitor spell is simple and used in most magical households, but the one you put on mine must have taken a lot of work, plus the needed transfiguration from a rock to a crystal is more complicated than it sounds."

"Yeah, that's why I'm just now giving it to you," Harry acknowledged with pride. "It took me a while to figure it out."

"Will yours notify me if you need me?" Snape asked with a pointed look to the necklace Harry now wore.

“Yes,” Harry said slowly with a frown. “I don’t know how you’ll find me to get to me though. I couldn’t figure out how to do that. I thought about turning it into a portkey or have it display a location or something, but I hadn’t gotten that far. Yours will just make mine vibrate with your set color, so not super helpful. It only works with yours since I can use my Fury to find you.”

“At least I will know you need me, so you will use it if that is ever the case,” Snape said as almost an order, pulling the necklace over his head. “I’ll take a look at them with you when we get back to Hogwarts sometime, and maybe we can figure something out together.”

“I’d like that,” Harry smiled sheepishly, still not quite used to this whole family-thing.

It was thinking about this very unexpected and kind gift that caused Snape to have the smile on his face which confused everyone when he flooded into Grimmauld Place for the Order of the Phoenix meeting. Remus gave him a little smile in return and nodded to the seat saved beside him. He had intentionally saved the seat for Snape because he wanted to be right in the middle of the action when Snape officially resigned as Dumbledore’s spy. The fallout was going to be beautiful!

“You’re freaking people out,” he whispered below his breath to Snape when the man finally took a seat.

“They can shove off for all I care,” Snape said, his smile turning into the more familiar sneer.

“Arcturus made this for me,” Snape said in explanation, showing the crystal to Remus who then whistled at the nice bit of magic that went into making it.

“That’s very well done,” he nodded, looking closely at the crystal around Snape’s neck.

“Is everyone here?” Dumbledore stood up and asked abruptly when Kingsley finally came through the front door. After looking around, he must have decided that they were because he continued. “We don’t have any major news, Death Eater attacks have actually been down recently, so we should be prepared for Voldemort to be planning something on a grander scale. Harry is doing well in his training, and as you all know, will still not be returning to Hogwarts this fall. He feels this is necessary and plans to better himself and his magic as quickly as he can.”

Molly sniffed sadly and Arthur patted her back, but Snape and Remus both had to keep themselves from sneering at the man. “I know the kids will really miss him this term,” Molly said to Dumbledore. “Maybe he can visit? He could pop by for a Hogsmeade weekend.”

“We’ll see, Molly,” Dumbledore twinkled at her before moving on, clearly not thinking about it at all. “On the note of Hogwarts, I’m very interested in learning about a new student that transferred in this term for his final year, an Arcturus Severus Snape. Care to share anything with the group, Severus?”

“As you have clearly deduced, my son will be attending Hogwarts this year as a seventh year,” Snape said with his usual mask of no expression on his face. “His mother homeschooled him up until this point, but that is no longer a possibility, necessitating his transfer.”

“I didn’t know you had a son, Severus!” Minerva McGonagall exclaimed, seeming a little hurt at not having known this important bit of information about her colleague. “You’ve never mentioned him? Who’s his mother?”

“Did she attend Hogwarts, dear? Are you still together?” Molly chimed in to ask.

Snape took a deep breath to keep from snapping at all of them. He knew the questions were going to come, but he hated people prying into his personal life. Even if it was fake, it still made his skin crawl to talk about personal things with people he equated to just above strangers.

“With my position here in the Order and with the Death Eaters, it has always been too dangerous for anyone to know about them. Albus clearly believed the Dark Lord would return, and I must return to his ranks as a spy,” Snape explained with as much patience as he

could muster. “Therefore, we kept each other secret all these years. Arcturus’s mother’s name was Marisol, and she did not attend Hogwarts, so you would not have known her, nor probably ever met her. We met through my work with the Potions Guild.”

“Why now then?” Arthur Weasley asked. “Why are you willing to tell everyone about your son now that the danger had increased?”

Snape narrowly avoided gritting his teeth at the accusation embedded somewhere in that question. “My son’s mother was killed in a Death Eater raid outside the country not long ago,” Snape explained simply, causing everyone to look down and avoid his eyes. “Arcturus has come to live with me and to finish his last year at Hogwarts as there is no one else in his family.”

Surprisingly, Remus reached over and just barely grazed Snape’s arm with his fingers. Snape was torn before jumping in surprise and accepting the kind gesture. After a moment of inner turmoil, he shot the werewolf beside him the smallest hint of a smile. The return smile from Remus suggested he had taken the gesture as intended.

“That is not all though...what is this that I hear from the governors about family quarters? That is a very unusual request. It’s not often it’s a necessity for our students,” Dumbledore asked with that damn twinkle in his eyes.

Dumbledore knew full well from the governors why his son needed family quarters, he was just trying to pry and stir up things in the Order meeting. Regardless, Snape steeled himself to answer. “My grandson will be attending the year with him. He is just a little over 7 months old now. The boy’s mother was also killed in the Death Eater raid since it happened while she and Arcturus’s mother were having tea together. Thankfully, Arcturus and Castor were out of the house doing the shopping for the week at the time.”

“That’s horrible!” Minerva gasped, looking like she would go to war for this teen and the baby she hadn’t even met yet.

“Such tragedy and so young,” Molly shook her head sadly. “The poor babe probably has no idea what’s happened either.”

“It’s a wonder the Death Eaters would go after your family or that you wouldn’t be forewarned of the attack,” Moody grumbled in clear suspicion of Snape and the entire situation.

Snape wanted to throttle him for whatever he might be implying. However, this did seem like the perfect opportunity for what he needed to do next. He saw Remus look at him expectantly and with all the glee of a Marauder about to witness an excellently planned prank.

“Yes, Alastor, and that is why I’m no longer a part of the Death Eaters and will no longer serve the Dark Lord in any capacity, even as a spy,” Snape growled at Moody, his real anger at all Harry had gone through showing in his expression.

“I must now formally resign as a spy for the Order. I am willing to continue to remain a member so long as it does not put my family in danger, but I will no longer spy for you nor have any dealings with the Death Eaters directly. I have done my part in this war...in both wars, but it is time for me to take care of the remaining family I have left. I am all my son and grandson have left in the world, and I take that responsibility seriously.”

This statement caused many reactions across the room as the meeting devolved into chaos. Some were looking at Severus in shock and betrayal while some started trying to talk him out of it. McGonagall was surprisingly coming to his defense against Moody, looking like she might decide to transfigure his fake eye into something extremely uncomfortable any second now. However, Dumbledore just looked at him in silent disappointment, his eye missing that twinkle. Remus’s eye seemed to have found that twinkle though as he sat back thoroughly enjoyed the fallout of this well-planned mayhem.

Dumbledore raised a hand and the room immediately quieted down. “My boy, you can’t just resign as our spy. You are a marked Death Eater. Voldemort won’t let you walk away, no one leaves the Death Eaters alive, and neither will the ministry let you walk if you are caught without our protection. When the war ends, you could very well find yourself in Azkaban prison from your activities as a marked Death Eater. Have you no sense of duty to those who cannot serve as you can?”

This left Snape seething. If Remus hadn’t put a hand on his arm once more, he was certain he would have hexed the man. “So, after my *years* of service in two wars where I regularly endured torture, both mental and physical, been kept from my son his entire life because of the danger, and provided you with valuable information which saved lives, you would just

remove any protection you might wish to give me? Yes, I know I made a mistake as a *15-year-old*, but since then I've given my health, my youth, and my family to this cause. After all that, you would renounce me as ever having been a spy?"

"It's not that I would want to renounce you, but I wouldn't have any proof to help you with, my boy. And you wouldn't actually be a spy for the Order then, would you?" Dumbledore said as if that made any sense at all except as a threat.

This was a load of shite and everyone knew it. "Fine then," Snape growled in anger. "Remove your protection. I don't need it anymore," he said as he rolled up his left sleeve to show his unmarked arm.

"Good luck proving I'm a Death Eater when I don't have a Dark Mark. You are well aware that because of my position as the Dark Lord's potions master, I have never been seen on any of the raids. I think I'll take my chances without your *kind* support!"

Now, this revelation had the room buzzing and Remus's lips quirking into a grin. "But how? That's impossible!" Dumbledore looked exceptionally confused and suspiciously angry.

"I found a way to remove it," Snape said simply, rolling down his sleeve once more. "The Dark Lord already knows I have left his service, and I haven't answered a single one of his calls in a month. I am sure the *loyal* Death Eaters have already been instructed to kill me on sight. So, if you will, I'll take my leave now so that you can all talk about me more freely amongst yourselves. My son and I will see you at Hogwarts in a week, Headmaster."

In the confusion this caused, Snape promptly left the kitchen where the meeting was taking place to head out the front door so that he could finally apparate home to his family. He was free...it felt like an anvil had been lifted from his chest. He had never been free from *both* of his masters before!

Remus caught up to him in the front entry, having also slipped out in the confusion. "Severus!" he called in a whisper to not set off Mrs. Black's portrait. He had the largest grin on his face, his amber eyes lighting up in mirth.

Snape stopped his dramatic exit and turned to Remus, lifting an eyebrow. “Hey, good show in there,” Remus said with a chuckle. “I think Lily would have loved to have seen it.”

“Thank you, I had quite a bit of fun with it myself,” Snape smirked and leaned against the ancient wallpaper.

“Erm, so would you like to get dinner with me when you get back to the castle next week? Maybe Friday in Hogsmeade?” Remus asked, still grinning happily at him.

Snape’s eyebrow shot up in surprise as he thought a minute and tried to pick apart the meaning behind the question. “I could do dinner...” he said slowly after staring at Remus for a bit, still not sure what he was asking.

“Ok, see you then,” Remus said with a little salute and slipping back into the kitchen unnoticed so Snape could continue his exit.

Remus sat back down at the table and chuckled to himself at the continued chaos around him. He was looking forward to talking to Severus about his ideas concerning how Harry survived the killing curse as a baby. He thought he really might have landed on something with his theory. Speaking over it in Hogsmeade was also much safer than in the castle where portraits could hear and report back to the headmaster.

Two seconds later his smile fell in concern. Did his request sound like he had asked Severus on a date? He did say dinner and a Friday night, but he hadn’t specified it was a date. Did Severus interpret it that way? *Would* he have agreed if he *had* interpreted it as a date? Surely not! After a minute Remus then wondered, did it matter if he had meant it as more than a friendly meeting? Did maybe he actually want it to *be* a date? He had to stop his rapid thoughts though as Dumbledore called the meeting back to order to discuss their problem of not having a spy anymore.

Harry put down the children’s book he had been reading to Castor who was currently chewing on a rubber giraffe toy that rattled when his dad apparated back in at Spinner’s End.

Snape had a confused frown on his face like he was thinking about something really hard. It was a look he didn't think he'd ever seen on the potion master's face.

"How did it go? Did something go wrong?" Harry asked in concern.

Snape looked at him as he collapsed on the sofa beside them to poke at a giggling Castor's belly. "Hhm, no, Dumbledore threatened to throw me to the metaphorical inferi as we predicted, but it all went pretty much as planned overall."

"What has you in such a state then? You look...I don't know...confused?" Harry asked in a worried tone as he wiped drool off his hand.

"I think I might have gotten asked on a date?" Snape said more as a question than a statement, looking well out of his depth for once ever.

Harry immediately slid forward in his seat and smiled broadly in excitement. "Who? Tonks? Isn't she a little young? Ew, not McGonagall, right? Who else is single in the Order?"

"Lupin," Snape said with wide eyes, not wanting his son to keep guessing at all. "He asked if I wanted to do dinner in Hogsmeade on Friday night when we get back to the castle. Do you think it's a date? I couldn't figure it out."

Harry thought it through for a minute. "Did he say to bring me and/or Castor?" Harry asked, smiling even more broadly now.

"Erm, no," Snape said after some thought.

"Then, it's probably a date," Harry stated and started getting even more excited as he bounced the baby on his knee. "Sirius mentioned in passing that Remus has dated blokes before when I told him that I thought I might be bisexual...which by the way...now you know..."

Snape rolled his eyes and smirked at the teen. “That’s the least shocking thing about you I have learned since you moved in here. Myself, I’m...well...I honestly do not care as long as the person likes me, which is difficult to find.”

“So, what did you say? Are you going? Do you like him?” Harry was liking the sound of this more and more as he thought about it. Yeah, they had never gotten along before, but they seemed to be trying to put the past behind them, and they were both such huge nerds and loved Castor...he could see a future for them at least.

Snape opened and shut his mouth several times trying to come up with the words. No one asked him on a date, ever. He and Lily hadn’t ever really been an official thing either, even though Harry was a result. Did he like Lupin? He wasn’t sure. He definitely didn’t hate him anymore.

“I said yes,” Snape finally said, a scared look in his eyes.

Harry laughed happily, causing Castor to laugh too, and would have jumped for joy if he hadn’t had a baby on his lap. He thought it would be awesome if his father and his father-figure got together. “So, you face down Dark Lords and certain death every day for years, but it’s a date that scares you? You have a bit of a skewed perspective there, don’t you?”

“Oh Merlin, what do I wear?” Snape asked, his eyes getting even larger as his cheeks turned a bit pink.

Harry shrugged, not knowing at all. “Ginny and I lasted all of two weeks, and I didn’t really have a girlfriend before her. Cho absolutely doesn’t count. So, I’m *not* the one to ask.” Snape sighed. “You know...if you’re desperate...”

“Yes, son, I think I have crossed into desperate when it’s been since before you were born that I last went on a real date. I am pretty sure you were the result of my last date actually,” Snape said with as much sarcasm as he could muster at the time.

“Ew, I didn’t need that thought in my head,” Harry shuddered. “Well...what I was suggesting was that the twins have dated a few people in the past, and everything seemed to go well for them, and they can give pretty good advice when they want to. Fred is gay even if George isn’t, so you have the advice on blokes covered. George is the better one for fashion tips though surprisingly. They could give you some help if you want.”

Snape opened his mouth to tell Harry that he would walk up to the Dark Lord and ask him to please curse him to death before asking the twins about dating advice, that was, before he actually started considering it. He groaned; they were never going to let him live this down.

The Most Slytherin of Them All

Harry, Snape, and Castor moved to Hogwarts a week before the term started so that Snape could get his classroom set up for the new term. It was a major production, more than either Harry or Snape had needed to attempt before. It was all their normal belongings, plus a cot for Castor, nappies, a play pen, blankets, clothes, toys, formula, baby food, etc... Thankfully they had magic to help, but Harry was certain they were going to forget something important. As long as it wasn't the nappies though, he figured they could either figure it out or make a run down to Hogsmeade.

Headmaster Dumbledore met them in the entryway of the castle as they walked up from Hogsmeade since they couldn't floo directly into Snape's quarters until he was officially back in residence (not that Harry was ever planning to floo anywhere again if he could avoid it). "Ah, you must be young Mr. Snape," Headmaster Dumbledore twinkled at Harry.

The man started at the top of Harry's silver hair and took in his slightly visible tattoo, leather jacket, band t-shirt, ripped jeans, and the blue, hippo patterned diaper bag Harry hadn't replaced from Castor's original home. Dumbledore was clearly *not* impressed. Harry was absolutely certain he'd been immediately labelled a troublemaker...partially due to his father, partially the baby while still a teenager, and mostly due to his new look. Which was saying a lot since Dumbledore was wearing lavender colored robes with sunflowers printed on them.

"Please call me Artie or Arcturus," Harry said, shaking Dumbledore's hand and trying to look and sound pleasant and as if he had never met the man before in his life.

"This is Castor," Harry added when Castor buried his head in Harry's neck in an uncharacteristic show of shyness.

"Well, hello there Castor," Dumbledore grinned at the baby who just hid more, seeming to be trying to crawl inside Harry's jacket.

"I guess he's decided to be shy today," Snape frowned at the baby's unusual behavior. It was a bit concerning...though they did already know not to trust the headmaster...

“Thank you for being so accommodating to the two of us,” Harry smiled at Dumbledore with his most innocent expression plastered on his face. “We really do appreciate the family rooms. I doubt my dormmates would be happy to wake up with us for an early morning feeding and diaper change.”

“It was no problem, my boy,” the elderly man chuckled. “I can only imagine your dormmates’ reactions to that long term. No need to cause excess animosity.”

Harry winced at the term “boy.” Ever since Vernon (so since forever), both boy and freak felt like actual physical blows. The headmaster continued to use the word though, and Harry tried to hold his tongue. “If you don’t mind, Headmaster,” Snape cut in quickly, seeing Harry’s wince. “We would really like to get settled in. It is almost Castor’s nap time. We could all chat over dinner tonight in the Great Hall maybe.”

“Of course, Severus. We can’t have sleepy babies trying to stay awake. I expect both of you to work out nap times and the baby’s schedule during the term between yourselves. We will not allow disruptions to learning, and the boy will not be an excuse for your absence from class, Arcturus, or even you Severus,” Dumbledore instructed them both with a look of frustration at his lost spy.

“Indeed, we are well aware of this,” Snape drawled tersely.

Dumbledore turned his attention back to Harry. “I would however like to tell you how sorry I am for your losses,” he added in what sounded like an afterthought.

Harry blinked his glamoured eyes in surprise. As many people as he had lost in his short lifetime and as long as he had known Dumbledore, he was sure that was the first time the man had expressed actual sadness over any of Harry’s losses, even Sirius. “Thank you, Headmaster,” Harry said hollowly, which probably helped sell their story.

Dumbledore just nodded and called Misty, the elf who served Severus and asked her to show Harry (or Arcturus) to his rooms. “Yes, sir, Headmaster, sir,” Misty called as she led Harry and Castor up a flight of stairs.

Harry thanked whoever had put thought into the family rooms because his room was up just a few flights of stairs from the Great Hall and in the middle of the castle. It would be easy for him to run back to his rooms between classes to feed and/or change Castor. Well, all except Potions in the dungeons, but Snape would definitely let him use his office after class if Castor needed a change. They entered through a portrait of a very flirty faerie with the password, “Mos Meiorum.”

The rooms themselves were very comfortable. The portrait hole opened to a sitting room area with a large fireplace, an overstuffed couch, and two armchairs all done in neutral colors with pops of burgundy and forest green. In the back of the space, was a small kitchenette and dining area, and opposite the fireplace were three doors, one to Harry’s room, one the nursery, and one the washroom.

“Can Misty help set up or with the baby?” the little elf offered with a shy smile at the baby who was chatting up a storm now that they were away from Dumbledore in his unintelligible baby-talk.

“No, thank you, Misty. I think we’ll just rest for a while. It’s Castor’s naptime,” Harry told her with a smile.

Actually, Harry and Snape had discussed their situation and could not be certain of the loyalties of the Hogwarts house elves since they were bound to the school and not Harry or Severus. If say, Harry asked one of the elves to change Castor’s diaper while he was in class and they saw his mark, they didn’t know if the elf would feel the need to tell Dumbledore. They weren’t willing to take the chance that anyone learned about the baby Selkie until he was old enough to take care of himself. Even though his pelt was secure in Harry’s vault, the baby was just too vulnerable. Harry and Severus had both learned the hard way that not everyone has children’s best interests at heart.

Severus had said that he thought he had a solution to this problem, but he hadn’t had the time to tell Harry while they were busy packing. So, instead, Harry just took all their shrunken luggage out of his pockets and enlarged it in the middle of the sitting room. By the time Harry had gotten Castor settled in his playpen with an enormous amount of toys and had unshrunk everything for the nursery, there was a knock at the portrait.

Harry opened the door to find his dad. “Hey, you found us! Come in.”

Snape raised an eyebrow at the room in appreciation. "It's not bad. I had expected smaller."

"It's better than anywhere I've stayed, except for your place," Harry said while he unshrunk his school trunk to drag it to his bedroom.

Snape was going to protest that his place wasn't all that great, but he saw that Harry was completely serious, so he didn't say anything. "Password is Mos Meiorum by the way. Come by anytime," Harry added.

"Thanks, I'll take you by my quarters after dinner," Snape said with a little nod. "I came to talk to you about the house elf issue. However..." Snape walked over to the trunk and quickly tapped it with his wand. The name plate instantly changed from H.J.P to A.S.S.

"Shit, I hadn't thought of that!" Harry frowned at the trunk, wondering what else he had missed. "What else am I missing? What about my wand, do you think anyone will recognize it? I probably shouldn't even pull my Firebolt out of the trunk...Am I forgetting something...?"

"It will be fine, Arcturus," Snape assured him quickly. "Your wand is a nondescript stick, even if someone recognizes the wood as holly, you can just say the core is dragon heartstring. The broom though...that is rare enough you are correct. It needs to stay in your trunk."

"Good job I should be able to fly with my wings then," Harry gave him a wide smirk.

Snape rolled his eyes but went to pick a fussy, sleepy Castor up out of the playpen to bounce him on his hip. "You can borrow a school broom to fly, or even my own. I have a very dependable Cleansweep."

"That's really nice of you, thank you," Harry said with feeling. It actually was really, very kind of his father. "Er...what are we going to do about the house elf issue then? I just assumed we'd be avoiding them."

“They’ll be useful if Castor needs something during class,” Snape explained as he walked and bounced with the baby. “If you couldn’t call an elf, you would have to leave class every time Castor cries, and he’s a baby, so it’ll happen a lot. As the headmaster explained when we got here, the faculty are not going to be making many, if any, concessions for you as a parent. We have had so few students in recent years who have needed any of these considerations that there isn’t an official policy anymore.”

Harry smirked at him mischievously. “At least now you get to complain dramatically to your friends on staff that I’m so terrible at potions I couldn’t even brew a decent contraception potion.”

“Which I *will* make sure you know how to do,” Snape glowered at him, making a mental note to definitely add it to the curriculum for the fourth through seventh year students. He actually *hadn’t* thought about teaching it for a few years since it was easily purchased at any apothecary.

“Sure, whatever, I don’t plan on any relationships anytime soon...so, what about the elves then; what do you suggest?” Harry asked sitting on the couch while Snape took an armchair since Castor was settling down a bit.

“What do you know about the elf who has followed you around like a puppy since your second year? Is he trustworthy?”

“Dobby?” Harry asked with a raise of his eyebrow. “Yeah, he’s trustworthy, and he’s a free elf, so he’s not bound to the school. It might work. He has...odd methods, but I don’t think he would do anything to endanger a baby.”

“There’s no such thing as a free elf,” Snape snorted.

“I freed him second year,” Harry protested, now wondering what his father meant by that. “Dumbledore pays him to serve in the kitchens.”

“Then Dumbledore has been hoodwinked,” Snape chuckled, rubbing his hand up and down Castor’s back while the little baby’s eyelids drooped. “I’m surprised the old man doesn’t know more about house elves. Really, that seems a fairly large blind spot for one of the most powerful wizards in existence.”

“What do you mean? Dobby isn’t free? What? How?” Harry was so very confused.

“No, he is not,” Snape said simply. “Elves must be bound to a wizard to feed off of their excess magic. It is a necessary symbiotic relationship for their species. If an elf isn’t bound, they will sink into depression and slowly die.”

“Winky,” Harry breathed out, thinking of what happened to Barty Crouch’s old elf. He wondered if she was still alive now...why hadn’t anyone told him about this? Hermione must not know either!

Snape just raised an eyebrow but didn’t care enough to ask. “My guess is that your Dobby bound himself to you without telling you since you were the one to instigate his freedom. Which is rude but not illegal.”

“Oh...well...I mean, if he was going to die, that’s all right then I guess. I don’t mind,” Harry said, even more confused.

Snape snorted wryly. “That Fury protectiveness can be annoying sometimes, or maybe it’s just your Gryffindor showing.”

“Hey, I’m being re-sorted in a few days. I might not end up in Gryffindor again,” Harry protested with a grin, knowing it was very likely that he would be sorted elsewhere, specifically Slytherin.

Snape snorted again, this time in disbelief, “The Gryffindor Golden Boy, hardly. You will be a lion once more shortly.”

Harry just smiled at him, not letting on to how wrong his father probably was. He figured it would be better fun to wait and surprise Snape at his sorting. “So, Dobby solves our problem? How?”

“Ah, yes, try calling him. If he comes; he’s your elf. Only elves bound to you or assigned to you by Hogwarts will come when called, and students don’t get assigned elves.”

“Er...sure,” Harry was pretty positive he had called Dobby before and he had come. “Erm, Dobby?!”

With a loud pop, the little house elf appeared wearing two hats and four pairs of socks in addition to his Hogwarts uniform toga. Snape sneered at his appearance in what looked like horror.

“Mr. Harry Potter, sir! And, Potion Master Snape! How can...?” Dobby cut off mid-sentence as he took in Harry’s appearance and then the baby who was now wide awake and reaching up and giggling at the elf’s ears. “Ooooh, we has a new baby, sir?! Dobby’s so happy! And, Master Harry, you looks great. Your ears fits you’s head so much better now,” Dobby said happily with a little dance and clap of his hands.

Snape and Harry both became concerned that Dobby recognized him so quickly. “Dobby,” Snape said seriously, holding the baby closer. “Did you recognize Harry when you saw him, or did you know it was Harry because he called you? Did you recognize him because you made him your master or because of some other means? You must tell us.”

Dobby started twisting the corner of his little toga anxiously and was eyeing the low coffee table like he wanted to hit his head on it. Seeing his thoughts, Harry jumped in to not let this spiral. “You aren’t in trouble Dobby, I promise; we just need to know. Did you make me your master?”

Dobby nodded his head quickly. “Yes, sir, Master Harry. I’s not wanting to leave you, but you’s were only a tiny child. I didn’t think you’d wants me to serve you. Dobby didn’t knows what to do, so I’s figured I’d tell you when you got older...and Dobby just didn’t find the right time yet...”

“I’m not angry at all, Dobby,” Harry said kindly. “I’m actually happy you’re safe and healthy. I didn’t mean to put you in a position that could hurt you by freeing you. I just wanted to get you away from Lucius Malfoy.”

Dobby looked like Harry had just bought him a sock store as he smiled a large toothy grin and almost vibrated in excitement. “Now, Dobby, how did you know I’m Harry Potter when I look so different?”

Dobby looked confused at both of them. “Because you’s my master,” Dobby said simply. “We house elves always knows our master.”

“Would you have recognized me if I wasn’t your master?” Harry asked in concern.

“No, sir. You’s look very different,” Dobby said. “But good,” he added as an afterthought like he might have insulted his master.

“You have somehow found yourself the most Slytherin of all house elves,” Snape laughed. “He not only got you to free him from the Malfoys, bound himself to the master he actually wanted, but also somehow convinced the headmaster to pay him even though he doesn’t technically work for the school.”

Harry laughed as well at this and Dobby smiled, recognizing it as a compliment coming from Snape. “Dobby, are you willing to help me with my son this year?” Harry motioned to Castor. “Castor may get fussy in class, and it would be nice to have some help so that I don’t have to leave all the time.”

“Oh, of course, master!” Dobby exclaimed excitedly. “I’s love the babies! I take good care of little master.”

“Ok, then,” Harry said seriously. “I’m going to have to tell you some things then, and I cannot have you intentionally, unintentionally, or under duress telling anyone what I’m about to tell you. I’m going to issue some orders to keep what I’m about to say secret. When I do that, could you tell me if I overlook an area that someone could use to make you tell them about me or my son?”

Dobby smiled more in appreciation of the question and Harry's trust in him than anything else, and Harry could definitely see what Snape meant by him being a Slytherin elf. "Of course, Master Harry. I's always catch *all* the loopholes."

"I know you do, Dobby, that's why I asked," Harry laughed. "Ok, so Dobby, I forbid you to tell anyone, by speaking or writing, that my name is anything other than Arcturus Severus Snape or that you knew me before this moment. I order you to care for my son, Castor Harrison Snape, to the best of your ability. I forbid you to tell anyone, oral or written, that my son is a magical creature known as a Selkie (Dobby's eyes widened dramatically at this), and I order you to do your very best to keep anyone from finding out what kind of creature he is unless I or Professor Snape tell them."

"I'm honored to serve Master Selkie!" Dobby said in reverence and with a little bow to the baby. "I's think Master's orders are good, but you's should also specifically forbid me to tell anyone that Castor Harrison Snape is a Selkie as you's just said your son."

"Ah, thank you Dobby," Harry said. "Dobby, I forbid you to tell anyone, oral or written, that Castor Harrison Snape is a Selkie."

"Very good Master Snape," Dobby nodded firmly.

"I don't suppose I can get you to drop the 'master?'" Harry asked with a little smile.

Dobby thought for a minute. "You can order me not to call you master around others so that they's don't know I's your elf, but I's have to call you master in private."

"Ok, Dobby, when we are around anyone not in this room right now, or Remus Lupin, or Fred or George Weasley, then I order you to not call me master," Harry added. "Could you call me Master Artie though instead of Master Snape? It gets a little confusing with him being here?" Harry asked motioning to Snape.

"Yes, Master Artie, sir!" Dobby beamed.

“Ok, one last command,” Harry said as Dobby smiled even wider at all the wonderful orders he was getting. “I order you to come to me if anyone treats you badly or if you need anything. I know Dumbledore is paying you, which I’m perfectly fine with you continuing, but as my elf, you should have access to my vaults, so when you need something, even if it’s just new socks, you take what you need from there or come see me.”

“Yes, Master Artie, sir!” Dobby beamed, yet again. “May I holds the little master now?” Dobby asked, excitedly.

“Of course, Dobby,” Harry stood and took Castor from Snape. The little baby immediately clung to Dobby while stroking his large ears in awe.

“We’s be the bestest friends little master,” Dobby cooed to the baby.

“Erm, Dobby?” Harry asked the smitten elf. “Do you happen to know anything about Selkies? I adopted Castor, and there just isn’t much information written about his people. He probably has grandparents out there who love him, and I wouldn’t even know where to start looking for them. I honestly don’t even know his original name since his mother died before she could tell me.”

“Selkies live on secret islands out in the ocean, Master Artie,” Dobby explained. “They’s have some business on our land though. Very few free Selkies live here, only they’s that be captured. It’s too dangerous on land. They’s be very powerful, but secret to stay safe. House elves are distant cousins with Selkies.”

“Do you know how I might find his relatives?”

“No, Master Artie,” Dobby said as he nuzzled the baby who was now poking him on the nose. “I’s can ask though. We elves sometimes see a cousin.”

Castor reached back over to Harry, wanting his dad. Dobby passed the baby off with a huge grin. “Thanks Dobby,” Harry smiled gratefully at him. “You can go back to whatever you

were doing. I'll call you when I need some help with Castor." With a loud pop, Dobby was gone again.

"Only you would end up with the insane elf," Snape chuckled.

"Insane or brilliant?" Harry asked with a raise of his eyebrow.

Snape thought for a minute. "You're probably right," he shrugged. "I think that elf could probably become Minister of Magic if he really put his mind to it."

"Dobby is too smart to be minister," Harry laughed.

Twin Invasion

Instead of joining the rest of the castle's inhabitants at dinner, Harry asked Snape to make his apologies to everyone so he could stay in his rooms with Castor, setting things up and getting the baby settled in. Castor had an epic meltdown of crying and screaming after all the turmoil of the move and the new environment. He was confused and tired since he had been moved yet again to a fourth home in just a month's time. Harry thought they needed a few days to themselves to get settled in, so he called Dobby to bring them some dinner and stayed in for the night.

It was Tuesday before Harry and Castor started venturing out around the other few inhabitants of the mostly empty castle. Harry thought it would do Castor good to visit his Uncle Moony since he already knew and liked the man, so they set off to the DADA office. After knocking and Remus calling for them to enter, Harry saw Remus's office set up almost exactly as it had been in his third year.

"I like what you've done with the place," Harry smirked.

"You wouldn't know why I keep finding cat pictures in odd places?" Remus asked as he reached out to take Castor into a big hug, already making faces at the baby.

"Umbridge," Harry shuddered and subconsciously rubbed his now scar-free hand. It might no longer have any scars, but even just thinking of Umbridge still gave him phantom pains that had his hand twitching. "You really, *really* don't want to know."

Remus made them tea and they talked over the new semester and how it was going to be for Harry not having his old friends. Harry agreed it would be strange and a little lonely, at least at first, but he also thought that he could make friends again with those he would miss the most. He was sure that Ron and Hermione, and maybe Neville and Luna, would still become his friends, even if he was a different person. They would just have to start all over again. He knew it wouldn't be the same, but he also wasn't ready to completely let go of those he cared about, even if was now as Artie Snape instead of Harry Potter.

After three cups of tea and Castor slobbering over all Remus's lesson plans, they finally stood up to leave. "Come visit me any time, cub. You know I've missed you."

“Thanks, Moony,” Harry smiled. He started walking to the door and stopped with a sigh and a frown on his face. He had promised himself he would stay out of it, he *really* should stay out of it, it was none of his business, but he found that he just couldn’t.

Harry slowly turned back around with a serious look at Remus. “Ok, Moony, this is important, so I’m only going to say this once, and it didn’t come from me, ok? We never had this conversation.”

“Ok...” Remus said, concerned. He put down his teacup and leaned forward, turning all his attention to his cub.

“Right, so I don’t know what your original intentions were for Friday with Dad, but it’s now officially a date, so deal with it,” Harry said sternly. “And you better not hurt him, or I’ll go all Fury on your arse.”

After a beat of confusion, Remus smiled broadly. “I really wasn’t sure if he took it as a date or not. I honestly didn’t even know if he would consider dating a man.”

“Well, it’s a date now, so dress nice...and if he offers to pay, let him. He’s traditional that way. And please don’t talk about James or Sirius, not on the first date,” Harry sighed, realizing this had the potential to go very badly.

“Yes, sir!” Remus laughed as Harry washed his hands of the whole situation now and walked out the door and back to his rooms.

When he got back to his rooms, Harry put Castor down for his nap. Since he had stuck his foot in it this far, he figured he might as well go all in with his meddling, so he threw a handful of floo powder in his fireplace which Dobby had insisted on connecting to the floo network for him. Unsurprisingly, the house elf was really good at getting things done without the headmaster knowing...or probably even the ministry. He really didn’t want to know how illegal his floo connection actually was.

Harry grimaced as he stuck his head in and called for Fred and George's place. "Oi! Prat 1 and Prat 2, I hate the floo, so you better be home!" He called out into their cozy flat.

Fred and George came into view from the kitchen. "Artiekins!" They both exclaimed before sitting on the floor in front of the fireplace.

"To what do we owe this pleasure?" George asked with a wide grin.

"Hey guys," Harry smiled at them. "Would you be free to come by the castle on Friday afternoon for just a bit? Dad could use some help with something, and I'm not capable at all in these regards?"

"Of course, Arts," Fred agreed promptly. "What's up?"

"Well, I'll tell you, but I warn you, if you make fun of him any at all, I'll get all the old Marauder's pranks from Moony and prank you both until you beg for mercy," Harry warned seriously.

"Aw, Artie, we'll be on our best behavior," Fred said.

"Yeah, we promise..."

"Nope! Don't finish that!" Harry cut George off frantically. "Never promise anything to a Fury unless you want it to be magically binding."

"Oh, yeah, good catch Arts," George said sheepishly, already having forgotten that bit of Harry's creature inheritance. "Well, we'll try to be on our best behavior."

"As long as he is," Fred added.

“That works for me,” Harry agreed, and took a breath to start in on his meddling. “So, Dad has a date.”

“Really?!” They both exclaimed as they sat more comfortably on the floor to better listen to Harry.

“Yeah, you know I’m not really knowledgeable on all that stuff, and,” Harry turned bright red here. “Apparently, I’m the result of the last date he went on, so it’s been a while.”

“Yeah, I’ll say,” George agreed with a chuckle.

“He’s freaking out about what to wear and do and everything. I was thinking if you both just came over and made everything sound normal and like everything would be fine that it’d help him. And maybe also keep him from wearing his black teaching robes too, if possible,” Harry almost begged.

“Of course, Harry,” Fred assured him. “Why didn’t you ask Remus though? They’re more the same generation and both already in the castle.”

Harry smiled at them and leaned in conspiratorially. “Because, the date is *with* Remus,” Harry gleefully.

The twins collapsed laughing. They just couldn’t believe the Marauder was going out with the Dungeon Bat. “This’ll be epic!” Fred laughed.

“Don’t worry, Harry. We wouldn’t miss this for the world!” George assured him.

Harry gave them the information they would need to floo to Snape’s quarters and pulled himself back into his room. Well, he thought to himself, in for a penny...

Harry had fairly successfully avoided the headmaster and other professors the entire week before the students were to arrive. He preferred to eat in his rooms with Castor or, occasionally, with his dad or Remus. Of course, his relatives hadn't let him do his homework over the summer, and he had the new class of Ancient Runes anyway, so he ended up spending most of his time catching up.

He also had to find a handwriting spell that he cast on all of his parchments when he finished to slightly alter his normal handwriting; unfortunately, it didn't make it better, but it wasn't worse. At least he didn't have to bother to disguise his handwriting with DADA or Potions. Most people wouldn't recognize a random student's handwriting, but he was Harry Potter, and professors were a group of people who did pay more attention to handwriting than the average person.

When Friday rolled around, Harry and Castor were hanging out in Snape's chambers in the late afternoon, enjoying the drama of the approaching date. Snape was pacing while Harry looked on in amusement. "Dumbledore and McGonagall keep sitting between us at meals, so we haven't been able to talk. He just smiles and nods when he sees me. And, thank you very much for leaving me all alone with those people all week at meals..."

"Hey, we ate dinner with you twice in here," Harry protested with a smirk.

Snape just sneered at him before the floo flared. "Who the bloody hell could that be?" Snape mused right before Fred and George Weasley stumbled into the room, Harry having immediately opened the floo to let them in. "You didn't?! Arcturus Snape!!"

Harry just smiled at him. "He did!" George exclaimed.

"Now, you are not wearing *that*," Fred responded with a wince, looking over his black robes. "Come George let's find the closet."

"That way," Harry said pointing to the bedroom.

“Traitor!” Snape sneered at his son as he trailed the twins into his room looking murderous the entire way.

Once Harry was able to get Castor down for a nap in his playpen. Harry made to follow the other three men. As he neared the room, he caught the tail-end of a conversation coming from the loo. “What if you just *didn't* slick it back? I mean *really* it can't be that bad,” he heard George emphatically say.

Harry laughed as he joined them. “You all remember my hair before my inheritance, right?” He asked the twins.

“Yep!”

“Sure do.”

“You had the crazy hair.”

“Yeah, I got that hair from my dad,” Harry explained. “Apparently Snape's is worse than James's ever was.”

“I would disown you if it wasn't too difficult and did not involve paperwork,” Snape snarled as the twins really did try not to giggle.

Fred finally got over the most of his mirth and took charge. “Ok, so you have nice robes picked out, we just need to deal with the hair. George, you're on it. I'm crap with hair.”

“Aye, aye, sir!” George exclaimed, promptly pulling Snape behind him back into the bathroom.

“Why is no one afraid of me anymore?” Snape grumbled.

“Oh, don’t worry, the little firsties will be here in a couple days and you can terrorize them all you want,” George said reassuringly as he shut the door behind them.

Harry laughed at them as he walked over to the bed Fred was sitting on to look at the robes they picked out. Surprisingly, they weren’t black. They were a very dark green with a white, dress shirt and black slacks to go under it. “Great choice,” Harry nodded to Fred. “Those will look good on him.”

“He only has like two non-black options. That man really needs to go shopping,” Fred smiled. “I know what to get him for Christmas at least now.”

“So, you two are really embracing this whole family thing it seems,” Harry said hopefully as he crossed his arms and leaned against the bedpost.

“Of course!” Fred looked shocked. “George and I have a lot of family, so we’ve taken it upon ourselves to show the rest of you lot what family actually means. I mean, between you, Snape, and Lupin, you wouldn’t know family if it hexed you. We can’t have our godson growing up like that.” Though it was blunt, Harry nodded in agreement, understanding completely.

“So, what about you?” Fred continued with an interested raise of one eyebrow. “We just got Daddy Snape ready for a date with the wolf, what about little Snape. Anyone strike your fancy?”

Harry laughed humorlessly. “Well, you know it didn’t work out with Ginny,” Harry started.

“Yeah, I never thought it would,” Fred nodded wisely. “You guys just aren’t good together, as much as I would love to see you married into the family that is.”

“Yeah, well, now I’m a teenaged single parent who’s classified as a dark creature, and oh yeah, my identity has existed for less than a month. I don’t think anyone, man or woman, is

going to be lining up to date me. I have a feeling I will be embracing singleness for a long while.”

Fred looked at him musingly. He noticed quite clearly that Harry was very inclusive in who he might be willing to date there...that was exceptionally interesting. Just then, George pushed Snape forcefully out of the bathroom.

“Oh wow, that looks good,” Harry exclaimed approvingly while Snape stared stoically at them. His hair was still slicked back but with much less product, so it had a little more body to it and definitely didn’t look greasy anymore.

“I threw away all his old hair products and replaced them,” George explained sternly. “Do NOT buy those again,” he said pointedly to Snape who rolled his eyes.

Fred and George started walking back to the living room. “Don’t talk about potions the whole time,” Fred warned.

“Making fun of Dumbledore is allowed though.”

“No talking about Harry for more than like 30 minutes.”

“That goes for Castor as well.”

“Oh, and have fun,” they both said as they flooded back to their flat.

Harry pushed Snape back into the bedroom where he left him to change and then had to push him out of the portrait hole so that he wouldn’t be late. Harry picked up an old defense book from his dad’s bookshelf and settled on the couch to read while Castor slept in the playpen beside him. He was decidedly going to hang around to hear how this whole ordeal turned out in the end, he was invested now.

It was with a decidedly awkward feeling that Snape walked to the entrance hall to meet Lupin. Remus had gotten there before him, and Snape noticed he was wearing robes that looked much less shabby than his normal ones. They almost looked new. As he got closer, Remus noticed him and turned around.

“Wow...you look good!” Remus said appreciatively, his eyes briefly flashing amber in the light.

Snape hated himself as he blushed at the compliment, which had Remus smiling even wider. Snape cleared his throat. “Er, shall we go?”

“Of course,” Remus said, opening the door and motioning for Snape to go first. “So, how’s the planning for the new semester going?” Remus asked after they walked in companionable silence for a bit. It was a safe topic, so maybe it could get the conversation rolling some.

“Not bad,” Snape grumbled and then sighed, realizing he needed to expand. “I’m no longer a Death Eater, but a lot of my students either are or their families are. I’m...concerned about how they will handle my new status. They know me well enough to not try anything on me, but I’m worried they will take it out on Arcturus. He never was one to avoid fights.”

Remus nodded, remembering Harry’s third year well and his feud with Draco Malfoy. “He isn’t the same as he was before though. It was the name that made him such a target. Even as your son, he’s still safer...even if a few Death Eater kids go after him, it’s still better than what he had before.”

“Yes, but getting in a fight with a young Fury is a recipe for disaster,” Snape rubbed his temples. “The power a Fury has is not as controlled when he is newly turned...”

Remus laughed in a dangerous way. “Artie will be walking everywhere with a baby in his arms. If someone attacks him, they deserve everything they will get and some. I doubt he will have any trouble after that.”

Snape looked at him in amusement. “You are a little bloodthirsty, aren’t you?”

Remus shrugged unconcernedly. “I’d blame the wolf, but one can never really tell.”

“I approve,” he smiled. They ended up at the Three Broomsticks and took a booth in the back of the mostly empty restaurant. “How about you? Are you settling back in well?”

“I missed teaching,” Remus said, looking over the menu. “I’m glad that I’m getting the opportunity again, even if it was only because there was literally no one else who wanted the job.”

After a minute, Remus put down the menu and looked at Snape directly. “Severus, there’s something I need to say before this goes any further, and please, just let me get it out,” he said with a deep breath. “I’ve never apologized for my part in everything that happened when we were students. So, I want to say, for the record, I am so sorry. We were idiots and you didn’t deserve anything we did to you.”

Snape leaned back in the booth and crossed his arms. “I’m not so sure *anything* is the right word there. I distinctly remember some nasty hexes on my part as well. I think I probably did deserve a little of it. But, regardless, apology accepted.” Remus smiled and picked his menu back up.

The rest of the evening went smoothly. The food was good, they bonded over Harry and Castor, they talked about their favorite and least favorite students, gossiped about the other professors, and took part in some Dumbledore bashing as well. Remus even found time to explain his theory of how Harry might have survived the killing curse when he was one. Snape was intrigued at the new theory and promised to do some research into it. After mutually promising not to tell Harry, Snape and Remus also compared notes on what they knew of Harry’s time at the Dursley’s. Though they didn’t have much information between the two of them, the picture didn’t look very pretty. They were able to turn the seriousness around though by talking about the twins and some of their better pranks while at the school.

Remus remembered what Harry told him and only protested a little when Snape insisted on paying. They walked back up to the castle together and went to part ways in the entrance hall. “Erm, thank you for inviting me to dinner,” Snape said with a confused frown, not sure how one ended one of these things.

“Thank you for coming,” Lupin said. Then, to Snape’s utter shock, he leaned forward and placed a quick kiss on his lips. “The full moon is tomorrow night, so I won’t see you until the welcoming feast. Save a seat for me though, right?”

Snape cleared his throat, trying to recover from his surprise. “Indeed.”

Lupin smiled, his amber eyes sparkling, and walked away to his rooms. After a minute, Snape also dazedly walked down to the dungeons. He was less than surprised to find his son asleep on the couch with his wings wrapped around Castor who was asleep on his chest. Snape pulled a blanket off the armchair and draped it over them.

“Sleep well,” he whispered with a small smile as he went to his room.

Shattered Misconceptions

“Dobby!” Harry called out once he and Castor made it back to their rooms after staying over on his dad’s couch after "the date," which his dad still wouldn't tell him anything about.

“Master Artie, sir!” Dobby vibrated in excitement while he immediately scooped up the baby from his playmat as soon as he appeared. “What’s can Dobby do for you and Little Master? You’re so cute...yes, you are...” he continued cooing to the baby who was petting his ears as usual. Harry held in as much of his laugh as possible. This was serious...serious face, yes.

“Dobby, erm, I needed to talk to you about Winky...I didn’t know house elves had to have some kind of bond with a wixen. Is there anything I can do to help? It’s been two years since I saw her...”

Harry trailed off, realizing Winky might not even be alive as his face twisted into a look of horror. “Dobby...is Winky still alive? When Dad told me about your bond, I just knew that must be what had happened to her...”

“Oh, Master Harry...” Dobby shuffled over with the baby to pat Harry’s hand. “Winky is ok, sir...Dobby promises. Dobby made sure she’s was taken into a new family. Dobby does not leave his friends in trouble.”

Harry breathed out a sigh of relief. “Thank Merlin! Where is she? Is she in a good situation.”

Dobby’s head bobbed up and down frantically. “Dobby cant’s tell Master which family Winky serves! I’s sorry...”

Harry stilled the elf’s hand as it went up to twist his ear. “Hey...that’s fine. As long as she’s ok, that’s all that matters. I know you would take care of her. I trust you, Dobby.”

Dobby looked like he just might cry in happiness at that. “Master trusts Dobby?”

Harry looked at his son and raised an eyebrow. “Dobby, I wouldn’t let you keep Castor for me if I didn’t trust you. If you say Winky is safe but you can’t tell me where she is, then that’s fine with me. I just didn’t want her suffering.”

Dobby’s head bobbed frantically again as he sniffed back tears. “Dobby’s going to go gets tea for Master,” he handed off the baby and immediately popped out of the rooms, probably to go pull himself together somewhere.

Harry looked at the baby and chuckled. “Your nanny is a bit of a mess, but he’s awesome. You’ll love him. Now...did that happen to sound ominous to you that Winky is off with a family that Dobby can’t tell us about, or was that just me?” Castor pulled on Harry’s hair and giggled, not being very helpful at all.

“Well...let’s just hope Dobby isn’t onto one of his schemes again...” Harry frowned, maybe he shouldn’t trust Dobby *quite* so much...nah, everything would be fine...right?...

Monday finally rolled around, and it was just a couple hours before all the students would arrive back to the castle. Harry was as on-edge as he could possibly be without having a panic attack. His friends were coming back to the castle...his friends who wouldn’t recognize him. *Could* he even make friends as Artie? What if they were only friends with him because he was Harry Potter? What if they didn’t like him anymore? Harry found that he really didn’t know how one went about making friends if they didn’t just sit together on the train or if a troll wasn’t involved.

In the middle of all Harry’s anxiety, Dumbledore called all the heads of houses and Arcturus Snape to his office for a private sorting ceremony before the feast. Since he wasn’t a first year, Artie would not be riding the boats to the castle or standing with the tiny eleven-year-olds to be sorted, which he was extremely grateful for. Severus, Harry, and Castor met McGonagall at the base of the gargoyle statue where they all arrived at the same time.

“Tootsie Pops,” she said with a grimace at the candy. “It’s good to meet you, Mr. Snape. I’m Professor McGonagall. I’ve really only seen the two of you in passing this week,” she said

kindly to Harry and Castor. Harry's unusual look didn't seem to faze her at all, and there was no judgment in her smile at the teen holding a baby he was surprised and happy to note.

"I realize getting the little one settled into a new place must be very difficult, especially with all you two have gone through recently," she continued.

"Yes, it's been a little difficult, but I think Castor's settling in alright now. He seems to like our rooms at least, and I bought him a new plushie that's a solid favorite," Harry said with a grateful smile at her.

"It's good to meet you, Professor McGonagall. Dad says you teach Transfiguration; that's one of my favorite subjects." Snape glared at Harry with a raise of his eyebrow communicating a clear and accusatory 'suck up.' Harry was unashamedly 'sucking up' though since he knew Castor would probably start crying in the middle of her class at some point in the term, and he needed to bank some goodwill ahead of time.

"I look forward to having you in my class then," McGonagall smiled as they stood on the slowly revolving stairway. "I forgo our normal wager, Severus. I'm sure we're both certain that a son of yours will be in your own house. I don't plan on leaving the feast at a deficit this year if I can avoid it. I have my eye on a new bottle of Glynfiddich I plan to buy with my winnings."

Snape frowned with a grimace that was more for drama's sake than actually meant. "I regret that I fear he'll end up in yours Minerva. He has all the idiotic courage of one of those blasted Gryffindors and little to no self-preservation."

"Hey, I'm right here!" Harry protested with an amused snort at the two of them.

"And I mean it in all love," Snape responded with a roll of his eyes.

Minerva laughed merrily. "Oh, that'd be golden, a Snape in Gryffindor! Now, if he'd only join the quidditch team, I'd have bragging rights until the end of time! You must tell me you know how to play?"

“I don’t play quidditch unfortunately,” Harry said sadly. Snape gave him a quizzical look, but Harry just looked away, not wanting to go into it right then. Snape didn’t understand why his son wouldn’t want to play; he had offered his broom for the teen to borrow. There must be something else going on he didn’t know about.

“Oh, well, you could very well end up a Hufflepuff anyway,” McGonagall shrugged, but with a malicious smirk at Severus.

Snape grumbled at that statement all the way into Dumbledore’s office. Professors Flitwick and Sprout were already waiting in the office with Dumbledore. “Welcome!” Dumbledore effused, eyes twinkling like crazy. Fawkes also squawked a melodious welcome. Harry thought the phoenix seemed to recognize him, but he didn’t think that would be a problem... hopefully. Fawkes couldn’t talk...right?

“Good to meet you Mr. Snape. I’m Professor Sprout, the head of Hufflepuff House,” Pomona offered her hand, followed by Professor Flitwick after her, both with assessing smiles at Harry and smirks over at Severus. They seemed delighted the man had a son and a grandson they would get to tease him about all year.

“Now, Mr. Snape,” Dumbledore explained with a serious expression on his face. “Just have a seat, and we’ll put the Sorting Hat on you. The hat will tell you where you will find your family and your place in this school for this year.”

Dumbledore seemed to be placing a lot of weight on a fairly arbitrary way of sorting students into dorms in Harry’s opinion. However, Harry just handed a gurgling Castor to Severus who bounced him a couple times and pulled a face to make the baby giggle to the amazement of the other professors and creating even more of a twinkle in the old man’s eyes. Harry sat in the hideously floral armchair, and Dumbledore immediately plopped the battered hat on his head.

Well, hello again.

Er, hello, Harry thought at the hat, hoping the artifact would keep his secret.

It's not often I get a repeat sorting, Mr. Potter, or rather Mr. Snape. It's interesting to see how you have grown within your house all these years. Maybe even grown out of your house.

I've learned a lot in my six years...

Yes, I see that, and made some good friends as well.

Does that mean you're putting me back in Gryffindor? Harry asked, not able to keep the hope out of his mental tone.

The hat seemed to think a minute, humming in consideration. You do have courage in spades, but now you have much more loyalty and family connection with your son and new found-family, which would speak more to Hufflepuff. I still don't think Ravenclaw is best for you even though you are a bright student, though not really living up to your potential now, are we?

Harry winced. *Yeah, sorry about that. I don't really want to stand out. That always causes even more problems.*

Uh huh, yeah, let's try to fix that this time around, shall we? You don't have the fame or the expectations, so clean slate and all.

I'll do my best. Harry promised both to the hat and himself.

That us all anyone can ask. So, even with your growth over the years in other areas, I think I'm going to stick by my original sorting. I think Slytherin is still the place you can learn and grow the most. Also, I think it's the place you can do the most good. Are you going to disagree with me on this again? I'll warn you, my second choice will be Hufflepuff this time around.

No, I think it's time to actually listen to you. Harry chuckled, almost wanting to sort Hufflepuff just to give his father a stroke.

Good luck, Mr. Snape... SLYTHERIN!

As Harry took the hat off his head, he saw a nodding Dumbledore and unconcerned other professors who had all been expecting this decision already. Snape's look was priceless though. He knew he'd have to figure out a way to share the memory with Remus and the twins. They would love it! Over the top of Castor's head, Snape's jaw was open, and he looked at a complete loss for words, something rarely seen on the face of Severus Snape.

Dazedly, Snape handed Castor back to Harry while they made their way to the Great Hall to wait on the other students. "Well, that was shocking to say the least," he grumbled at his son, still seeming not to be able to believe it.

"Do you not want me in your house?" Harry asked, concerned for the first time. Maybe his father had gotten tired of him. Maybe he didn't want to see him outside of class. Maybe he needed a break.

"Of course, I want you in my house, idiot boy!" Snape protested, putting a stop to Harry's spiraling thoughts with something between a smirk and a sneer. "But who would have thought *you* could be in any house other than Gryffindor?! If Albus knew who you really are, he'd be having a fit right now!"

"Actually," Harry corrected him with a large grin. "The Sorting Hat originally wanted to put me in Slytherin, but I hadn't heard any good things about it at that time since I'd only really met Hagrid and Ron at that point, so I asked the hat to put me somewhere else. Gryffindor was its second choice. I was afraid I'd go bad or something if I ended up in Slytherin. My relatives always told me that's where I was headed, and I thought...I don't know, maybe they were right...anyway, I didn't want to chance it."

"What?!" Snape exclaimed as he stopped in the middle of the hallway and stared at Harry in shock once more.

Harry shrugged sadly. “Look, you know I don’t want to talk about it, but yeah...I’ve mentioned it over the summer...I’m an abused kid who had to fight every day just to get food and to keep myself from being beaten. I learned to be cunning and cover my true emotions to only let others see what I wanted them to see, or what they expected to see. It’s survival to pretend to be the subservient slave to my relatives, the good Gryffindor for here at school, and the leader my friends expect with them. It’s all roles to play, parts in some elaborate theatre production of my life. I’m hoping to maybe figure out who I actually am this year... I’m not sure who exactly that is at this point. Whether that’s very Slytherin or not, I don’t really care. The hat said I’d do well there though.”

Snape stared at him like he had never seen him before, which there was some definite truth in that. Harry regularly changed huge swaths of his personality depending on the situation and who he was around. What of that was actually him or not, well...he’d have figure that out since he even confused himself most of the time at this point. Snape shocked himself by admitting he was looking forward to getting to know this young man in front of him, his son, for the first time.

Severus just cleared his throat and pushed all those thoughts away for now to be dealt with later in the privacy of his own rooms. “Slytherin House will have a quick meeting in the common room after the feast. Come for that before you head to your rooms. I will need to explain your situation with Castor to your housemates at that point as well. The password is *Patrician*. A prefect can show you to the common room.”

Harry shuffled his feet a bit not sure if he was about to get in trouble. “Erm, I already know where it is,” he admitted.

Snape narrowed his eyes. “Indeed, we’ll be talking about *that* later.”

Harry just grumbled as they both made their way into the Great Hall. Harry sat at the Slytherin table where he remembered the seventh years normally sat and pulled Castor’s fuzzy hippogriff toy (his favorite at the moment, and his new plushie for being such a good boy through the move) out of the diaper bag to keep him occupied. Harry nervously checked that his hair was covering his ears and that he was securely wearing the glamour ring as the students started filing in.

Harry and Castor were getting blatantly curious looks from all the houses as well as his own. He might no longer be the Boy-Who-Lived, but he was a 6’3” new transfer student with long,

steel gray hair and black tattoos visible on his neck above the collar of his robes, not to mention the clapping baby in his lap who seemed to be having a very animated and unintelligible conversation with the fuzzy hippogriff.

“They do seem to get younger every year, Pansy,” Blaise Zabini said with a fake sigh as he sat down beside Harry. Pansy Parkinson sat across from them.

“I thought they were usually at least potty trained before the sorting though,” Pansy laughed with a smile at Castor.

“Pretty sure Draco wasn’t,” Blaise replied with a smirk as Draco Malfoy sat beside Pansy with a scowl at his friend.

Malfoy looked remarkably healthier since his year of stress the year before. Harry remembered the teen had lost a lot of weight, had almost permanent dark circles under his eyes, and seemed to be hanging on by a thread by the end of sixth year. Switching sides looked good on the Slytherin Prince. Harry couldn’t take any credit for the change in sides, or at least he never would, he thought as he turned a sad smile on the blond Slytherin.

Things had come to a tragic head when Harry and Draco had ended up in a bloody fight at the end of the year in the bathroom. Draco had cursed Harry, Harry had used a spell he really didn’t understand, and Draco had gotten the worst of it. Harry still had nightmares about what would have happened if Snape hadn’t found them in time to save Draco. Harry had broken down the night after and used the Marauder’s Map and his invisibility cloak to track down Draco outside the Room of Requirement where he followed him inside and almost pleaded (definitely pleaded even with some tears) with him to forgive him and get help with whatever it was he was going through. Thankfully, Draco had listened and gone to Snape...Harry took absolutely no credit. He would forever feel guilty about what he’d almost done to his school rival, and he’d *never* use any spell he didn’t know what it did ever again!

“Just because I live with you now doesn’t mean you can make fun of me whenever you want,” Draco drawled at the dark-skinned Italian, the smirk on his face full of fondness though.

“I’m Draco Malfoy, by the way,” Draco said, extending his hand to Harry, a questioning eyebrow quirked up at the baby. “Those two ingrates are Blaise Zabini and Pansy Parkinson.”

“Arcturus Snape,” Harry said, reaching across the table and shaking his hand. He hadn’t got to talk to Malfoy any at all after the quickly subdued invasion of Death Eaters that Snape and Dumbledore had staged with the aurors the year before. He wanted to give the teen a chance though...to see if maybe all their animosity was on Harry and Malfoy and if Artie and Draco could possibly be friends.

“You lot can call me Artie though. This is Castor,” Harry said to the group, bouncing the baby that was now grabbing at Blaise’s robes.

“Pleased to meet you, little Mr. Snape,” Blaise said in all seriousness, shaking the little chubby hand that had a fistful of his robes.

“You related to...?” Malfoy asked, motioning to the head table with a confused look on his face.

Harry nodded and smiled at his dad who he was happy to see was chatting with Professor Lupin who looked tired but not the worse for wear after the full moon this time. “Yeah, Severus is my dad,” he said simply.

“Blimey!” Blaise remarked, sounding a lot like Ron in that moment instead of the aristocrat he was.

“I didn’t know he had a son!” Draco exclaimed indignantly with a frown. “I’m his godson; how didn’t I know he had a son?!”

“Er, I wouldn’t take it personally. I was always a secret since, with the war and all, it just didn’t seem safe. My mum died though, so I had to come and live with Dad since I don’t really have anyone else,” Harry said, sticking to their story.

“And, this little cutie?” Pansy asked as she made faces at a laughing Castor, shocking Harry to no end. He’d always thought these purebloods were all starch and no personality...it

seemed he was in for a lot of surprises. He figured babies probably brought out of a lot of different aspects of people's personalities he wouldn't normally see though.

"My son," Harry said proudly and with a kiss to Castor's blond curls. "His mum died in the raid when mine did. We're all alone now, right bub?"

"Wait!" Blaise said, dramatically holding a hand up and breaking the moment of sad silence the table had fallen into. "That means Snape's a grandfather!!" Pansy and Draco looked like they were holding back chuckles as they picked up their water glasses to snort into them in amusement.

"Yeah, maybe don't tease him about it though. He can be a bit of a grump about it. Right, Cas? He says he's too young to be a grandfather," Harry explaining Snape as being 'a bit of a grump' seemed to be the last straw and finally did set them off into giggles.

They had to break off their conversation when McGonagall finally let in the new first years with the Sorting Hat. Harry had no clue what the Sorting Hat sang or where any of the first years were sorted because his attention was immediately caught by the Gryffindor table. Ron and Hermione were sitting together. He couldn't tell from looking at them exactly what they thought about his absence for 'training.' They didn't seem overly upset, but he wouldn't have wanted them to be either.

Neville was making some joking comments to Ginny about the new first years, it seemed. He was looking well. He seemed to have had a growth spurt over the summer. As much as he didn't like Dumbledore lying to everyone, Harry was a little grateful that he wasn't watching his friends dealing with his death, just some training nonsense. Luna was sitting a little off from everyone at the Ravenclaw table. When Harry looked over at her, she met his eyes and gave him a friendly smile. Harry smiled back but quickly focused his attention back on Castor again since the baby had decided to play with a fork and Harry thought that seemed way too dangerous.

Up at the head table, Snape and Lupin both were keeping an eye on Harry and his interactions with the other students. Snape was glad his son seemed to be getting along with some of the Slytherins but also noticed the longing look over at the Gryffindor table. Nothing of note happened at the welcome feast (the Forbidden Forest was still forbidden, and Weasley Wizarding Wheezes were all banned). The only interesting thing was when Castor loudly

squealed in the middle of Dumbledore's speech. Snape and Lupin both concealed grins behind their hands.

"Yes, thank you Mr. Snape, I agree as well," Dumbledore said with a chuckle as he continued with the speech. "Now, as I'm sure you have noticed young Mr. Snape, if not also his father, at the Slytherin table, I would like to introduce Arcturus Snape and his son Castor Snape to you all. Arcturus is Professor Snape's son and is joining us for the year after being homeschooled up until this point. Please be respectful of there being a baby in our midst and don't give them a hard time. Now, off to your common rooms!"

Harry got a lot of curious looks again as students started leaving the hall. This time he noticed that they kept glancing up to the head table as well. "You know, I wouldn't picture Professor Snape being ok with a lot of body modifications," Pansy mentioned to Harry, looking over his hair and mostly hidden tattoos with an interested smirk on her face. "Might our esteemed head of house have some hidden tattoos himself we don't know about?"

Harry chuckled as he shifted Castor on his hip to pick up the diaper bag and start towards the common room. "He hasn't said anything to me about my appearance besides my clothes, which he insisted on replacing," Harry said with a fake shudder. "As far as I know, he doesn't have any tattoos himself, but I would pay big money to be there if you ask him. *Please* invite me along for that!" This was now actually very true since the Dark Mark was gone.

Pansy laughed. "I don't quite have a death wish just yet."

"Hey, anyone else notice our resident 'Chosen One' wasn't in attendance?" Draco asked with a frown.

"Huh, maybe he'll turn up in a flying car again," Blaise shrugged, which made Pansy snicker.

"Who?" Harry asked, playing dumb.

"Harry Potter...Boy-Who-Lived," Draco explained a little exasperatedly.

“Oh, him,” Harry hummed in consideration while they walked down the stairs to the dungeon now. “Yeah, Dad mentioned something about him not being here this year. Like some kind of training or something. Dad seemed really happy about it for some reason. I don’t think they get along.”

“I’ll say,” Blaise snorted in agreement.

Vincent Crabbe huffed behind them. “I hear he offed himself,” Crabbe said darkly. “Good riddance.”

Draco, Pansy, and Blaise all stared at him in shock. “No, he’d never...” Draco began, turning deathly pale.

“Yeah,” Gregory Goyle agreed with Crabbe. “I heard his homelife was shite, and he just couldn’t take it anymore.”

Harry noticed Draco, Pansy, and Blaise look at each other in concern. Interesting, Harry thought to himself. He knew Draco had changed sides, but it appeared Pansy and Blaise weren’t with the Death Eaters either if they didn’t know about his faked suicide. He’d definitely have to watch Crabbe and Goyle though, they knew too much to not be connected to Voldemort. He also noticed neither of them bothered to introduce themselves to him... interesting.

Snape walked into the Slytherin common room to find his son sitting between Zabini and Parkinson. Surprisingly, his grandson had a fistful of Zabini’s robes in a slobbery hand. However, when Snape walked fully into the room and it went silent for him, Castor raised both arms up to Snape and squealed. Snape sighed and went to pick up the child. No one was going to take him seriously this year, all his hard work at being intimidating...gone. As he took Castor, he passed a note to Harry.

Harry smiled brightly as Snape gave in to Castor’s large, blue eyes and picked him up. He raised an eyebrow as he opened the hastily scribbled note.

Son,

I neglected to say before, but congratulations on being sorted into Slytherin. We take care of our own in this house. Remus suggested (oh, it's Remus now, Harry laughed) that we tell your housemates of your...status. It may help to have some support from them, and you seemed unconcerned about people knowing. Those ears have been difficult already for you to hide. If you agree, give me a nod, if not just shake your head and we'll forget it.

Dad

Harry thought about it. He really didn't mind if people knew. He was positive it would cause him more problems, but his dad was right and his ears were pretty hard to hide, so it would eventually get out. And he wasn't *Harry Potter* anymore, so it didn't even matter if it got back to Old Voldy what he was. It's not like you can turn a Fury or force them to do your bidding. They inherently were their own side since their powers are completely dependent on their conviction and beliefs. Harry shrugged finally and gave his dad a small nod that Snape returned.

"All right all, quiet down everyone," he said, even though it was already almost quiet. "Listen to me and ignore the baby," he continued with as much sternness he could muster with an 8-month-old baby playing with his hair.

"For those of you new, welcome to Slytherin House. For those of you returning, welcome back. We here in Slytherin take care of each other. You will find out very quickly that there are many prejudices against our house, some warranted but most not. I expect you all to watch each other's backs. Any problems between house members should *not* be handled in the hallways, but within the house. I expect you all to be beyond reproach in your classes and among the other houses. I will avoid calling you out for mistakes you make when we are with the other houses, but I *will* handle any behavioral or academic issues with you privately, fairly, but also strictly," Snape looked over the first years with this. It was quite impressive that he was still eliciting fear in them, even with the gurgling baby in his arms.

"I feel I must mention the hippogriff in the room, or rather the baby," Snape sighed when Castor let out a little squeal. "This will be a different year than most because my grandson will be in the castle. I expect you all to keep in mind that there is a baby around and to watch

your language and actions in his presence. If his first word is a swear word, I'll be coming after each and every one of you," Snape looked over to Harry. "His father included." Harry just smiled at him and a few others in the room chuckled. Pansy looked ready to have a heart attack that Snape had almost made a joke.

"There is one last thing which is different this year and still pertains to my family and also watching what you say. I advise you all to avoid making any promises to my son or in his presence. In fact, it is best if you make no promises to him at all." Everyone looked confusedly between Snape and Harry. "I would also ask that you help diffuse any situations where he may feel that someone is threatened around him."

Snape nodded to Harry who pushed his silver hair behind his ears and took his glamour ring off. Those around him gasped. "Hi all!" Harry called out to the room. "Er...call me Artie. Dad's rules are for your own and others' protection. I'm not dangerous, really, but I am a Fury." This got several more gasps from the room. "If you don't know, that means that if you make a promise directly to me, then it becomes magically binding. So, you must follow through on pain of death with whatever it is. I care less than Dad anyway about the situation if someone is threatened, because I *will* step in. My instincts tell me to protect above all else, so they'll get what they deserve in my opinion."

Snape glared at him before sighing. "Be that as it may, no one wants an angry Fury around, so please don't be the ones he is coming after at the very least. And try not to spread around what he is to everyone until it is necessary. Now, prefects, fill in our first years on curfew and study hours. The rest of you, off to bed!" Snape handed Castor back to Harry and swept out of the room, robes billowing behind him.

"So that's what's up with this whole...look," Blaise said, waving his hand in front of Harry with a smirk. "That's pretty awesome, mate, especially the eyes," he concluded.

"Yeah, hot," Pansy added with a firm nod. "And, creepy."

Harry laughed. "Thanks...I think," he said as he put his ring on and his eyes went back to green.

"Think we could get the Weasel to promise something stupid to Artie here?" Draco grinned evilly.

“Oh, move *on*, Draco,” Pansy said, rolling her eyes. “Let it go! You don’t even know what the feud between your families is about!”

“It’s the principle!” Draco protested with a pout at her.

“It wouldn’t work; it has to be an intentional promise,” Harry said with a little laugh. He was fairly certain Ron would have said the same thing if the situation was reversed. “It’s not a good idea anyway. You never really know how my vengeance side will come out. I’m still working on the whole control thing.”

“So...the two of you are in our dorm?” Blaise asked, looking with a little fear at the baby.

“Yeah, figured I’d put the baby right by your bed,” Harry smiled at him. Blaise’s smile fell. “Oh, calm down, we have family quarters.”

“I like babies and all, but I really like my sleep more,” Blaise laughed in relief.

“Well, we should go anyway, Cas is starting to fade,” Harry said as he picked up the sleepy baby. “See you all in class tomorrow.”

Settling In

Harry's first day of class was Tuesday which started with Transfiguration then Charms; he had a break for lunch and then had double potions with the Gryffindors. He was certain Dumbledore was trying to torture his dad by always putting Slytherin and Gryffindor together in Potions; no other class had he been consistently paired with one particular house for all of his seven years except for that one.

Harry packed almost Castor's entire room in his diaper bag that he had magically made bottomless and featherlight after quite a bit of research into how that was done. The diaper bag was originally muggle, and Harry (very sentimentally) didn't want to get rid of the diaper bag Castor's mother had bought for him. However, that meant it needed quite a few spells layered on it to make it carry pretty much any and everything Harry thought the baby might need during the day. He had no clue what they would need in order to get through a day of classes without a meltdown. Castor was a wonderful baby, but a tired baby can only take so much.

Harry got to the Great Hall early and found Pansy by herself at the Slytherin table. She looked very well put together for the day with her hair immaculate and her uniform without a single wrinkle, but she was nursing a cup of coffee with a deep scowl on her face.

"Not a morning person?" Harry asked with a little smirk at the glare he got in return. He was just thankful he was *wearing* his uniform after his morning of getting Castor ready. Besides his hair covering his ears, he really didn't even spend a second on getting it to look anything besides like he'd just rolled out of bed. He figured he probably had some spit-up somewhere on his robes, but at the moment, he really couldn't be bothered.

"No until I'm two cups in," Pansy said motioning to the coffee cup as she reached out for the carafe to pour herself another cup.

"I'm more of a tea person," Harry said, trying to make small talk as he, kindly, shoved a bottle into his fussing son's mouth. Castor was still being introduced to solid foods, but his main nourishment would continue to be a bottle for a while. Harry held the bottle for Castor with one hand while he ate his bacon and eggs with the other, finally starting to get the hang of doing everything one handed and over the head of a baby.

“So, how long were you with his mother?” Pansy asked, almost making Harry choke on his eggs. He hadn’t really been planning for that question, at least not the first morning after he had ‘met’ these people.

“Not long enough,” he said cryptically, thinking of how he wasn’t able to help the abused Selkie. Pansy just nodded and let it go, realizing he didn’t want to talk about it. “You got Transfiguration today?” He asked to change the subject.

“Yes, I will show you how to get there in this long,” Pansy said, motioning to how much coffee she had left in the cup with a slow/tired blink of her eyes.

Oh yeah, he wasn’t supposed to know how to get anywhere. He might have to remind himself of that for a while and avoid all the secret passages he frequently used. “Thanks,” he laughed, realizing this might be more difficult than he had originally thought since it was almost second nature now to avoid the trick stairs and use shortcuts to class.

Pansy studied him over the top of her mug of coffee. “Professor Snape really did not raise you at all, did he? You must drive him crazy...”

Harry frowned. He had no idea where this was coming from. “Excuse me? Er...my mum raised me, but still...Dad and I get along fine.”

Pansy’s eyes widened, she seemed to not have realized she had voiced that thought aloud. “I am very sorry...I didn’t mean any offense. It’s just, your accent and vocabulary...it is very different from Professor Snape’s and...well...”

Clearly, she was trying to say (or rather not say but imply) that he didn’t have the aristocratic sounding speech that his father had painstakingly learned over his time in Slytherin house. Harry knew he was never going to pass as high society. Merlin, he’d been raised in a cupboard, and Ron hadn’t exactly been the best influence when he’d started school. Harry really couldn’t care less though.

“Yep, I’m probably not going to be winning over any lords or ladies on the Wizengamot,” Harry gave her an out from the hole she was trying to dig herself out of. “I’m not the one to

bring home to the parents, right?” He chuckled with a general wave of his hand to his overall look as well as Castor.

Pansy just frowned though at his flippant dismissal. “Slytherin House has many good qualities. We are extremely loyal, but there is also a level of needing to fit in...I am not saying that you need to change yourself, but...”

“But it wouldn’t hurt?” Harry raised an eyebrow at her and laughed, shifting Castor some on his lap. “Look, Parkinson, I have an infant son, I’m a magical creature, and I’m only here for one year. I don’t even live in the actual dorms...fitting in isn’t at the top of my priorities. Castor and my NEWTs are really all I care about right now. I get what you are saying, and I would like to be your friend, to make friends within the house, but I will never be ashamed of who I am or where I came from...not ever again.” He tried not to wince at the truth of that last phrase. No, he was never planning on telling anyone about the Dursleys, but he was who he was, for better or worse, and his time there had shaped him in many ways.

Pansy took a sip, studying him. “Hmm,” she mused, giving her finger to Castor to hold in his little, chubby hand. “Well, in that case...I am interested in seeing how not giving a damn works for you...It might be a viable strategy I would like to choose in the future if it works for you first.”

Harry laughed, wondering how he had made something of a friend in Pansy Parkinson of all people! Yes, it seemed she liked babies, and that was probably the crux of it, but still, he could see them actually having a conversation in the future. It shocked him to no end, but hey, he could use all the friends he could get at the moment.

True to her word. Pansy rose to take Harry to Transfiguration once she finally finished the coffee. They passed Draco and Blaise entering the Great Hall at a bit of a frantic pace. “You’re going to be late,” she scolded them in a tone Harry was certain Hermione had used with him and Ron multiple times throughout the years. He couldn’t believe he had missed just how good of friends those three were...but Malfoy had always seemed to hang out with Crabbe and Goyle before, not Zabini and Parkinson.

“We’re just grabbing toast!” Draco said as they hurried past without even pausing.

“And you thought *I* wasn’t a morning person,” she said with a raised eyebrow to Harry and a fond scoff at the other two teens.

Harry and Pansy took seats on the end of a row so that Harry could set up the playpen for Castor beside him. Castor immediately began to play with his fluffy hippogriff (that Harry had taken to calling Buckbeak in his head). Harry then cast a silencing charm over the playpen and put the baby monitor crystal in with Castor.

“Smart, thinking Mr. Snape,” Professor McGonagall said walking by them. “Did you do the transfiguration of the crystal or did your father? I know that kind of a spell needs the extra magic of a transfigured crystal for the monitoring spell to layer on top of.”

“I did ma’am. I also did the charm work,” he said proudly. He planned to take the Sorting Hat’s advice and no longer try to aim for the middle of the class. He wanted to learn and do well. His goal to stay as invisible as possible before led him to not do his best in classes. He had to admit, Ron wasn’t the best influence either. Artie Snape though...maybe he could be someone who really tried and succeeded where Harry Potter had been afraid to rock the boat.

“I believe that’s 5 points to Slytherin then,” McGonagall smiled as the rest of the class filtered in. “Your father is quite skilled in Transfiguration. I hope some of that has rubbed off on his son.”

Castor made it through all of Transfiguration and half of Charms before he had a meltdown. Harry was pretty sure he needed a diaper change and probably another bottle or at least to be held. His monitoring crystal started to vibrate with Castor’s silent cries beside him, his face going red and his little feet kicking. With a tired sigh, Harry stood and lifted Castor out of the silencing bubble causing everyone to hear a few loud wails before he left the room and Professor Flitwick to give them an understanding look even as he continued in his lecture.

“We will *not* be calling in Dobby on our first day, Cas. We got this right? We’re in this together,” he said soothingly as he found an empty alcove where he could change the very damp diaper.

Harry made it back to class with a much calmer baby right as Flitwick was ending. Harry sighed, realizing he’d probably missed some very important information and would not do

well on that night's homework. However, just as he was despairing, Blaise waved his wand over his notes to duplicate them and handed a copy to Harry.

"Wow, thanks!" Harry exclaimed, thoroughly shocked. He had never pictured Zabini as someone who would just offer to help someone.

"No worries. Just like Snape said, we look out for our own," the Slytherin gave the baby a little pat on the back before he left for lunch.

Instead of going to lunch in the Great Hall, Harry had Dobby bring him some food in his quarters. He figured Cas could use some time to crawl (or rather scoot since he wasn't quite at crawling yet) around and not be around people constantly. Before he knew it, it was time for Potions though. Harry was both excited and dreading being in class with his old friends again. So far, he hadn't even been near the Gryffindors yet. Transfiguration was with Hufflepuff, and Charms had been with Ravenclaw. It was the first time they were actually going to interact since he had 'died' or left for training or whatever. He didn't know how to act around them, and they had absolutely no clue who he was.

Harry walked into the classroom in the dungeons and found a seat at Draco and Pansy's table. Apparently, Blaise was shite at Potions and had dropped (Pansy's words, non-aristocratic slang and all; Harry must already be a good influence on her). Draco cryptically remarked that Blaise just preferred *not* knowing exactly what had killed his most recent stepfather, so he preferred to remain in the dark for plausible deniability. Harry figured he needed more of that story...just how true *were* all those rumors about Madam Zabini?!

Right after Harry and Castor settled beside Draco, Ron and Hermione entered, chatting together about something. "You'd think the Weasel and the Mudblood would be more concerned with their missing friend," Draco sneered at them. "They must have heard all the rumors about him. Do *they* actually know what happened?"

Unfortunately for Draco, Professor Snape had just walked by their table. With a flourish, he deposited a jar loudly on the table in front of Draco. "That'll be one knut, Mr. Malfoy," he said sternly and with a cold look at his godson. Written boldly across the jar was 'Swear Jar.'

"You can't be serious, Professor," Draco protested in shock.

“Deadly,” Snape glowered. “I mean it when I say that my grandson’s first words will not be a swear word.”

Snape then turned to Ron who was snickering. “That goes for you too, Mr. Weasley. I’ve heard you talk to your friends, and I suggest you watch yourself before you bankrupt your entire family.”

After Draco dropped a knut into the jar, Snape took the jar and Castor from Harry. He deposited the jar on his desk, in full view of the class, and Castor in a comfortable looking play area to the right of his desk and behind the chalkboard for extra protection. “Be good,” he warned the laughing baby softly.

And, with that, the snarky potions master was back as if nothing had changed in his life. If they didn’t have the swear jar shoved in front of a couple of them, they would never have known that he was anything different than he had been every other class in their six years. Harry, however, was loving the class. Though nothing had changed for the majority of the other students, for Harry, everything had. The Slytherins weren’t trying to sabotage his potions, and Snape was giving him neutral attention instead of being outright hostile. He definitely wasn’t being favored, not that anyone would have expected that from the professor even if he was his father, but at least he wasn’t being yelled at and sneered at constantly. So, Harry was immensely proud of the potion he turned in at the end of class for the first time ever...well, with Snape and not Slughorn at least.

That night, with Castor cuddled under his wings, Harry slept the best he had slept in a long time. Castor always seemed to keep his nightmares away but flying on the high of his success in the day, and being just physically exhausted, led him to sleep deeply. Merlin, it was so very tiring to be a parent and a student all at the same time!

Wednesday brought Harry’s first Ancient Runes class and double DADA with the Gryffindors. Harry decided he was really going to like Ancient Runes. It was much better than Divination anyway, which he did not miss even the slightest. He was even able to sit close enough to Hermione that he was able to say ‘hi’ to her before the class started. She gave him a little smile and said ‘hi’ back, but that was all the interaction they had before class got going. Even though Harry was taking Runes at the OWL level and Hermione was doing NEWT level work, the classes were combined with their assignments and projects being tailored to the two different levels. He hoped he would be able to get Hermione’s help with

the material at some point in the future. If not, Draco was also in the class doing NEWT work, but he really missed Hermione and wanted to be her friend again.

When Harry got to Professor Lupin's class, he saw a similar set-up in the corner of the room for Castor as there was in Potions. This was another class that was more than a little bit dangerous for a baby to be out and about in, so Harry was happy to deposit Castor in his warded play area with the monitor crystal before taking a seat by Blaise. The class groaned as one when Lupin pulled a familiar looking jar out of his desk and set it in their view.

Lupin shrugged with a unrepentant smile. "Professor Snape talked me into it. I believe the going rate is a knut per swear word."

It only took until the next day before every single professor in Harry's classes had a similar jar on their desks. "Everyone's going to hate me," Harry groaned after McGonagall pulled one out in their double Transfiguration class.

"Nah, the baby's too cute," Pansy smiled since she was holding Castor right then and cooing at him. "I'm ok parting with a few knuts for these gorgeous blue eyes." Merlin, the Selkie aura might actually be stronger than he had realized, Harry thought with wide eyes at his son.

Harry dragged himself tiredly into the Great Hall for dinner. Thursday nights were Astronomy at midnight. He had no clue how he was going to make it. Carrying a baby around all day as well as attending classes was harder than any quidditch practice he had ever had. There were the stairs and the stress and the bouncing of Castor when he got fussy, he didn't know how he was going to do this all year.

Harry had just got settled beside Pansy at the Slytherin table when Snape came up behind him silently, making him jump. "I hear I'm on babysitting duty tonight," his dad grumbled softly.

"Not until bedtime, Astronomy's at midnight," Harry smiled at him, thankful the man was willing to watch Castor after he went to sleep. There was no way he could handle Astronomy with Castor as well as all his other classes.

“Nonsense,” Snape frowned with a scoff. “You need to rest and take a nap before class or you’ll be useless tomorrow. Now, hand over my grandson. I haven’t seen him in days.”

“You saw him yesterday,” Harry responded, handing Castor and the diaper bag over, not going to protest a small break.

“That was class; it does not count,” Snape said in all seriousness as he took the baby with him up to the head table. Where he saw Remus reaching for a pudgy little hand as soon as they were seated.

Harry sighed, feeling odd without a baby in his lap, and smiled at his new friends in front of him. “So, how does it feel to be baby-less for the night?” Blaise asked with a smirk as he filled his plate.

Harry laughed. “I’m hopeless. I miss him already.”

“Well, I for one plan to swear up a storm in class tonight,” Draco laughed, having already lost 5 knuts surprisingly.

“Maybe we should start up the swear jar in the dorm,” Pansy said, giving Draco a playful push. Draco laughed and gave her a quick peck of a kiss on the lips.

Harry blinked, his tired brain processing. How had he not noticed they were together. He had almost been obsessed with Draco and what he was up to the year before, and he had been hanging out with them every day since classes started. “Erm, how long have you two been together?” He finally asked.

“Just since the summer,” Pansy said, pushing some mashed potatoes over to him. “Draco had to move out of his family’s house at the end of last year, and we were not able to be together before then.”

“There was a difference in ideals between my parents and I,” Draco explained with no emotion in his tone, but he also didn’t need Harry’s eyes.

That was an understatement, Harry thought with no humor, having heard at least part of the story from Snape at the end of the summer. He knew Draco’s father had cursed him with the Cruciatus multiple times when he learned that he had gone to Dumbledore to seek protection from Voldemort, and all this was actually in an inn in Hogsmeade since Voldemort was supposedly at Malfoy Manor, so Draco couldn’t return home and had barely escaped to Snape’s house. Snape had then taken him some place safe...which Harry now knew was Blaise’s house. Draco had then been promptly disowned, or at least Lucius had tried, but Draco’s grandfather had made several provisions in his will that kept Lucius from being able to disown his son.

“Yes, well, Draco moved in with Blaise, who happens to be my neighbor at my family’s summer house, so we hung out a lot this summer,” Pansy finished, not giving away just how much Draco had glossed over the trauma of his confrontation with his father.

“Don’t you normally hang out during the year?” Harry asked, confused at her statement that they hadn’t been able to be together before Draco had turned on his family.

“No, Draco’s father would not let him...my family is neutral, and Parkinson’s family isn’t considered quite at Lucius’s level of ‘acceptable,’ even if they are dark,” Blaise explained with a sneer while Draco looked down at his plate.

“Crabbe and Goyle over there were instructed to keep him in line and away from anyone old Lucius disagreed with and to make sure he acted the part he was expected to play. Dear old daddy Malfoy is a piece of work, and that’s coming from the son of Madam Catarina Zabini,” Blaise finished wryly with a snort.

“Er...I’m sorry, Draco,” Harry said, truly sorry he hadn’t known the boy had been controlled all those years. He wondered how long it had been going on, surely not as far back as first year?! He had been saddened over the summer to hear that Draco had lost his family when he had taken Harry’s advice and gone to Snape, but now...well, now he was much less sad Draco had lost his family and more interested in how he could get his Fury side to come out for a little vengeance...

Draco just shrugged it all off though. “I’m a Malfoy, even if my father doesn’t remember what that means anymore. Malfoys bow to no one...I will bow to no one.”

“At least you don’t have to deal with those two morons anymore,” Harry motioned with a sneer in Crabbe and Goyle’s direction.

“Yeah, I think I lost brain cells every minute I was around them,” Draco snorted in agreement.

“Well, let me know if they bother you...or don’t, depending on how messed up you want them to be,” the Fury smiled at him, showing some fangs and meaning every word.

“That’s creepy, mate,” Blaise shuddered. “The baby really tones you down when you’re holding him all the time.”

Harry had fun with his friends at dinner and even hung out with his new housemates in the common room until time for Astronomy class. Slytherin dynamics were definitely more intense than Gryffindor ones, but he found himself up to the task of playing the politics, at least as much as he cared to anyway. Crabbe and Goyle were definitely going to be a problem though as they gave Harry and his group murderous glares whenever they walked by. His best guess was that Nott and Bulstrode were also with the Death Eaters from their animosity towards him and his father. However, even in the midst of all this, Harry actually felt like a normal teenager again for just a little bit...not that he didn’t miss Castor every second.

They were making fun of Blaise’s abysmal potions skills on their way to Astronomy class when they turned a corner and Harry almost ran right into Ron who was walking to class with Hermione and Seamus. “Watch where you’re going, snake,” Ron grumbled nastily as he roughly shoved past Harry.

Harry was not giving up that easily though even as his heart clenched at Ron’s dismissal of him. He skirted around Ron until he was in front of him again. “Hi, I’m Artie,” he said offering his hand with a smile as if this were perfectly normal and they were having a pleasant conversation. He could see Draco rolling his eyes in his peripheral vision.

Ron squinted at him in confusion with a deep frown on his face. "You're the greasy git's son, right?"

"We replaced his hair products. He was buying all the wrong things. So...better hair now. Didn't you notice?" Harry rambled, not liking how this was going one bit.

Hermione pushed Ron to the side, trying to save the situation as much as possible. "Yes, his hair is much better now, and that was very rude of Ron. I'm sorry on behalf of my idiot friend. My name's Hermione."

"Artie," Harry said shaking her hand with a huge grin on his face.

"Where's your tiny shadow?" she asked looking around as if Castor would appear out of nowhere.

"Oh, it's past his bedtime, so he's hanging out with his grandad for the evening," Harry explained.

"Never going to get used to Snape being a grandfather," Blaise snorted behind him, holding in laughter.

Ron looked over at Seamus with a huff and they continued walking, ignoring the group of Slytherins. "What's his problem?" Harry asked Hermione sadly. He didn't know why Ron was acting so strange.

"He just misses his best friend," Hermione explained. "Erm, he wasn't able to come back this year. It's been really rough on Ron."

"Oh, you know my friends?" Harry asked to change the subject. Offering to introduce Draco, Blaise, and Pansy, knowing full well she already knew them. Hermione seemed at a loss as to

how to answer him.

“We know each other already, but I don’t think we have been formally introduced, I’m Pansy,” Pansy offered her hand to Hermione, attempting to be the bigger person in their group if the situation was necessary, which it seemed to be after Harry’s meddling.

“Yeah, Pansy. How’s Arithmancy going so far?” Hermione asked, shaking her hand. “Erm... call me Hermione.”

Harry was fairly pleased with the encounter. Things might have been tense with Ron, and Draco and Hermione may have ignored each other the entire time, but Pansy and his old friend really seemed to hit it off. Blaise, well Harry wasn’t sure about Blaise. He got really quiet all of a sudden, not Draco ignoring them quiet, but actually shy quiet...like he might have a bit of a crush on Hermione. Apparently, Harry meddled in things like this now, so he found himself watching the two of them and plotting future hangouts when they might be suspiciously left alone together.

Snape walked out of his bedroom in the morning to turn his kettle on to make tea. He stretched and then laughed. Apparently, Harry hadn’t been able to go the night without Castor as the two were curled on his couch together in a cocoon of black, leather wings. Harry woke when the kettle started boiling with a yawn and a stretch. “Good morning.”

“How was Astronomy?”

“Good...or as good as could be expected when I stubbornly tried to make Gryffindors and Slytherins get along. I think Blaise has a thing for Hermione though, surprisingly. I’m thinking we should all go study in the library sometime soon,” Harry said as he transferred a still-sleeping baby to his cot in the corner, then stretched his wings before folding them back into the tattoo on his back. “How was Cas for you?”

“Fussy, drooly, threw porridge at the wall, so an angel as always,” Snape said with none of his usual sarcasm. “I think he missed his dad.”

“Thanks for watching him. I’ll just pack up his stuff and we’ll be out of your hair,” Harry said, folding the blanket they had been using.

“Oh no you don’t!” Snape said folding his arms and glaring at him. “I promised Remus he could hold him at breakfast. You are not going to make his godfather mad at me, are you?”

Harry smiled and shook his head. “Ok, but you return him after breakfast. He will not be staying in the Potions classroom all day. I don’t want him around the fumes all the time.”

Romance on the Horizon

Harry and Castor eventually got into a rhythm with their days. Harry finally did decide after much stress and guilt that Dobby really needed to come and take care of Castor for a bit when Harry had a double period; it was just too long for the baby to play or nap on his own. Dobby was over the moon about it though. He loved his 'Master Selkie' just as much as Harry and Severus, and Castor loved him as he loved most people. Really, it was just Dumbledore, Crabbe, Goyle, and surprisingly Professor Trelawney that Castor wasn't very happy being around. Thankfully, Harry didn't have Divination anymore, but Castor must have thought she smelled weird (of sherry) or something since he always tried to hide when they walked by the eccentric professor. Harry hadn't taken Castor to meet Hagrid yet, but he was hopeful they'd get along since Hagrid was a fierce friend even if he was quite large and intimidating. Harry had already been handing Castor off to Remus (who had a free period) during when he had CoMC though because everyone remembered the skrewts, and the hippogriffs, and Fluffy, and the list could go on.

Harry had almost immediately planned a few library study sessions where he included both Hermione and Blaise after his realization before Astronomy class. He figured if he was going to meddle in things now, he would rather it be his friends' relationships instead of murderous professors at the school like before. Unfortunately, Hermione and Draco were still ignoring each other very pointedly, but at least neither said anything mean (within his hearing anyway). Harry figured this was mostly because the baby was always there with them, reminding the teens to be on their best behavior. After a couple study sessions, Blaise still hadn't gotten up the courage to ask Hermione out yet. There was a Hogsmeade weekend in a couple weeks though, so Harry was planning to mention it to him when it got closer.

Everything seemed to be going well between Remus and his dad...maybe too well. One Wednesday in DADA, Harry was pulling out his parchment for notes and noticed that Professor Lupin was wearing a nice, black button-down shirt...his dad's favorite teaching shirt. Harry turned bright red and coughed to cover the choking sound he had made in shock.

"What's wrong, Artie?" Pansy asked quietly in concern at his very pink look now.

"You really, *really* don't want to know," Harry groaned, burying his head in his bag and vowing to tell Fred and George the next chance he got to floo call them.

The twins hadn't forgotten about Harry and Castor at all. Besides now keeping Hedwig (who was too noticeably Harry's owl) with them at their shop, they floo called regularly and used Severus's owl to communicate. Harry's quarters were connected to the floo network, courtesy of Dobby, so they usually came over on Sunday nights for dinner and to visit with Harry and their godson. It was on one of these visits that they were able to fill him in on what people were saying about Harry Potter's disappearance.

George had taken Castor into the washroom for a bath after he had gotten banana puree all over himself, in his hair, even in his diaper while Fred sat on the couch with Harry, relaxing after a long day. Knowing the general education at Hogwarts, Harry was certain neither Weasley twin would know the significance of Castor's birthmark, and he planned to eventually tell them anyway when Castor was older, so he wasn't concerned when either of them offered to change a diaper or give the baby a bath. Frankly, he could use all the help he could get.

"So, how's your family. I still haven't quite won over Ron yet, but I'm working on it," Harry told Fred with a tired smile. "Honestly, I'm probably trying too hard. Blaise frequently tells me that I'm being creepy, but making friends is hard!"

"Yeah, don't be too hard on Ron right now. You might want to just give him some space. He's going through a rough time," Fred explained.

Harry frowned. "He just thinks I'm off with Moody training somewhere though, right?"

"Old Voldy hasn't come right out and said it, but he's spread around that you're dead to enough people that the Order is starting to ask questions. The ministry is even starting to come down hard on Dumbledore to produce you, and there's more and more talk about why you might have died and Dumbledore would be covering it up," Fred explained. "Obviously, Voldemort didn't kill you or he'd have your body on full and graphic display somewhere, so how did you die? The longer Dumbledore refuses to produce you, the more questions everyone has, but the headmaster just keeps insisting that you're off training somewhere."

Harry nodded slowly. Ron was very trusting where Dumbledore was concerned, but he always thought through situations strategically. He would ask the question of 'why' if Voldemort had been spreading rumors about Harry's death. "So...he's starting to think the rumors might be true?"

Fred threw an arm around Harry's shoulders, answering in the affirmative even if he didn't say it. He finally spoke once Harry relaxed into his side, "I think Ron has come to the correct, or at least the conclusion that you originally were trying to spread, that you might have killed yourself. He knew at least some, not as much as me and George, but at least as much as Hermione, that your homelife wasn't pleasant. We absolutely kept everything that happened at the end of first year to just me and George. He's been really depressed about it all recently though, as much as I can tell from his letters which are mainly just asking for information on you we might have heard at an Order meeting. And Mum's now threatening mutiny or to at least stop cooking for everyone if she doesn't get a visit from you soon."

"I wish I could just tell them," Harry sighed and put his silver head on the warm shoulder beside him. "I can't though, or things would go back to everyone out to kill me, and it's not just me now, but Castor too. While they're all fighting over if I'm alive or not, at least they aren't asking too many questions about the new student that suddenly popped up. And, if everything was suddenly back to normal with Ron and Hermione and me, that would raise too many questions about me, for Dumbledore anyway. My backstory isn't solid enough to hold up to much scrutiny. As sad as it is to admit, but Ron not liking me right now, that's probably my best cover and evidence that Artie is not Harry."

"I agree mate and am just happy I'm in the know," Fred assured him, squeezing his shoulders in a bit of a side-hug. "I realize it's different though because we aren't around you every day, so we have less chance of blowing your cover."

"That wasn't why I told you," Harry smiled over at him. "As much as I *love* Ron and Hermione, I also *trust* you and George. Ron gets angry and loudly says stupid things when he's hurt while Hermione believes too much in the authority of all adults without question. She's liable to tell Dumbledore just because he asked. I love them, but I'm not blind to their faults. You guys though, I know I can trust you with my life, and more importantly, with my son's life."

Fred smiled so broadly, it really and truly lit up the room. "And I you as well," Fred said sincerely.

George then joined them in the living room with a towel-wrapped, giggling baby. "Your kid has some lungs on him. He did *not* want to get in the tub, but then was happy to play in it once he was there."

“So, he’s *my* kid when he’s bad, but *your* godson when he’s good?” Harry laughed.

“Of course,” they both said together.

Fred and George left right after they all put Castor down to sleep, taking turns reading a bedtime story to him. Harry smiled at the floo they had just left from as he sat on his couch. Both the twins were so good to them, and Fred always seemed to know the right things to say so he would feel that everything was going to be all right, even when he knew they weren’t.

As much as he told everyone differently, Harry knew very well he was the one that would eventually have to kill Voldemort, even if he’d told everyone he was either dead or out of the war. It wasn’t even the stupid prophecy, which he was unsure how it even applied to him with James Potter not being his father; it was the fact that he knew instinctually somehow that it would come down to him and the Dark Lord at the end. Somehow, he just knew that it was his responsibility...maybe as Harry Potter, or maybe as a Fury...he really didn’t know.

Through all of that, Fred still made him feel like the only thing that actually mattered was their little family. It was even more than George, Harry’s dad, or Remus...Fred just *believed* in them. After staring at the fire with a stupid grin on his face for five minutes, Harry groaned and laid his head on the armrest. He could NOT have a crush on Fred Weasley. Ron was going to kill him if Voldemort didn’t after dating or wanting to date two of his siblings. He couldn’t stop the little thought in the back of his head that he could probably take on Ron easily now though what with the fangs and wings and all.

It was mid-October before *finally* Blaise got up the courage to ask out Hermione...the man really wasn’t a Gryffindor at all. They had all been studying more and more together in the library. Draco and Hermione could even say a few civil words to each other over Ancient Runes or Arithmancy work now. Ron, however, never joined and seemed to be extra peeved at Harry, probably thinking he was trying to steal one of the few friends he had left now that Hermione seemed unperturbed by joining the Slytherin study table. Harry felt sorry for him, but he couldn’t do anything about it if his former best friend wouldn’t talk to him. And he was too busy with classes, Castor, and obsessing over Ron’s brother now to put forth more than a passing effort into getting Ron on his side as the dungeon bat’s son and sketchy teenage father.

It was at the end of one of these study sessions that Harry kept giving Blaise pointed looks because a Hogsmeade weekend was coming up again when the Italian finally found his courage. As everyone was packing up to head to dinner, Blaise just blurted out, "Hermione, will you go with me to Hogsmeade this weekend?"

Hermione opened and closed her mouth in shock. Harry rolled his eyes at Blaise and gave a long-suffering sigh. "Don't answer him yet, Hermione. Don't let him put you on the spot like that," he shot an accusing glare at Blaise. "I said to ask her, you idiot, not ask her in front of everyone! That's so awkward!"

"Sorry," Blaise said looking at his hands with a grimace.

"Mamma Zabini raised you better than that!" Draco had to add on with a teasing smirk. "I'm going to tell her you didn't inherit any suaveness at all. Such a shame..."

"I don't think my mum's lessons really apply in this situation..." Blaise rolled his eyes and caused the rest of them to wince from the very little they knew of Madam Catarina Zabini.

"We're all going to head out and give you two a minute, then you can answer him, Granger," Pansy agreed with Harry, dragging Draco up from his chair to give them some privacy.

They all trooped out of the library, leaving Blaise and Hermione alone. They might have been mature about it, but they were also really curious, so they compromised by waiting right outside the doors to the library and trying to peer through the frosted glass window in the door. Just a couple minutes later Blaise came rushing out.

"She said yes!" He said hugging Draco, then Harry and Castor, and then Pansy fended him off with a punch to his shoulder, refusing a hug.

And that was the start of how Draco, Pansy, Blaise, and Hermione all ended up on a double date in Hogsmeade while Harry and Castor tattered to WWW for tea with Fred and George and to see all their new inventions since he refused to be fifth and sixth wheels on the date.

Harry had just tattered back into their quarters after dinner and put Castor down for the night when he heard a knock at the portrait. Usually, Remus or Snape just used the password and entered, so he walked across the sitting room with a concerned frown at who it might be. Harry cracked the portrait open a bit in curiosity to find Hermione, Blaise, Draco, Pansy, and Ron (who looked like he would rather be anywhere else and with any other people) impatiently waiting on him on the other side.

“Hey, erm, come in...everyone,” Harry said opening the door wider and wondering what was going on and how Ron got roped into whatever this was.

“Hey Artie, sorry we just stopped by with no warning,” Hermione said with a kind smile as Harry waved them over to the couch where Harry was happy to note Hermione sat by Blaise and took his hand. “Is Castor still awake?”

“No, I just got him to sleep. There’s a muffling spell on his door though, so we won’t wake him,” he said, awkwardly standing by the fireplace since all his seating was now taken.

“We had a quick question,” Hermione said nudging Ron beside her to speak.

“Erm, yeah, what’s going on between your dad and Professor Lupin?” Ron asked, not unkindly but overly blunt.

“Yeah, we saw them at Hogsmeade, and it didn’t seem like they were *just* friendly, if you know what I mean,” Blaise clarified with a significant waggle of his eyebrows.

“My godfather...was *smiling*,” Draco added in with a deep shudder. “I don’t think I’ve ever seen that,” he said amazed. “Hell must have frozen over at some point recently.”

Harry chuckled at them as he tapped Draco’s armchair with his wand to enlarge it before shoving the blond over to join him sitting. “I was sitting here first, Snape!” Draco grumbled, but still scooted over to give Harry some room.

“Hey, you all invaded my rooms to interrogate me. I at least want to be sitting for this,” he grinned at them all. “Right, so I’ll tell you about their situation, but you didn’t hear this from me, ok?”

“We promise we won’t tell anyone you told us,” Hermione said leaning forward in interest. Just then her magic flared and it connected all of them to Harry.

“Great! That was an idiotic move, *Granger!* Are you trying to get us killed!” Draco snarled throwing his hands in the air in surrender.

“Hey! Don’t talk to her that way!” Ron exclaimed, turning red in anger.

“I’ll say whatever I want, Weasel!”

A piercing whistle quieted the room. Blaise took his fingers from his mouth. “Now, we’ve already broken rule #1. Are you gits sure you want to go and break rule #2 as well? Frankly, I’m quite fond of my appendages and would like to keep them attached if it’s all the same to you.”

Draco looked worriedly over to Harry beside him who just looked at them all sheepishly with an embarrassed shrug. “No, erm, I’m sorry for what I said Granger,” Draco said, quickly apologizing. “I could have said it less accusingly...even if I was correct in my sentiments.”

Ron and Hermione both looked just as shocked at Draco’s apology as they were with whatever had happened with Hermione’s magic. “Can someone explain what these ‘rules’ are to us please?” Hermione asked with frustration, she never liked not being in the know.

“They are the rules for safely being friends with Artie,” Pansy explained from her own armchair. “Rule #1 is never promise anything directly to him and rule #2 is to diffuse all tense situations when he’s around unless you really want someone hurt.”

“And why are there rules for being your friend?” Hermione asked Harry, genuinely confused and concerned now as well.

“They aren’t so much rules as good ideas to live by,” Harry said awkwardly as he pushed his hair behind his pointed ears and pulled the tie from his wrist to gather it into a loose ponytail. “I mean no one wants to accidentally swear an unbreakable vow like you just did, and that tends to happen around me unfortunately.”

Hermione stared at his ears in shock. “And *why* did I just swear an unbreakable vow, Arcturus Snape?”

Harry grimaced, having flashbacks to Hermione using that exact same tone but with a different name not too long ago. “Because I’m a Fury,” he explained. “It’s kind of my thing...”

“Blimey!” Ron exclaimed, leaning forward with a huge smile on his face. Harry blinked in shock. He had forgotten that Ron was obsessed with magical creatures. Charlie was clearly Ron’s favorite brother from the few times Harry had seen them together, and Ron absolutely *loved* talking about magical creatures with his similarly obsessed sibling. “Do you have the wings and the fangs and all?”

“Er.. yeah, sure do,” Harry said giving him a fang-y smile as he removed the glamour ring to show his true eyes.

“That’s brilliant!” Ron exclaimed, looking at Harry’s black eyes with a huge grin on his face and clearly trying to keep himself from coming over to physically study Harry more closely.

“I’m not super read-up on my Fury lore, can someone please explain to me what this all means?” Hermione asked impatiently. Harry could clearly see an intense study session in the library in Hermione’s future.

Surprisingly, Ron spoke up to answer her. “Furies are brilliant! We haven’t had one in Britain in like a hundred years...I think she was a part of the Prince family, but I can’t remember her first name. Anyway, their powers focus on protection and vengeance. Part of that is securing

oaths as one of their main instinctual drives. Any oath a Fury swears or is sworn to them is held even more sacred than an unbreakable vow and very legally binding. A long time ago, marriages commonly used to be officiated by Furies, but it caused way too many problems if the couple went a little overboard with their vows. Divorce was clearly not an option if they promised to always be together, or if they got overly specific, then yeah...lots of problems."

"I guess if I ever get married it'll be super official. I hadn't thought of that," Harry mused, not liking the sound of this, but filing it away to be dealt with much later down the road.

"Yeah, coming from someone who's had about a dozen stepfathers in my life...sorry about that," Blaise said sympathetically. "Choose wisely."

"Also, they have almost unlimited power to enact vengeance on others or to protect when they see a need. Their powers are only limited by their belief in the cause and their justification in their actions, which has to be like really very strong," Ron continued.

"Have you ever gone full-on Fury mode?" He asked Harry, almost vibrating in excitement, reminding Harry of Dobby so much he had to hold in a laugh.

"Erm, a couple times, but I was very new then and didn't know how to control anything...not that I really know how to control myself now either though," Harry said, thinking about when he got Castor and when he removed his dad's Dark Mark.

"Wow," Ron looked impressed. If Harry had known that it just took telling him he was a Fury to get him as a friend, he would have told him weeks ago.

"So, this is all very informative, but can you please circle back around and tell us what my godfather and the wolf are doing together? Obviously, we won't tell anyone you told us," Draco said pointedly at Hermione who just rolled her eyes at his dramatics.

"They've been dating since the start of the term!" Harry said abruptly with a large grin as everyone else's jaws dropped open.

“Why would he date that wolf?” Draco asked disbelievingly.

“Why would that wolf date a Death Eater?” Ron shot back with a sneer.

“Former Death Eater,” Pansy clarified.

Ron and Hermione’s heads both whipped around comically to look at Pansy. They were certain that Snape’s status as a spy was only known to the Order, or at least the Death Eaters who knew believed him to be on their side. Pansy raised an eyebrow at the two of them though, questioning the over-reaction. “Riiiiight...so, I heard from Crabbe that Snape resigned from the Dark Lord over the summer. That was clearly not Crabbe’s words though, there was quite a lot of traitor, ingrate, bastard, and other words that cost a knut to say around the baby now thrown in there when he said it.”

Draco sighed and rubbed his temples. “You don’t just ‘resign’ from the Dark Lord. The Dark Mark is permanent. Crabbe must have been confused. Uncle Sev might be out of favor right now...probably because of me, but if the Dark Lord had either determined he had gone to the Light or was no longer faithful, then he would kill him through the Dark Mark. It’s one of the main reasons I got out when I did, thankfully before he could mark me on my seventeenth birthday.”

Harry cleared his throat and shifting in his seat, “Yeah, so this doesn’t leave the room either, but no need to promise anything this time,” he added on quickly with a smile at Hermione. “Well, Dad got called to a meeting after Castor and I moved in with him this summer. I’ve never liked the danger he put himself in...and well, he was spying for the Light...sorry if you didn’t know that...” He added quickly as Pansy, Blaise, and surprisingly Draco all sputtered in shock.

“What the hell?!” Pansy exclaimed with an angry frown.

“Why didn’t I *know* this?!! I’m his godson for Merlin’s sake!” Draco threw his arms up in the air in exasperation. “I clearly knew he wasn’t completely sold on everything since he took me to Dumbledore to get me out last year, but still...he never said!! We’re *so* going to have words! First he didn’t say he had a son, now this!!”

“It *does* make sense with him protecting you and all though,” Blaise nodded at Draco.

“Fine!” Pansy sighed in exasperation. “Clearly, none of us are the best examples of the Dark anyway since we’re willingly hanging out with Granger and the blood traitor. I suppose being a spy is actually quite impressive. Fooling the Dark Lord is not an easy or healthy task.”

Ron and Hermione kept pointedly silent about the whole thing (besides a glare from Ron at being called a blood traitor), having known since before their fifth year about Snape. Harry just chuckled though. “Anyway, back to the story. Dad apparated back to the house after obviously being under the Cruciatus Curse for an inhumanly long period of time. I’m not sure what set off the crazy man this time...it could have been anything really. That was one of those times that I went into full-on Fury mode though as Ron called it.”

“Ooo, is the Dark Lord still alive?!” Pansy asked, a small twinkle in her eyes belying any latent belief in the Dark she might have tried to sell others on still.

“I’m not that powerful, Pansy,” Harry smiled back at her, happy that his new Slytherin friends were clearly not angling to be Death Eaters in the near future. “Anyway, I went into ‘protect’ and not ‘vengeance’ mode. I grabbed his Dark Mark and broke the connection. There isn’t any trace of it on him anymore. So, he can’t return to the Dark Lord ever, and I’ll never apologize for that, even if it means he can’t be a spy anymore. Castor and I need him.”

“Um, yeah mate, that’s pretty powerful in itself,” Blaise said, clearly impressed. “You broke a spell that should only be able to be broken by its caster.”

“Anyway, back to the juicy bits, so Snape and Lupin are like *together*; together? How did that happen?” Pansy asked.

“Considering I’ve seen Professor Lupin wear a couple of Dad’s shirts into class in the mornings, I’d say, yeah, they’re definitely *together*; together. I might need therapy though now,” Harry laughed.

“Oh, please, you’re 17 and have a son. Don’t be a prude,” Hermione scoffed. Harry choked on air and stared at Hermione in shock. He had never expected *that* to come out of her mouth.

Hermione had always been open about things in general, but they had never talked about sex or anything like that when he was Harry. Hermione must have thought Harry was either a prude or had innocent ears or something...he didn't want to analyze her motivations though at the moment.

"Oh, look, he's turning red!" Pansy laughed ruthlessly at him. "I think you broke Artie."

"Oh please, you obviously know where babies come from and probably have more experience than the rest of us," Hermione continued flippantly as she gestured towards the nursery. "Not that I would trust you to brew a contraception potion though...clearly, you're lacking *some* knowledge."

Harry took a deep breath and winced at the outright lie he was about to spin from his still a virgin mouth. "For your information, I do clearly know where babies come from. Dad has also very meticulously taught me and all of us at Hogwarts the contraception potion now in much more detail than necessary." He was very much regretting giving his father permission to make fun of his lack of skills in making a contraception potion in order to support Castor's backstory and cover up that he might be both kidnapped and a Selkie. His dad had (very much in character) gone completely overboard in teaching the entire school how to brew it by this point. He could also already see that Artie Snape would forever be a cautionary tale at Hogwarts, warranted or not.

"*And*, not that it matters, but I'm pretty sure I'm gay. I always thought I was bi, but I've been re-evaluating a lot of things recently...anyway, that particular potion might not be needed much in my future," Harry sighed and shrugged. He'd never felt anything for Ginny or Cho like he felt for Fred. He didn't see how what he had felt for them was anything more than a friendly attraction in comparison. "Well, anyway...at least there's this guy I really like, and besides Castor's mum...it's not like I have much experience with girls or any with blokes really."

That got stunned looks from his friends. They all just stared at him for a minute until Pansy broke the silence. "Please, oh *please*, tell me it isn't Weasley over here that you like! You're always trying to talk to him and trying to make friends!"

"I will not support this!" Draco firmly pouted from beside Harry. "Granger is welcome to join the group now since Blaise insists on her company and she's not a dunderhead at least,

but no friend of mine will date Weasel!”

“Oi!” Ron protested at them all. “I’ll have you know, I’m a catch!”

“I am sure your mother tells you that,” Pansy rolled her eyes at him.

Harry laughed; they were close, right family, wrong brother. “No, it’s not Ron, I promise. Not that you aren’t, erm, handsome or anything though. Merlin, how do you tell someone you aren’t interested in them but in a nice way?”

“Good enough, I’m not offended,” Ron said, turning bright red. “And, erm, thanks for saying I’m handsome. I’m, er...definitely not into blokes though...”

“There isn’t anyone else you hang out with in the school besides us though,” Pansy said, fishing for a name with a calculating look in her eyes.

“You do realize that I had a whole other life before I started Hogwarts,” Harry said, knowing it was all too true. “I never said he was a student here.”

“How has Professor Snape been with all this?” Hermione asked with a musing look on her face. “I mean, he can’t have been excited to learn he was a grandfather at...what?...thirty-seven? Then there was the raid, and you’re all alone now...I’m so sorry, Artie.”

“It’s fine, Hermione...Castor and I are getting through it together,” Harry assured her with a small smile. It was true too, he and Castor had a rough time figuring out how to be a family when he’d first kidnapped the baby, but they were starting to make it work with their little cobbled together family.

“As for Dad, I think he did call me ‘idiot boy’ at some point, but I’m an adult and Castor is here, so there really isn’t anything he can do about it,” Harry shrugged. That was pretty much how it had gone down too, only an accidental unbreakable vow instead of a surprise pregnancy...which was surprisingly more his Dad’s story than his own...not that Harry wanted to ever think about that though.

“Ah, that sounds more like him,” Blaise added like now everything was right with the world again.

“Besides, I’m pretty sure he loves that baby as much as you do now,” Pansy shrugged. “I mean, have you ever seen him with the baby. I’d say it was adorable if it was anyone besides Snape.”

“We should get going guys; it’s almost curfew,” Hermione said standing after she noticed the clock on the wall.

“Erm, Snape,” Ron started as if he wasn’t really sure how to continue his sentence.

“Artie, please.”

“Ok, Artie, just so you know, you tell Snape he better not hurt Professor Lupin, he’s our friend,” Ron warned.

Harry smiled at him, fangs out and black eyes shining. “I’ll accept your warning since I gave the same one to Professor Lupin. It *is* only fair, and I hear Furies do prefer things to be fair.”

Halloween

Harry was starting to get nervous as Halloween approached. It wasn't that he was superstitious, but still...it seemed something crazy happened almost every year on that night. He had long believed that Old Voldy had a checklist and always decided to terrorize Harry sometime around Halloween and finals almost like tradition. There had been some recent Death Eater attacks, but overall, it had been relatively quiet, so Harry was thinking they were due for something major. It didn't help that Dumbledore had somehow gotten it into his head to have a bonfire by the gates of Hogwarts instead of the feast that year. Yes, a bonfire did sound fun, but Harry thought the best plan would be to hole up and fortify the castle until All Saints Day. It was almost as if Dumbledore was *wanting* something to happen.

Snape had banned Harry and Castor from his rooms for Halloween because it also happened to be a full moon (of course it was!) and Moony was hanging out in front of Snape's fireplace. Even though the werewolf was safe after taking his wolfsbane potion, Snape was not taking any chances with his son and grandson. He had even gotten over his fear of werewolves enough to insist that Remus was extra safe under his watchful eye instead of unsupervised with Harry and Castor in the castle. Harry was so proud of how far his father had come since he once used to be very afraid of werewolves. Remus had done the man a world of good. However, between the day, the full moon, and Dumbledore's idiotic optimism, this all was definitely adding to Snape's agitation well as Harry's when he walked to the bonfire beside Harry and Castor.

"I would say that everything will be fine, but I'm honestly expecting something," Harry said quietly to the nervous potions master beside him. "If I were Voldy...I mean, I'd plan something. The opportunity is almost too good to pass up."

"Me too, son, me too," he said with an agitated sigh. "Dumbledore is seriously off his rocker if he thinks everything is going to go smoothly tonight. There are too many reasons for thing to go wrong."

"Didn't anyone tell him this was a bad idea," Harry grumbled, looking at the mass of students laughing and joking with each other as they walked through the fading light.

"Everyone did! Minerva's been loudly complaining since he first brought it up," Snape sneered. "He thinks that as long as we are on Hogwarts grounds, we are safe though. He just

keeps saying that Hogwarts is the safest place in Britain, even though he's been proven wrong countless times since you started school here."

"Yes, I very vividly remember a troll, a basilisk, dementors, dragons, a few professors, and Voldemort himself that have all tried to kill me on Hogwarts grounds," Harry said, with only a little bitterness. "Not to mention the colony of Acromantulas that live in the forest and any wondering werewolves that might be out since it's a full moon."

"There are Acromantulas in the forest?!" Snape stopped and exclaimed in surprise, his eyes wide in shock at that new information. He'd been to the forest for potions ingredients many times, but even for potions ingredients, he was not willing to go very far past the tree line into the dangerous forest without at least Hagrid with him for protection.

"Yeah, they tried to kill me and Ron in second year," Harry shrugged and held Castor closer to his chest.

Snape groaned. "I have a feeling I don't know the half of everything you've been through, do I?"

"Erm, you probably know about half," Harry said sheepishly and with a smirk at his father.

The bonfire was actually really fun...for a while. Harry got to hang out with his friends, Ron included now even though he tended to try to avoid the rest of the Slytherins. His former friend was a little suspicious (or maybe jealous) of Hermione's relationship with Blaise and was still a little awkward around the Slytherins in general, and they were too, but they all made an effort for Castor's sake if nothing else. Hermione and Blaise, on the other hand, were blatantly hanging off each other all night, so that seemed to be going well. It was a couple hours in that Harry was able to say "I told you so" to the universe though.

A loud howl came from the edge of the forest as five werewolves slowly emerged from the shadows. "Oh, come on!" Harry deadpanned with a sneer and a roll of his eyes at the approaching danger.

The entire pack of werewolves made their way menacingly towards the gathered students. Needless to say, everyone took off running towards the castle, but they weren't very close to safety since the bonfire was by the gates. Harry assessed the situation as quickly as he could with both the advantage of all his past experiences and his Fury instincts. His conclusion... they weren't going to make it, not everyone anyway. There were going to be students who weren't fast enough. This took all of one second for him to decide before he immediately turned to Snape who hadn't even had time to react yet.

"Take him," he said handing Castor over. He continued in a voice that was suddenly nothing like the voice of Harry Potter. His was now much deeper and had a short, clicking tone to it (probably due to the fangs). "Get them all into the castle...Protect," he ordered, not as Harry Potter but as the Fury.

Snape took Castor immediately as Harry's bat-like wings shot out and he took flight over the retreating students to have a better vantage point to attack from. Harry noted in his peripheral vision that Snape handed Castor off to Blaise who ran towards the castle, outpacing many of the other students, while Snape and the other professors helped the students who were not as fast. All this happened as Harry flew to stand between the retreating students and the oncoming werewolves. He landed with fully extended wings, visible fangs, luminescent black eyes, and surprisingly, now claws were even extending from his fingers.

Catching the werewolves by surprise, he let his Fury instincts completely take over with a screeching roar of a bird of prey, and he swiped with his claws at the first two werewolves, bodily throwing them into the other three. Before they could recover, he threw up a glowing green shield in front of himself coming from his outstretched hands. The shield quickly expanded over and around the werewolves, encasing them in a bubble.

Harry growled at the werewolf who charged into the shield multiple times, attempting to break the magic. He recognized the magical signature of Fenrir Greyback from the failed invasion of the castle the year before and the resulting injuries to Bill Weasley. He didn't have time to think about how he was able to recognize magical signatures now even before he fully came into his inheritance because he was weakening quickly and dramatically.

Harry searched with his magic behind him to find the magical signatures of the students and professors. They were all retreating towards the castle. He couldn't hold the werewolves for much longer. He held off until his father's signature, the last one, reached the doors before he

released the shield and simultaneously took a step, tessering himself directly into the Great Hall.

Harry ended up in the very middle of the hall, surrounded by all the frightened students. He quickly looked around to find Blaise, thankfully still holding a crying Castor, and his dad just entering the hall. He looked over to McGonagall, the closest professor to him, and with the same, deep and clicky tone ordered her sternly, "Protect," and then he promptly passed out in a heap on the stone floor.

Harry slowly awoke to the extremely familiar sight of the hospital wing's ceiling. He closed his eyes again with a pained groan. After shifting his sore muscles a bit (Merlin but flying took some muscles he'd never used before!), he realized his wings were still outstretched and hanging uncomfortably off the bed on either side of him and dragging on the floor. He rolled back and forth some so that he could slowly pull them back in.

"I'm very sorry Mr. Snape," he heard Madam Pomfrey say to his right in her normal brusque but caring tone. "I've never treated a Fury before and was uncertain how to get your wings to retract when you were brought to me."

He looked over to see her running a diagnostic on him with her wand. "That's ok, Madam Pomfrey. I don't think you could have made them retract without me conscious."

"Oh, thank Merlin!" He now heard off to his left as he saw his dad rush over holding Caster and looking very concerned.

"Hi, Dad," Harry said with a frown as he reached up to take his son. "Is everyone ok?" Snape looking concerned was shocking in itself, but Harry was also definitely not used to people waiting beside his hospital bed after any of his adventures since Madam Pomfrey generally ran all the students out of her infirmary.

"Yes, we got everyone inside in time and sealed off the castle," his dad explained, seeming to let out a breath of relief once he was able to hand off the baby and put a hand on Harry's shoulder as if to reassure himself that his son was still there and alive.

"All thanks to you, young man," Harry looked up next to realize Dumbledore was at the foot of his bed. Merlin, there were so many people around him! He was too tired to deal with the headmaster. He wished Madam Pomfrey ran out faculty members now as well.

"And you expended a great deal of your magic to do it! Too much magic for your body to handle!" Snape growled, but Harry could tell he was just worried and not *really* angry. "You cannot just hold five fully-grown werewolves in a shield bubble for an extended period of time. That takes a massive amount of power. You almost completely depleted your core."

Harry rolled his eyes. "I wasn't exactly in control now, was I? I was riding high on the whole, Fury protective instincts. Besides, what would you rather I have done? Let a few first years get eaten?"

"Maybe go all vengeance instead of protective next time and kill a few of them instead," Snape snarled. "It would have used much less magic."

Harry just shrugged and held Castor closer, kissing his temple. He didn't like his vengeance side, it made him uneasy and scared him some. This was probably (most definitely) why he'd never really given into that part of him yet...at least since he was a baby and almost killed Voldemort, if Remus was right anyway.

"It all worked out regardless," he responded quietly to the room.

Snape sighed and collapsed in the chair beside the bed. "You're going to be the death of me; you know that right? When you collapsed...I thought I had lost you for a moment."

Harry looked at him musingly. It was different having someone who actually cared as a parental figure. While it made him uncomfortable, he thought he might actually like it a little. "I'm sorry, Dad. I didn't mean to worry you."

"Young Mr. Snape is actually doing quite well," Madam Pomfrey said to calm his nerves some. "His magic is building back up nicely, and he should be able to leave in infirmary in a

couple hours."

"Thank Merlin!" Harry exclaimed, already ready to leave. He absolutely *hated* having to stay in the infirmary.

"You should have told us you were are a Fury when you applied to transfer into the school," Dumbledore scolded, but with a delighted twinkle in his eyes that spoke more to interest in this new creature he could use and not any kind of safety concerns.

"I could have helped you develop your powers, find productive ways of using them for our society. Your capabilities could be influential in these dark times we find ourselves in," the headmaster continued almost giddily.

Harry frowned, definitely not wanting Dumbledore to sink his teeth in his life once again. "That's not how my powers work, Headmaster," he explained calmly and clearly. He didn't want anyone, especially Dumbledore, to get the wrong idea about his powers. He was certain Voldemort would have heard about a new Fury in Britain by now if not when he was introduced to Slytherin house and only hoped the crazy man looked up Furies before getting any ideas as well.

"I can't use anything but very basic Fury powers until they are needed, which I guess is determined by some instinct of mine. On a normal day, I don't have any extra or stronger magic than any other student at this school. When I *can* access my powers as a Fury, then I can only really channel them instead of making active decisions about what to do and when. It's not like I have a whole lot of control and agency in what's happening when it's an emergency-type situation...at least not in my experience so far anyway."

Dumbledore frowned, not wanting to believe he couldn't use this powerful being. "Are you sure, my boy? What you did out there last night was quite impressive."

"Yes, Headmaster; I'm sure. It's not like I can learn new spells that only work for Furies or turn my powers on and off," Harry continued, holding Castor so that he was as far away from the headmaster as he could get his son. "When I'm Artie, I'm a normal seventeen-year-old wizard, and when I'm a Fury, the Fury has control."

"Well, I'm glad you were there to help protect your fellow classmates then," Dumbledore said, still with that twinkle in his eye, but with a little frown as well. "I'll leave you to your family." With that, Dumbledore walked away, clearly vowing to do more research into Furies.

As Madam Pomfrey also left the room, Remus finally rushed into the infirmary. "Oh cub! Are you ok?! What happened? Severus left a note for me, but I only turned back a few hours ago and fell immediately to sleep. Did you get hurt any at all? How's Castor?"

"I'm fine Moony...we're both fine," Harry smiled at him and took his hand. "In comparison to all my adventures, it was actually pretty tame."

"Indeed, there is infinite problems with the fact that is true," Snape drawled. "I expect you to use your Slytherin cunning now that you are in my house and stay much farther away from danger in the future!"

"I didn't schedule the bonfire," Harry protested with a pout.

"Oh, I know the person who is to blame for all of this," Snape glared at the door the headmaster had left from.

"You mean Voldemort?" Remus asked with a raise of his eyebrow, knowing exactly what Severus really meant.

"Him too," Snape stepped closer to Remus and crossed his arms, seeming angry at the world which was conspiring to harm his family.

"Oh...guess what Moony," Harry smiled broadly. "I got to *fly*!"

Remus laughed and took the seat beside Harry's bed. "I know you've missed flying for quidditch," he said, realizing Harry's need to move on to talking about something else.

"Why didn't you try out for the Slytherin quidditch team? I'm sure your dad would love to win his standing quidditch bet with McGonagall at least once while you are in school." This caused Snape to snarl/pout. That was the best way Harry could describe it, and it was absolutely hilarious. He heroically kept himself from laughing though as it would probably have been the last thing he ever did.

"First of all, do you two bet on everything that happens at the school? So, far I've heard about the sorting and quidditch, and I would guess the house cup as well," Harry raised a questioning eyebrow at his father.

Snape sat down in the vacant armchair and crossed his arms again. "We absolutely do not bet on *everything*."

"Uh huh," Remus said with more than a hint of sarcasm. "In addition to your list, Artie, they also bet on which students are seeing each other romantically, when Binns will finally pass on, what will happen to the newest DADA professor, they used to bet on the victims of the next Weasley prank, and how many detentions Harry Potter would get in a year as well."

"You guys have a problem," Harry looked at Snape with mock worry. "Do Remus and I need to stage an intervention?"

"Not all the bets are for money, actually most of them are for who has to do the latest night patrol," Remus explained while Snape glared at them both.

Harry snickered. "So, that's the reason why I always ran into you in the corridors and never McGonagall when I snuck out at night! It makes so much sense now! You need to get better at winning these bets, Dad."

Snape scowled more deeply. "You've completely gotten off topic. Why did you decide not to play quidditch this year? I was counting on no night patrols for a year when you were shockingly sorted into Slytherin."

"I miss quidditch, but it's actually against the rules to play if you have wings. I looked it up when I first got back here to school. No, love, don't do that," Harry said, shifting Castor who

had taken to trying to poke him *in* the nose for some reason. "I always figured people would find out eventually, and I didn't want to get kicked off the team after playing for a bit. People would think that Slytherin was trying to cheat."

"Ah," Snape nodded in understanding. "Always the honorable Gryffindor, no matter what house you are in. If you won a few games before you were disqualified, I'm sure no one in the house would have complained."

"Well, now that the secret's out, I can take Castor flying around the quidditch pitch! I think he'd love that, wouldn't you?" Harry asked as he bounced the baby and kissed his cheek.

Snape looked at him in abject horror. "You had better not put my grandson in danger from one of your ridiculous stunts!"

Harry rolled his eyes, but then glanced around the infirmary, checking to see who was around. "Hey, I know this is off topic, but I have to ask. Does it seem odd to either of you that we had this bonfire by the gates, which we never do, and that werewolves decided to attack that same night? Voldemort must have known about the bonfire, right? Normally, students wouldn't be that far from the castle at night."

Snape and Lupin glanced at each other. "It would stand to reason," Snape nodded.

"So, we have someone who's passing on information to You-Know-Who in our midst," Lupin agreed.

"You don't think...Dumbledore? He did plan it?" Harry kept glancing back at the door in suspicion.

Snape shook his head though. "None of us may like the man or trust him, but he's absolutely not in league with the Dark Lord. I think he's just lost touch with reality and assumes that Hogwarts is safe even when proven the contrary."

"It's more likely a student is informing You-Know-Who about the happenings at the school," Remus begrudgingly agreed. He still really didn't like Dumbledore for keeping him from his cub but also didn't have any concrete proof that he had done anything illegal.

"So, another year, another mystery to solve, no matter what my name is," Harry sighed in frustration. "At least it isn't the DADA professor this time. Thank goodness for small mercies."

"Finally," Snape said, taking Remus's hand in an uncharacteristic show of PDA.

"Oh, Artie," Remus remembered as he smiled at their linked hands. "You need to contact the twins when you get back to your rooms. They were the ones who woke me up yelling from the floo. I have no clue how they heard what happened so quickly."

"Either through Ron or the Order, whoever was quickest, probably. You know how gossip spreads around here. Clearly, it could be anyone passing on information to Voldemort," Harry said with a grin. He was grinning because, Remus said the twins, but Harry just heard that Fred was worried about him.

Madam Pomfrey was true to her word and released Harry a couple hours later. He had just gotten back to his rooms with Castor when he heard the floo ding that someone wanted through. He settled Castor in his playpen and opened it with a wave of his wand, knowing exactly who it was that wanted through...especially since they were the only ones who knew his floo information.

The twins rushed through with Fred in the lead, and both grabbed Harry immediately into a hug. "You were *supposed* to be staying out of danger now, and then we hear from Mum that some Fury at the school faced off with a bunch of werewolves. You gave us twin heart attacks!" Fred immediately scolded.

"Yeah, mate, you can't go scaring us like that," George agreed, patting Harry on the back since Fred hadn't let go yet.

"I'm fine, seriously, nothing wrong here," Harry assured them from where his air was still being constricted by a tall redhead.

The twins didn't leave Hogwarts until Harry had a large dinner and he and Castor were both nodding off to sleep. They wanted to make absolutely certain Harry and Castor both were completely over the fright. "You're worse than your mother, you know," Harry yawned as they made their way back to the floo.

"Bite your tongue!" Fred exclaimed.

"See if we worry about you again," George fake huffed as they floored back to their flat.

When George strode out of the floo into his flat, he saw his brother turn right around and walk back to the fireplace, seeming to have made a difficult decision. "What're you doing, Fred?"

"Something I should have done a long while ago, oh brother mine," he responded before throwing a handful of floo powder in again. "Severus Snape's quarters, Hogwarts!"

After a tired and grumpy potions master allowed him entrance, Fred Weasley tumbled from the floo into Snape's private chambers to find Snape and Lupin sitting on the couch and drinking tea. "What's going on?" Remus asked. "You realize it is very late, Mr. Weasley."

Suddenly losing some of his courage, Fred shifted on his feet a bit. "Erm, Professor Snape..."

Snape stopped him with a wave of his hand. "Please, I think we are at Severus now if you feel you can floo into my chambers in the middle of the night."

"Ok, uh, Severus," Fred started again, this time with shock on his face. "I was wondering if you could volunteer to babysit Castor next Friday night?"

"And you want me to babysit my grandson on that particular night, why?" Snape raised an eyebrow but with a little knowing smirk pulling at his lips.

Fred shifted awkwardly on his feet a second before taking a deep breath and quickly said, "I want to ask Harry out, and I don't even know if he likes me or guys in general or what, but I didn't want him not having a babysitter to be the reason he says no."

Snape looked over to Remus with an 'I told you so' look on his face. He then slowly took a sip of his tea, causing Fred's anxiety to rise. "I think we could do that," he finally said with a stern look on his face. "I suggest doing things right though. Ask him the way someone of his standing should be asked. You know what I mean?"

Fred let out a breath in relief. "Thank you, sirs. I will." With that he turned back to the floor.

"Oh, and Fred..."

"Yes?"

Snape looked at Fred and said, very calmly and serenely. "You hurt my son, and I'll break your legs."

"Erm, yes sir," Fred gulped and then floored back to his flat.

The next morning at breakfast, an unfamiliar brown owl dropped a small package in front of Harry during the morning post. Harry shifted Castor over to Pansy to hold while he opened the letter attached.

Hey Artie,

Fred here! Yes, Hedwig is doing fine. We're treating her like the queen she is, but she's a little noticeable to use to send you something, not that she didn't peck a hole in my finger for using a different owl to send this to you. Anyway, I'm writing with a question. I'd ask you in person, but while we make fun of and generally disparage every wixen tradition, I do come from a pureblood family and there are just a few very select traditions that we still tend to follow, specifically some that deal with persons with magical creature blood.

Well, that's a round-about way to say that I'm supposed to send this in a letter based on some old dusty rule from the 1500s or such.

(Harry was completely lost at this point. What in the world could Fred be asking that needed some old rule from the dark ages?)

So, I'm asking you, Artie Snape, if you would do me the honor to go on a date with me? I don't know if you like me or blokes in general, but I've always liked you. I've always noticed you since we first met when George and I helped you with your trunk your first year and I didn't even know who you were.

I know your favorite dessert is treacle tart, your favorite color is blue (definitely not red and gold!), you don't like being touched but love those you consider family to touch you, you don't like small spaces though you hide it extremely well, you have a dark sense of humor, you loved Sirius but see Remus as more of your godfather, you've always wanted a pet snake to talk to but won't get one in case it freaks people out, and you love your family, the one you've made for yourself, more than anything in the world. I know you Artie (regardless of what you are calling yourself at the time). So, I had to ask...I had to know. I hope if you turn me down, we can still be the brothers we are now, but I'm hoping you feel for me like I feel for you.

So, the ridiculous tradition part. In the box is a traditional courting ring. If you accept my date and my offer to court, put the ring on your right ring finger, and I'll know. If not, just send it back with the owl. Also, tradition, there are several protection charms on the ring I placed myself. There is one that negates almost all love charms and potions as well as one that helps deflect mind magic to some small extent.

So, Friday, 7pm meet me at WWW if you are up for it. I already cleared babysitting with Severus (he actually said I could call him that!) if you choose to say yes. I hope you do.

Lastly, to prove I am who I say I am (this letter was way too serious, you really should be thinking this is an imposter) the parchment is charmed, and your hair is blue by now.

Put on the ring,

See you Friday,

Love,

Fred (the better-looking twin)

"Erm, Artie, mate, your hair is blue," Blaise said in confusion across from Harry.

Harry just looked at him with a dazed and happy smile on his face. He slowly unwrapped the ring box and opened it to find a small, silver band with a dark sapphire embedded in it. He could feel Fred's magic circling the ring as he looked at it.

"That's a courting ring! Who sent you a courting ring?!" Pansy almost squealed as she bounced Castor up and down on her knee.

"Please tell me this is from the bloke you like?" Blaise asked with a wide grin. "I live for the drama!"

"Artie, you know Professors Snape and Lupin are staring at you right now," Draco said in a stage whisper. "You might want to make a decision about that ring before they come down here and start asking questions."

Harry, oblivious to all his friends, pulled the ring out of the box and slid it onto his right, ring finger. As soon as it touched his skin, he felt the warm rush of Fred's magic flow over him from it. The owl chirped once and flew off again, seeing its job done.

"Congratulations, mate," Draco said, patting Harry's arm. "And good luck with those two."

Sure enough, Snape and Lupin both were walking over from the head table. "Well, let's see it," Snape snarled at Harry who just held up his hand with a roll of his eyes at his dad. Snape grabbed his hand and looked at the ring, examining the spell work.

"I guess he did reasonably well, those are fairly useful spells and not something ridiculous at least," he begrudgingly admitted.

"It's lovely and the spells are spectacular," Remus said, also examining the ring. "You know your dad would say the same thing if that ring could repel You-Know-Who himself. Congratulations. And I like the hair! Good touch!"

"The spells are fine," Snape rolled his eyes.

"Uh huh, well I don't see a ring on my finger, and I'm also technically a magical creature," Remus said with a huff at Snape. "I don't think you have any room to grouch."

As Remus strode off after a wink at Harry, Snape rushed after him looking extremely worried now. Harry chuckled and took Castor from Pansy. "What's going on?" Hermione asked as she and Ron trailed over from the Gryffindor table, seeing that drama was happening across the hall.

"Artie just got a courting ring in the mail," Pansy said conspiratorially to Hermione and with a little squeal at the end.

"What's that?" Hermione asked.

Pansy flashed her own ring from Draco to Hermione to show the girl version. "It's an old tradition that when you ask out someone that you're serious about, then you send a courting ring you have spelled with some protection charms particular to that person. It's almost required in dating a magical creature since so many have mate bonds, you need to be very

specific with your intentions or you could end up in a very compromising situation. It's still frequently done in normal wixen relationships though as well."

Hermione looked over at Blaise with a questioning raise of her eyebrow. "I just haven't figured out the right charms yet," Blaise said quickly, grimacing into his coffee.

"Uh huh," Hermione said slowly. "We'll talk later." She turned to Harry, "Speaking of mate bonds, *do* Furies have mates?"

Harry shuddered, "Thank Merlin, Morgana, and the Founders, no! I would absolutely hate that being decided for me and just having to go along with it. I think I would refuse to be in a relationship on the principle of the matter if that was the case!"

"I don't know, it seems kind of romantic," Pansy mused sappily as everyone else rolled their eyes at her.

"Just think about it," Harry tried to explain to the hopeless romantic. "If a Fury happened to fall in love with someone and really thought they were their mate and promised to never leave them, and then their actual mate showed up. It would be a fucking disaster. Our oath thing isn't really conducive to decisions being made for us. I'm learning quickly that you have to be a realist as a Fury and plan for things maybe not working."

Pansy huffed. "I suppose that makes sense, but I still think it would be romantic."

"Congratulations," Ron said from behind Hermione. Harry wasn't sure when he had shown up but was happy to see he had actually come over. "Is it from the guy you liked?"

"It is," Harry nodded at him with a large smile.

"Care to tell us who he is?" Blaise asked, glad the attention was off him once again.

"I told you, he's from before I came here. He's not a Hogwarts student," Harry said evasively.

"Well, I for one volunteer to babysit whenever this date happens," Pansy laughed. "I'm volunteering Draco as well; it'll be good practice." At that Draco choked on his pumpkin juice and turned bright red.

"He already cleared it with Dad to babysit," Harry smiled as he slapped the choking Draco on his back.

"Wow, he must really like you, mate, to go to Snape first," Ron said in awe. "Also, why is your hair blue?"

"It's an inside joke," Harry chuckled, but really wondering how long it would take before his hair changed back to its normal silver.

Puddlemere United

“My Lord,” Lucius Malfoy nervously prostrated himself on the floor of the study Voldemort had claimed for himself in Malfoy manor.

“Ah, Lucius, any word from the search parties?” Voldemort asked as he calmly ran a finger over Nagini’s head with one hand and twirled the feared yew wand menacingly in the other.

Lucius was not fooled by the calm demeanor of his lord. The exact same news had been delivered each week to the Dark Lord for the past twelve weeks. Thankfully, Lucius had only had to deliver the news three of those twelve weeks. If he had delivered it more often than that, he was sure he would be suffering irreparable nerve damage by this point if not death.

“Forgive me, my lord,” Lucius said as he grimaced in preparation for a round of crucio. “There has been no body found and no evidence discovered once more. Do you wish us to continue our search? We could expand the search area once more.”

It was the same statement and question each time. The question was always followed by a furious crucio, and it ended with the order to keep searching. Lucius prepared himself, knowing how this was going to end. “No...I think not,” Voldemort said musingly, both hands continuing in their activities of stroking or twirling.

Lucius’s head snapped up. This was unexpected. “My lord? We are giving up the search for the Potter boy’s body?” Lucius asked, wanting to be very clear so he didn’t misinterpret his orders.

“Yes, I think it’s time, don’t you Lucius?” The Dark Lord’s red, slit pupil eyes studied the blond Death Eater on the floor with what would have been a raised eyebrow, if the Dark Lord had eyebrows.

Lucius panicked, not sure what the expected response to this was supposed to be. Finally deciding on agreement, the man quickly nodded. “Of course, my lord. In absence of a body,

we could have the suicide letter published in the Daily Prophet,” Lucius offered. “Skeeter is easily paid off and will publish whatever we want.”

Voldemort hissed at Nagini for a minute, causing Lucius to pale. A conversation with the snake tended to end in pain, he had a suspicion that the snake enjoyed seeing them suffer and egged her master on. The snake hissed back and then slowly slithered out of the room. Lucius almost breathed a sigh of relief, if the sadistic snake left, maybe he was safe.

“Lucius, I know that logic isn’t really your forte, but do try for just a bit, for me,” the dark lord sneered in his version of a patronizing smile.

“Of course, my lord. We don’t want to release the letter?”

Voldemort sighed in exasperation this time. Lucius was almost positive a crucio was coming any moment. He really just could not follow what was going on in his lord’s mind though. “Lucius, Lucius, Lucius...you have to realize that dozens of wizards on both our side and on the old bearded bastard’s side have all been looking for the body of one underage wizard for weeks now. That is dozens of at least semi-qualified wizards using both Light and Dark magic to find any trace at all of a boy who spent most of his life sheltered in a small, muggle suburb and then within the walls of Hogwarts. There is no evidence that the boy ever left the country or even went on vacation his entire life.”

“So...?” Lucius did not know what conclusion he was supposed to be drawing here.

Another dooming sigh from the dark lord. “I need better minions; you all are increasingly incompetent. No wonder Nagini left in boredom,” Voldemort sighed under his breath.

“The boy is still alive, Lucius,” Voldemort finally informed the man, putting him out of his misery.

Lucius nodded, finally understanding the direction of his lord’s thoughts. “Wouldn’t we have been able to find him alive then, sir? Do you think he really is in training somewhere with Alastor Moody?”

After about ten minutes of keeping the man under crucio, Voldemort finally felt calm enough to answer the question. He really did need better minions. “Lucius, use your inbred brain for one minute!” Voldemort sneered at the twitching man. “Why would Dumbledore have Diggle, Shacklebolt, and Fletcher out searching for a body along with all of you if the old coot knew where the boy was? You ran into them enough to know they’re doing the exact same thing we have been. I do not know how the idiot boy has kept himself hidden so far, but it probably helped that we haven’t been looking for a live Harry Potter but a dead one. I think it’s time to change our strategy and look for a living Boy-Who-Unfortunately-Still-Lives.”

“It is probable he’s hidden himself in the muggle world since that’s what he is most familiar with and which we are least,” Lucius suggested as he slowly raised himself to his knees.

“Why, Lucius, I think that’s the most intelligent thing you’ve said since you entered my door,” Voldemort chuckled at the man terrifyingly.

“Thank you, my lord,” Lucius quickly nodded, hoping for a reprieve.

“Well, we must have at least one half-blood or muggle-raised in our ranks. Find them and bring them here. They will need to lead this new search,” Voldemort ordered sternly.

“Yes, my lord,” Lucius said raising. He was extremely concerned that he was unfamiliar with a Death Eater fitting this task. It wasn’t as if they actively recruited half-bloods or anyone muggle-raised especially. He paused. “Do you want us to start spreading the rumor to the public that the boy is alive?”

Voldemort gave a short laugh. “No, I’m quite enjoying the confusion and distrust we’ve been sowing in the ranks of the Order of that Flaming Flamingo. Keep the death rumors going; maybe even start a new one about us having the body around the few members of the Order who are aware that the boy might be dead.”

“Yes, my lord,” Lucius bowed once more before turning to leave again.

“Oh, and Lucius?” Voldemort said, causing the man to turn before he reached the door.

“My lord?”

“Crucio!” Voldemort chuckled darkly as the man fell to the floor once more. “I didn’t tell you that you could leave yet. I still need the report from Hogwarts. What is going on in the aftermath of that fiasco of an attack Greyback planned? I knew I had given him too much autonomy with those plans. Incompetence all around! I must also know all there is to know about this new Fury recently discovered in Britain and how he is connected to our old friend Severus!”

Harry’s hair didn’t turn back to its steel grey until the very morning of his date with Fred. Surprisingly, Castor seemed sad that the color had changed back since he had been entranced with the blue locks all that week, thinking they were very funny. That evening, Harry handed a sleepy Castor to his Uncle Moony as soon as he walked into his dad’s quarters.

Harry raised an eyebrow at the werewolf now baby-taking at his son. “Erm, so Moony, do you live here now, or do you actually go back to your own quarters sometimes?”

Remus looked around and made a shushing motion to Harry, a fierce smirk on his face. “Shhh, I’m trying to see how long it takes Severus to realize that I’ve been slowing moving more and more of my stuff in over the past few weeks. I’ve already taken over three drawers and part of the closet. Frankly, I’m surprised he hasn’t figured it out yet.”

Harry laughed as he glanced at the door to his father’s private potions lab that he was sure to be in. “Maybe he has and just hasn’t mentioned it yet? He might be happy you are moving in...neither of you are the best at talking about your feelings, you know.”

Remus smiled mischievously, “Yes, I am well aware...and if he does know what I’m doing, then, I’m waiting to see how long it takes to actually bother him.”

“And, if that’s never?”

“Then, I guess I live here now,” Remus chuckled unapologetically. “I like his quarters more than my own anyway. They’re roomier and much more lived in, plus there is an odd floral smell I can’t get out of mine. It must be from that toad, Umbridge, but it makes my nose itch.”

Harry glanced over as the door to the potion’s lab opened and raised his voice some. “So, make sure he goes to bed at a decent hour, and he does need a bath tonight if he doesn’t make too much of a fuss about it.”

Snape quirked an eyebrow at Harry. “Of course, who do you think we are?”

“The one who gave a six-month-old baby ice cream and got him on a sugar high,” Harry smirked back at him.

“Have fun with Fred!” Remus added in before the two of them could get off on one of their sarcastic comments tangents that happened quite often between the father and son. Merlin, they didn’t see it, but they were so much alike!

“Just not too much fun,” Snape added as he reached for the baby with a little glare. “Especially since you are not supposed to be leaving the castle to begin with.”

“Aww, you can never have too much fun,” Harry winked as he took a step and tessered out of the castle to the alley beside Weasley Wizarding Wheezes.

Harry looked on in confusion as George Weasley waited for him outside of the store. He always enjoyed spending time with George, but this wasn’t the twin he had been expecting to see. “Hey George. Where’s Fred?”

George gave him a huge smile. “He’s just finishing getting ready. We had a potion blow up on us earlier, so he had to take another shower. I was wondering if I could steal you for a minute to look at some paperwork for the store.”

Harry looked at him in even more confusion. “Why? I don’t know anything about running a business. Any advice I give you, well...you should probably do the opposite.”

George just put a hand on his shoulder and led him inside the store that had recently closed for the day and made for a small office in the back that Harry had only seen a time or two when he had stopped by since they normally always hung out in the flat upstairs. “You gave us our start-up capital,” George explained. “So, we have you listed as a silent investor with the bank. When you reached your majority and changed your name at Gringotts, it messed up some of our paperwork. We just need you to sign that you are who you say you are for the bank’s purposes. As the goblins clearly already know that Artie is Harry, that shouldn’t cause a problem, right?”

“I guess not,” Harry said with a frown, taking the parchment from George.

“Ok, I’ll go tell Fred you’re here. Be right back!” George beamed at him as he sprinted up the stairs.

Harry read over the parchment in his hands and raised a disbelieving eyebrow. After a minute, he chuckled and signed at the bottom of the page, then initialed and dated another area. Just as he was finishing, he heard heavy footsteps crashing down the stairs.

“Harry!” Fred exclaimed excitedly, grabbing the Fury and pulling him into a hug. “I’m so glad you want to go out with me!! I really didn’t know how you would take all this. I was so stressed-out that morning when I sent you the ring that I accidentally set a rack of nosebleed nougats on fire.”

“Hi Fred. I can’t breathe you know,” Harry gasped out from the tight and almost manic hug. “And, of course, I want to go out with you, idiot! If you hadn’t asked when you did, I would definitely have asked you eventually.”

“Oh sorry. Can’t have you passing out before the date...I have too much planned,” Fred released him with an even wider grin. “So, George tells me you passed the test?”

Harry looked over at George suspiciously to where he was standing just inside the door to the office. “What test?”

“You knew it was me and not Fred when you saw me outside the store,” George smiled at him with a little unrepentant shrug. “We thought you always seemed to know which of us was which, so we wanted to see if you could do it when we weren’t standing right beside each other.”

“Yeah, how *do* you do that? Tell us your secrets so we can make sure Mum never finds out,” Fred leaned against the counter beside Harry, still grinning widely.

Harry thought for a minute. How *did* he always know? “Well, now that I know the both of you, your personalities are very different, and I guess your freckles are slightly different as well.”

George looked at him disbelievingly. “You were not close enough to look at my freckles out there,” he protested.

“Besides, you could tell us apart back when your eyesight was crap,” Fred reminded him.

“Yeah, so, I think it must be a Fury thing, but I recently realized I can tell who a person is by their magical signatures,” Harry shrugged like it was nothing special while both twins’ jaws dropped. “I guess I could do it before I got all my powers as well, but it was more in the background then. I just kind-of *know* which one you are, you know?”

“That’s amazing, Artie!” Fred almost danced in excitement. “Wait..Harry?...what do you want us to call you when we’re alone? Artie or Harry? We keep switching back and forth, and that has to get annoying.”

“Artie’s fine,” Harry gave his shoulder a bit of a shrug at the twin’s antics. “I *am* Artie now, so it keeps everyone from getting confused.”

“Wait, am I the only one that can tell you apart?” Harry asked in surprise as he caught on to what they had been asking.

George smirked at him, a teasing look in his eyes. “Watch this,” George said as he pulled a leather, cuff bracelet off his wrist and handed it to Fred. He and Fred then changed places so that George was leaning against the counter beside Harry.

“Hey, Angie babe! Come down here, there’s someone I want you to meet!” Fred called up the stairs to their flat.

A couple seconds later, Angelina Johnson walked into the little office from where she had been upstairs. “Hey! Do I get to meet Fred’s new beau?” she asked as she walked over to Fred and put her arm around his shoulders, a wide, expectant grin turned on Harry.

Fred and George both looked over at Harry and laughed. “Yes, you can meet my new beau,” Fred said between giggles as Angelina caught on to their prank. She immediately smacked Fred hard in the shoulder before reaching across and doing the same to George.

“Stop that you two!!” She scolded. “It’s not funny!”

“Sorry, babe,” George laughed as he and Fred changed places and Fred gave him the bracelet back. George put his arm around her waist after putting the bracelet back on, kissing her temple apologetically.

“It only took me a few months of dating to realize that Angie was giving me jewelry to mark which twin I was,” George explained with a smirk as he gave her another peck on the cheek.

“It worked so well before you figured it out,” she pouted.

“You may want to pick a different strategy than I did,” Angelina said with an eyeroll as she held out a hand to Harry. “I’m Angie, George’s girlfriend. Fred has been talking about you non-stop the past few days. I’m surprised you can’t walk on water after all he’s said, but I’ll reserve my judgement until we come across a large puddle or something to test it out.”

Harry smiled and shook his former quidditch teammate’s hand. “Good to meet you Angie. I’m Artie. Please don’t believe anything Fred told you.”

“Of course, not. You’ll learn that really quickly around these two, but they do make life interesting, that’s for sure,” she said with a fond look at George. “I do insist on meeting the baby sometime soon though. Apparently, he’s the cutest child in the entire world and we should all bow at his tiny, baby feet according to them both.”

“Sure, we should all do dinner together sometime then,” Harry offered. “We could cook here or something.”

“You do realize neither of them can boil water, right?” Angie laughed brightly and gave George’s hair a little tug in the back.

“Well, before you completely talk him out of courting me, let’s go ahead and leave,” Fred said, taking Harry’s hand before Angie could say anything else.

“Good to see you both!” Harry called as his twin pulled him from the shop.

Harry got a glimpse of the almost deserted Diagon Alley as they left the shop. He paused and looked around, noting the empty storefronts and the lack of pedestrians. “It’s easy to forget we’re in the middle of a war when you’re at Hogwarts,” Harry said sadly when Fred turned to look at him.

Fred took Harry’s hand and pulled him closer. “We need to apparate. I know you hate it, but are you up for it? I’ll wait until you’re ready,” he said, distracting Harry from his morose thoughts.

Harry just wrapped his arms around Fred. “It’s your fault if I throw up,” he said in answer right before Fred turned on the spot.

Harry felt as if his insides were all being squished together and like he was spinning frantically. The world didn’t stop spinning when he and Fred crashed down into a grassy area. Harry immediately fell over and lay on the ground with his eyes closed and groaned dramatically.

“Do I need to conjure you a bucket?” Fred asked, really trying not to laugh and be largely unsuccessful at it.

Harry lay spread-eagle on the ground and moaned. “Just give me a minute.”

He felt a presence flop down beside him on the grass. “So, this whole magical transportation thing is really no joke at all, I see.”

Harry’s world finally stopped spinning and he slowly opened his eyes. “I’ll tesser you back to Diagon, and you can feel what I go through every time people make me use a different means of transport.”

“I’m not sure I want to take you up on that,” Fred laughed, but grabbed Harry’s hand and gave it a comforting squeeze.

Finally feeling more himself, Harry sat up and looked around at where they landed. He gasped when he realized they were laying in the middle of a huge quidditch pitch with tower-like stands all around them. It was easily twice the size of Hogwarts’s pitch. He vaguely recognized the blue and gold banners around him but couldn’t see the name of the team or remember which had those colors in particular.

“Where are we?” He asked in wonder as Fred stood and pulled him back up to his feet.

“We’re at the Puddlemere United stadium and have the whole place to ourselves for an hour!” Fred smiled. He pulled two little sticks out of his pockets which he immediately enlarged to brooms. Harry gave him a look of shock when Fred handed him his own Firebolt.

“How?”

Fred smiled at him mischievously. “Remus helped me steal it to surprise you with.”

Harry laughed, appreciating the surprise and the forethought. “How did you get us in though? You can’t normally apparate to the middle of the stadium, can you? That seems a little unsafe.”

“No, Oliver Wood owes me a favor though. He had me added to the wards for just this hour,” Fred smirked at him. His look spoke volumes that whatever the favor was must have been very embarrassing to Wood.

“And, this favor was...?” Harry smiled at the redhead who was taking a shrunken box out of his robes this time.

“Well...part of the favor is that I take the details to my grave. But I *can* say that it involves catnip, Professor McGonagall, and Wood being somewhere he shouldn’t be with someone he probably shouldn’t have been with,” Fred chuckled.

Harry’s eyebrows knit together in concentration. “Well, now I have all kinds of horrible images and scenarios running through my mind. That is not healthy to my mental well-being, Fred Weasley!”

Fred laughed as he finally got the small box open and released a golden snitch. “That’s why I told you as much as I did. It wouldn’t do for me to be insane alone. Don’t you know...”

insanity loves company,” he wiggled his eyebrows. “Now, up for a game of catch the snitch?”

Harry’s eyes followed the snitch as it flew off into the stadium. “You do realize I was the youngest seeker in a century, right?”

“Yes, and I’m just a slow and plodding beater, I know,” Fred laughed at him as he got on his broom and rose a couple feet into the air. “I’ll try not to go too hard on you. We wouldn’t want to hurt that ego any.”

Fred laughed and zoomed off into the stadium before Harry could retaliate.

After catching the snitch in the first five minutes of their first game, Harry decided to take a little pity on Fred and gave him a ten-minute head start the next time. However, at the end of their hour, Harry had still caught the snitch four times to Fred’s zero, but the beater didn’t seem to care in the slightest. By the end, Fred had taken to trying to distract Harry by flying upside down and telling jokes instead of looking for the snitch anyway. Eventually, Harry just grabbed the snitch from the air where it was hovering beside Fred’s head and shoved it in the jokester’s mouth before flying to the ground so that he could roll around laughing.

“Does this make me the second person to catch a snitch in their mouth now?” Fred laughed as he pulled Harry up from the ground.

“I shoved it in there! You don’t have the grace to actually catch it in your mouth yourself!” Harry continued laughing as he shrank both their brooms. “That takes skill and finesse.”

“Oh, yes, almost throwing up the snitch was extremely graceful!” Fred agreed with a smirk. “So, dinner at my place? George and Angie were going to a movie at a muggle cinema tonight since the muggle world is a little safer right now than ours, so they’ll still be out for a while and we’ll have the place to ourselves.”

Harry smiled at Fred deviously as the twin looked back at him worried now. “Sure,” Harry grabbed onto Fred quickly and tessered right to the middle of the twins’ flat.

In a show similar to Harry earlier, Fred collapsed to the floor looking very green. “I never figured you one for payback, dear Artie,” Fred gasped with a pained groan.

“You do realize that between you and George, not to mention Sirius, Remus, and Dad, payback is bread and butter to our ideologies. Maybe I’ve just absorbed some of that over the years,” Harry said, helping him up. Harry was beginning to think that this was the most he had laughed in a very long time, and the night wasn’t even over with yet.

“I actually blame Ginny, she’s the vindictive one of the family, and you did date her for like two weeks. Must have learned a lot during that time,” Fred smiled deviously as he walked over to the kitchen and started rummaging in the cabinets.

Harry shrugged. “I’m just surrounded by bad influences. So, what are you making? I do remember what Angie said just an hour ago about your cooking skills.”

Fred looked a little lost as he pulled out a box of pasta and started reading the back of it. Harry eventually took pity on him and grabbed the box of pasta before doing his own search of the cabinets. Fred leaned against the counter looking like he had won some sort of contest.

“How in Merlin’s name do you not know how to cook when your mother is Molly Weasley?” Harry grumbled.

“My dear, sweet Artie, that’s exactly why I don’t know how to cook,” Fred laughed as he reached over to brush a piece of Harry’s hair behind his pointed ears. “Knowing my mother, do you ever think she trusted us in the kitchen for one minute?”

Harry laughed as he pulled a pan out and put water in it to boil. “No, I don’t guess so. I offered to help enough times, and she kept turning me down.”

“I think Bill cooked some,” Fred acknowledged. “It was only when he was on babysitting duty when we were little though.”

“Aww, you and George as little terrors! I’ll need to get a pensieve memory from Bill or your mum someday! That would be epic!”

Fred stared at him for a bit with a thoughtful expression on his face. “Will you remove your ring?” He asked after a moment.

Harry glanced down at his new courting ring and gave Fred a quick look of confusion and hurt. “Not that one, you dolt,” he laughed and took Harry’s hand in his.

“You’re not allowed to take that one off...or at least I hope you don’t ever want to. This one,” Fred said as he slid the glamour ring off Harry’s hand turning his eyes back to pure black.

“My eyes tend to freak people out,” Harry said, looking at Fred questioningly and waiting for the disgusted grimace.

“I like you just the way you are, and I think your eyes are extremely sexy,” Fred leaned over, giving Harry a quick kiss as the Fury blushed deeply.

Fred was still raving about the full pasta dinner Harry had made from random ingredients in their kitchen when George and Angelina returned from their date. They all convinced Harry to stay for a round of Exploding Snap with all of them before leaving back to the castle. Through it all, Fred and George did a phenomenal job of pretending they hadn’t known Harry for years while Angie tried to grill him on Snape and Lupin’s relationship since George had mentioned it to her earlier.

When Harry tessered back to his dad’s (and Lupin’s if we’re being honest) chambers, everyone had already gone to sleep. Harry avoided the bedroom like the gateway to purgatory itself and instead picked up a sleeping Castor who only blinked at him twice before falling to sleep again. Harry curled up on his dad’s couch with Castor in his wings, a huge grin on his face.

Pollux

The first major test to Harry's new identity surprisingly came from Charms class of all things. And Harry had to admit that he did it to himself by teaching his classmates in fifth year unfortunately. Professor Flitwick began class explaining that they would be learning how to use a Patronus Charm to send a message. Harry was already groaning in resignation as soon as Flitwick wrote the lesson of the day on the chalkboard.

"Now class, I know the Patronus Charm is normally taught in DADA and not in Charms. However, the charm itself has other useful applications besides fighting off dementors, like sending messages. I normally don't even teach this particular spell, even to 7th years, but according to your OWL examiners, pretty much all of you can cast a corporeal patronus, unlike students in my past classes. I heard a rumor there was a very successful defense tutoring group last year run by our absent Mr. Potter, and I was surprised at how effective it was when it came to your tests," Flitwick smiled at them all in pride. "Because you are so advanced in this spell, I've added it into our lesson plan for this week since it is very useful for communication purposes."

Harry dropped his head into his hands, trying to figure out the best plan of action. There was no way he could cast his stag patronus and not give himself away. Everyone had seen his stag when he cast it at the quidditch match his third year, and it would be too much of a coincidence for the new student to have the same patronus as the missing Harry Potter.

However, he had taken the Sorting Hat's advice and had set himself up as an excellent student in Charms (and all his classes) that year. Professor Flitwick would have a hard time believing he couldn't cast some semblance of a patronus even it was just a whisp of smoke. He figured that he could try to cast vapor instead of a corporeal charm, but he wasn't really sure he could do that now that he could cast the full spell since it wasn't as simple as just using less magic. It would cause him to not do well in the class that day, but it would protect his identity if he could pull it off.

"Right, so, you should all know the patronus incantation is *Expecto Patronum* even if you weren't a part of the study group. Once your patronus appears, then you will cast *Nuntius* at it. Lastly, tell the patronus who to send the message to and what the message is. Currently, Professor Lupin is in a free period and has agreed to receive any messages you are able to send," Flitwick explained. "For those of you who were not in the study group, I will be coming by to help you with the first spell before tackling the messenger addition."

Harry stood beside Draco whose face was screwed up in massive concentration. Harry snorted, barely stopping himself from laughing at his friend's constipated expression. So, Harry closed his eyes as well and tried to come up with a memory that was happy, but not happy enough for the spell. He wasn't sure it would work, but he had to at least attempt the spell, or that would look suspicious on its own. The memory he had recently used most in the past was when Sirius told him that he wanted Harry to move in with him and never go back to the Dursley's. It was still a happy memory, but it was tainted with the knowledge of Sirius's death.

This would work, Harry told himself. He thought of Sirius and that moment, letting the knowledge of his death bleed into his conscious thoughts as he raised his wand. Unfortunately, halfway through the spell, Harry's mind started to wander.

It was at *Expec*...that the crystal in Harry's pocket started to vibrate, telling him that Castor was making noise...

to Pa...Harry thought of his son and his love for him...

tro...Castor and him moving in with Snape and *actually* never having to go back to the Dursley's again...

num...his new family, being there, supporting him, being the family Sirius and no one else had never able to be for him.

Harry winced as a brilliant light erupted from the tip of his wand creating one of the strongest patroni he had ever cast before.

Draco gasped beside Harry who was similarly staring in shock. "Well done, Mr. Snape!" Professor Flitwick called happily across the room. "Now, the next incantation."

Harry looked on in love and amazement at the seal who was happily swimming through the room, chasing around Hermione's otter and nudging Ron's terrier playfully. "Pollux," Harry breathed out in recognition as the seal swam back and started circling him. It was his son...it

was Castor as he would be in the sea, happy and loved and embracing who he was as a Selkie.

“*Nuntius*,” Harry was barely able to breathe out. “Love, please go to Remus, tell him ‘Thank you Remus. Thank you so very much.’”

The seal disappeared as Harry walked over to check on Castor, coming out of his daze. Love, it changed his patronus. The love for his son; the strongest love he had ever felt, would probably ever feel.

Harry and Castor met up later that day with Remus and Severus in the potions master’s quarters that night for Harry to pass off Castor before his late night Astronomy class. “I hear you all had an interesting Charms class today,” Snape raised a questioning eyebrow at Harry as he bounced Castor a few times on his hip and kissed the top of his head.

“Yes, I’m very intrigued by the messenger I received earlier,” Remus smiled at Harry proudly. “I was expecting to either not get a message or maybe see Prongs in my office and have quite a bit of damage control to do after.”

“Wait? Harry’s patronus changed?” Snape looked between them in surprise. “I was only wondering if he succeeded in pretending to not know how to do the spell. I did not expect him to do it and have a different patronus! Why did you even attempt the spell?”

Harry sighed and joined Remus on the couch. “I was trying to fake it, but Castor’s baby monitor went off halfway through the spell. I got me thinking of him, and my memory became happier than the one I had been intentionally using to mess it up.”

“So, what was it since it was no longer your stag?” Snape wondered, joining them by sitting in the armchair.

“It was surprisingly a seal that appeared in my office,” Remus told him. “I have no idea why though. Fred and George both have magpie patroni, so it wasn’t matching them. You’re a doe, which his stag already matched, and mine’s a wolf, so who did it change for? I’ve never known a patronus to just change randomly, it almost always matches a person’s when it changes.”

“I think I know,” Snape looked at Harry, a question in his eyes. Harry saw the question. Was it time to tell Remus? Snape couldn’t tell anyone because of his oath, but Harry knew he wouldn’t anyway unless Harry was ready for Remus to know.

“I need you to promise me something, Moony,” Harry began seriously.

“Harry, we’ve talked about this. People can’t make you promises anymore,” Remus reminded him with a shake of his head. “You know this.”

“For this, yes, it’s important. I know exactly what I’m asking of you. I had Dad make the same promise when we were living with him this summer,” Harry told him, the glamour over his eyes disconcertingly disappearing even while he was wearing the glamour ring. “In order for me to tell you this, I need you to say that you promise to never tell anyone what magical creature Castor is unless Castor or I give you permission or if it would save Castor’s life. I’m sorry; I trust you completely, but this is just that important and dangerous to my son.”

Remus searched the dark eyes and looked over to Snape who was also looking at him with a serious expression on his face and gave him a little nod. “It’s that important?” Remus asked Snape.

Snape placed his hand on the back of Castor’s head protectively. “Yes, it is that important.”

Remus nodded right back then, a look of resolution on his face. “I, Remus John Lupin, promise to never tell anyone what magical creature Castor is unless his father or Castor himself tells me I can or if it would save Castor’s life to do so.”

A bright flare of magic went from Remus to Harry. “Thank you, Moony,” Harry sighed. “That means a lot...more than you can know.”

“You’re absolutely welcome. Now, can you cure me of my curiosity?” Remus gave the trio a little look of impatience.

“Castor is a Selkie,” Harry explained. “His mother was also. She was killed by her husband, unable to leave him. I think he must have had her skin, but she was thankfully able to pass me Castor’s before she died.”

Remus breathed out in awe and understanding. “Is it safe?” He asked the same question Snape had.

“Yes, I have it in a very secure place. It’s safe,” Harry assured him vehemently. “I’ll give it to Castor as soon as he’s old enough to take care of it himself. He knows where it is, but I’ll make sure he continues to know this as he gets older. I will not be his master, only his father.”

“He’s going to be massively powerful,” Remus said, taking one of the tiny hands in his own with love in his eyes. “Selkies have powers similar to house elves, but even more advanced. What they are specifically, I don’t think anyone knows besides the Selkies themselves. They are extremely secretive, for good reason.”

“Oh, he’ll be a handful,” Harry laughed. “I know that already. I’m both looking forward to and dreading when his accidental magic starts.”

“It’ll be soon,” Remus nodded, giving Harry information he actually hadn’t known. “He’s that powerful.”

“Oh great,” Harry and Snape both groaned.

“Hey! We can make Moony change diapers now!” Harry exclaimed happily in realization. At that, it was Remus’s turn to groan.

Harry and Pansy were studying together in the library just a week after Halloween. Dobby had insisted on babysitting Castor for a few hours because he “missed his Master Selkie” and hadn’t seen him enough recently. Really, Harry knew the elf was taking pity on him. Castor had started teething recently and neither of them had slept well for several days. Harry had finally agreed when Dobby promised they would be spending the time in the kitchens with the other elves and that Harry could stop by if he missed his son too much.

The reason why Dobby hadn’t seen Castor as much recently was because the eccentric elf was on a mild form of probation in Harry and Snape’s eyes, though Harry was pretty sure the elf still snuck in to check on Castor at night. Lupin and the twins thought it was all hilarious and were cheering the elf on, but Harry and Severus were standing firm.

It all happened a week or so before the events of Halloween when Dobby had suddenly asked if he could keep Castor for the whole day while Harry had class. As Harry was really busy with his classes and studying then, he didn’t think much of it and agreed. He figured that if Dobby needed anything, then he would be in the castle and could grab Harry, Severus, or Remus.

That evening when Dobby popped back into Snape’s quarters to pass Castor off to Harry again, Harry finally realized why Dobby wanted him for the whole day instead of just during Harry’s longer classes. His son looked beyond exhausted but also extremely happy. His whole face was sticky with different sugary substances, he was wearing a ballcap with mouse ears on the top, and there was a stamp on his tiny hand that read “Wizarding Disney.” Apparently, Winky’s family had season passes to Wizarding Disney in Paris and she had a day off and was welcome to use the passes surprisingly. It was nice that Dobby and Castor were able to visit with Winky, and that her family was so considerate, but Harry still didn’t know what family the former Hogwarts elf was with, and...it was a *bloody* different country!

Now, Harry was glad they had a fun day together and knew Dobby and Winky could protect the baby, but he spent the next half hour trying to impress on the, only slightly, repentant elf the importance of telling the father before taking his child away from the castle and bloody out of the country they lived in! Castor’s grandfather had, of course, backed Harry up, but Remus had just asked if he could tag along next time they went. This earned him glares from both men, and probably relegated him to sleeping on the couch that night.

Dobby had gotten better over the next couple weeks at telling Harry where they were going after that, so Harry was reluctantly taking him off probation. Also, his nerves were very

grateful to the baby's favorite elf for taking his fussy child for just a little while since neither of them had been sleeping well. So, that is how he found himself sitting in the library with his new Slytherin friend and finally getting to his homework that he had let pile up since the teething horrors began.

Harry had only just finished his potions essay when Blaise rushed into the library, looking for them frantically. Both Harry and Pansy looked up at him in concern when he ran over to their table. "Draco's been attacked. He's in the infirmary," Blaise rushed out between panting breaths as he clutched a stitch in his side.

Pansy stood to run to the door, fear lining her face, but Harry forcefully grabbed onto both of his friends instead and tessered them directly to the infirmary. While Blaise lay crumpled on the floor, trying not to throw up, Harry was impressed that Pansy pushed through the feelings in her anxiety for Draco and ran over to the last bed in the row of beds where they could see blond hair sticking up from under the sheets.

"Hey, guys," Draco slurred with a smile, obviously high out of his mind on a strong pain potion. Pansy took Draco's hand, which Harry noticed was more than slightly shaking.

"Draco, what happened baby? Are you ok?" Pansy asked as she pushed his blond hair away from his forehead, holding back tears. "Who did this?"

"Pssh, nothing much. I'm fine," Draco said still slurring and very drugged. "Least, nothing haven't done before. Hey...you have any chocolate or a bunny...I could hug a bunny...that would be nice. They're so soft! Have you ever hugged a bunny before, Pansy?"

"Yes, baby. I was with you when we saw the rabbit at the pet store," she chuckled and kissed his forehead. "I'll get you some chocolate though if Madam Pomfrey allows it."

Harry's eyes narrowed. The pain meds, the tremor in his hands, the fact that Draco had experienced whatever this was before were all starting to add up to the Fury. "Draco, did someone cast crucio on you?" Harry said, taking the blond's other hand with fire in his eyes.

“Yep, get this, a Hufflepuff found me and brought me here, a *Hufflepuff*! My dad would kill me. The shame to the Malfoy name, being saved by a Hufflepuff!” Draco laughed dramatically as Blaise finally made it over to the bed. “Merlin, I should send him a letter!”

“Wow, he’s really out of it. They must have held him under the curse for a long time if Pomfrey had to give him this much pain potion,” Blaise observed angrily.

“Draco! Draco! This is important,” Harry said, trying to get his attention as his former enemy was now staring at Pansy’s hand like it was the most interesting thing in the world. When the grey eyes focused as much as they could back on Harry, he asked, “Who did this to you? Who cast the curse?”

Draco looked at him in confusion. “Didn’t I already say? I thought I did,” Draco stared off into space before Blaise snapped his fingers in front of his face. “Oh, yeah, Crabbe and Goyle...both of them. Got hit by both a few times...Crabbe’s better at it. Goyle needs a bit more umph or something.”

Harry looked over at the other two Slytherins. Their eyes grew wider when Harry’s glamour fell away, and his eyes turned black. Almost immediately after, his fangs appeared, and his wings shot out. “Erm, mate, the professors can handle this, I’m sure,” Blaise said worriedly to the angry Fury. This was looking bad...

“Yeah, Artie, please. Draco knows you care for him. He wouldn’t want you to go all vengeance and get yourself into trouble,” Pansy added, wondering how much havoc an out-of-control Fury could cause to the student-body.

“No expelled, no Artie,” Draco slurred, pulling frantically on Harry’s hand that he was still holding.

Harry carefully extracted his hand from Draco’s. In the deep and clicking voice they had only heard that one night at Halloween, he responded. “Then protection. I will protect my friends.” Harry turned, catching a glimpse of a very concerned potions master, just pushing into the infirmary before he disappeared.

Draco had been released from the infirmary the next day after a mostly clean bill of health and with a bag of potions to continue taking. Pansy and Blaise both were joking with him as he packed up his few personal items about all the blackmail they now had on him from his stint under pain meds when Harry walked in without Castor and sat beside them with a smile on his face as if nothing happened.

“What did you do?” Draco asked him in concern, narrowing his eyes in suspicion. “I don’t remember a lot from yesterday, but I do remember you going all scary-mode.”

“What me?” Harry smiled innocently. “What makes you think I did anything? Besides, I hear Crabbe and Goyle were expelled.”

It was true. Several hours after Harry had tattered out, the headmaster had come in to inform Draco that Misters Crabbe and Goyle would be out of the castle by the next day. Professor Snape had looked extremely relieved at that news, but also very angry they were only being expelled instead of sent to Azkaban. Dumbledore must have covered up what they did somehow since they were both of-age and should have been arrested. Draco wasn’t even offered the opportunity to talk with aurors about what happened though. As for his son, Snape had earlier quickly checked on Draco before running off to stop whatever idiotic plan his son was about to enact on the two perpetrators, but Snape had never found the Fury nor Crabbe or Goyle and eventually returned to Draco’s bedside.

“Yes, I was very surprised when two alive and well young men boarded the Hogwarts Express this morning,” Snape informed them in his normal drawl as he walked from Madam Pomfrey’s office where he had been getting briefed on what Draco would need in the coming days to completely heal. “This makes me question, just what the angry Fury did when he left here in a strop?”

Harry shrugged. “Maybe I couldn’t find them.”

Snape scoffed. “You can find anyone when you’re in full Fury form.” At Harry’s shocked expression, Snape rolled his eyes. “You forget, I have all the books on Furies as well, and I can read. Unlike some of the dunderheads in these halls.”

“Present company excluded, I’m sure,” Pansy joked and then caught herself with a look of horror. She hadn’t realized how comfortable she was getting around the potions master since spending time with Artie, who treated the man as a normal person. She braced herself for the professor’s ire.

Snape just looked at her and smirked though. “Maybe,” was all he said. “However, I *will* hear what you did to the miscreants who dared to attack my godson. And, if the reason is more for my own pleasure than your punishment, then I am sure you can understand where I’m coming from.”

Harry didn’t trust that smirk one bit, but smiled at his father, nonetheless. “Well, I’m not exactly sure what I did,” he tried to explain with a scrunch of his nose in thought. “I fled out of here with the goal to protect Draco and the other students from those two Death Eaters parading around the school. When I found them, laughing about what they did in an empty classroom by the way, well...I made sure they could never hurt anyone again.”

“And that means...?” Snape raised an eyebrow.

“Any time they inflict purposeful pain or injury on a person, it will be reflected back on them the same as the person they are harming,” Harry shrugged. “So, if they ever cast the cruciatus curse again, they will find themselves writhing in pain along with their victim. If they cast the killing curse...well, that’s it for them. I think Voldemort will soon find that they’ve lost much of their usefulness to him, pity that.”

All five Slytherins in the infirmary had matching evil grins on their faces at that news. “Wow, I didn’t even know there was a spell for that,” Draco grinned even more widely. “Can you teach it to me?”

Harry looked a little uncomfortable. “I don’t use spells when I’m all Fury-like. I just manipulate the magic to do what I want it to do. I don’t think I could do it again unless my Fury side was in charge. I still don’t understand how to control that part of my magic...I might never be able to.”

“I think there are some things we must take care of before leaving the infirmary,” Snape informed them as they turned to him questioningly. “First of all, ten points to Zabini,

Parkinson, and Malfoy for attempting to talk down an enraged Fury set on destruction...you must have been quite successful since he did not tear the two limb from limb.”

Harry mock glared at the man while his friends laughed. “And,” Snape continued dramatically. “Detention for said Fury for letting himself get out of control.”

“What?!” Draco exclaimed to Harry’s surprise...surprise that Draco was defending him, not that he was getting detention from his father, that was entirely expected. “But he was just protecting me!! You can’t do that Uncle Sev.”

Professor Snape glared at Draco to keep quiet. “I can and I will. He is both my student and my son. For detention tonight, I have some bottles I would like you to clean. You see, there are all these full bottles of butterbeer around my quarters that really need to be emptied out so they can be used again. It’s possible there are also a few plates with biscuits on them as well that need to be cleared.”

Harry chuckled in surprised fondness for his dad. “I might need some help with all that, Professor. It sounds like quite the task. Could I possibly bring a friend or three to help clean all that mess?”

Snape stood and brushed invisible lint off his robes. “Of course, as long as it is only those in Slytherin. I can’t have any Gryffindors knowing where my quarters are, you understand. I would need to move promptly if that were to ever happen.”

Just as the potions master was reaching the door, he paused as the laughing voice of his son called out. “You know Remus was a Gryffindor, right?!” Snape scowled and stalked out of the infirmary to stock up on party-food from the kitchens.

Remus showed up in Harry’s chambers a couple days after the impromptu detention party. “Harry, I have an important question,” Remus started as he, Harry, and Castor settled down for tea in the sitting room.

“Sure Moony, what’s up?”

“Did you seek vengeance on Crabbe and Goyle for what they did to Mr. Malfoy?” Remus asked, taking a sip of his tea and raising an eyebrow over the rim of the mug. There was surprisingly no judgement on his face, just curiosity.

Harry shifted Castor in his lap awkwardly. “Erm, no, I didn’t, but I may have made it to where they can’t hurt others again. I’m not going to apologize for that.”

“And you should not...So, to be more specific, you were protecting Mr. Malfoy?” He clarified.

“Yeah, and the other students they might go after. I’m sorry for losing control, but it’s not like I hurt them in any way; I just made it to where they can’t hurt others,” Harry said firmly.

“I’m not complaining about what you did,” Remus said, putting his mug down with a frown as if he were piecing together all the bits of research he had done into Furies in his head. “I’m concerned that you only ever give in to your protective side and you never access vengeance. It is a core part of who you are.”

Harry looked at him in confusion. “You think I should have punished them?”

Remus sighed and put down his teacup. “I’m not talking about Crabbe and Goyle specifically. No, I don’t think you should have injured them, more to keep you out of trouble with Dumbledore and the aurors than because they didn’t deserve it, which to be clear they did. But I’ve been reading, and I think you are limiting yourself in how you access your Fury powers. Protection is not actually your strongest trait. As a Fury, vengeance is what you are made for. By not connecting with that side of yourself, you’re limiting your powers and stifling part of yourself.”

“What right do I have to sit in judgement on anyone?” Harry scoffed. “I’m not the judge and jury of others. I’m just...Harry, or Artie or whatever.”

“But you are,” Remus gave him a sad smile at the fact his cub would never be normal, he wasn’t born to be ‘just’ anything. “As a Fury, you have the right given by Magic herself to judge others. It is who you are.”

“That doesn’t seem fair,” Harry shook his head in disbelief. “I’m just Artie, a seventh year not even finished with school yet. I’m not some supernatural judge.”

“Actually, that’s the exact definition of a Fury. You *are* a supernatural judge.”

“I don’t know that I agree, Remus,” Harry pulled Castor closer to himself. “I don’t think I can seek vengeance on others. That’s just not right.”

“Just think about it, alright?” Remus asked seriously. “I’m sure there are some people, like a certain Dark Lord, where you may find vengeance an easy decision.”

“I’ll think about it,” Harry said slowly, knowing what he was about to say wasn’t exactly the truth. “But I’m out of the war, and I will not seek to endanger my son in any way. I’m neutral...the grey side if I have to choose an alignment.”

“Thinking about it is all I ask. And actually, Furies are inherently neutral, it’s why neither Dumbledore nor Voldemort have even a chance at controlling you. You stand alone, for better or worse,” Remus said.

Harry just snorted. “What else is new?”

“Well, you have us now, and we will help as much as we humanly can,” Remus smiled and reached for Castor. “Now, can I hold my godson?” Harry smiled and passed a giggling Castor to the werewolf.

“You know,” Remus said with a wicked grin. “It only took months of dating, but I finally caught your father without all that gel in his hair he slathers in it every day. I swear he always woke up before me just to do his hair.”

“Yeah?! So?” Harry grinned back.

“You were right! James’s hair was never that crazy. I can’t believe his hair is even messier than yours was! It’s like gravity doesn’t even exist for it!”

“I know right?!”

“I’m going to have to steal his hair products one day and make him teach like that! It’d be epic!” Remus laughed.

Harry clutched his sides, laughing at the picture. “Yes! Please! We need pictures and we need to make sure he has to eat every meal in the Great Hall!”

The Cold War Begins

Hermione forcefully shoved Blaise and Harry apart at the Slytherin table early on Saturday morning as she sat between them and dropped a heavy, black leather book on the table with *Darke Creatures* emblazoned in silver across the cover. “Hello, Hermione, good morning,” Blaise smiled at her as he pulled the pancakes closer to his girlfriend.

“Thanks,” she smiled at him and put a couple on the plate he had just emptied of his breakfast.

“Erm, Hermione, not that I’m not happy to see you, but what are you doing at the Slytherin table, and what’s with the book?” Harry asked as he tried to get Castor to eat a little porridge instead of just smearing it on his face.

Hermione looked over at him with her ‘I’ve been doing research’ face and smiled. “Did you know that in the 1300s there was a law that stated the highest court in the land was any court presided over by a Fury. Any verdicts handed down from one of these trials was magically binding. As far as I can tell, the law was never repealed.”

Harry laughed at her enthusiasm. It surprised him how very much his relationship with Hermione had changed with his identity that year. He hadn’t realized it before, but Hermione had always treated him like a child she was babysitting or much younger brother, someone who needed looking after and who caused her fond exasperation most of the time. Now...it was almost as if they were equals, what he thought they had been before but was realizing that wasn’t actually their relationship.

Harry didn’t know what specifically about him led to this change in how she interacted with him, probably the baby, or maybe it was just that Hermione didn’t know him since he was 11 and most definitely didn’t assume he was from an abusive home like he was certain she had realized when he was Harry. Regardless, he liked the change...he didn’t want to go back, which shocked him because it forced him to admit to himself that he didn’t actually feel the need to tell Hermione who he had been before. He didn’t feel like he was just waiting to fill her in anymore...he was assuming he would stay Artie in her eyes indefinitely. That was a shocking revelation that he wasn’t so sure how to deal with.

“So, I’m guessing you’ve been doing research into me since before Halloween when I told you all about Furies,” he eventually remarked with a nod towards the book.

Hermione smirked at him playfully. “Of course! Hon, pass the syrup please,” she said turning to Blaise and giving him a little kiss on the cheek when he handed it to her.

“You find out anything else interesting that Snape hasn’t bothered to fill us in on yet?” Blaise asked as he picked a blueberry off the top of her pancakes where she had just dumped a spoonful.

“It’s so interesting just how your magic is different from ours! Did you know that Veritaserum is lethal to a Fury? Be careful about that Artie!” She nodded distractedly in his direction.

“I actually didn’t know that,” Harry paled slightly. That was very good to know. How many times had various people threatened to dose him with Veritaserum? “Merlin...that’s important information...”

“Yeah, it’s something about it interacting with how you bind oaths or something,” Hermione nodded. “Unfortunately, this book only has a couple pages on Furies, and I couldn’t find any other book in the library that even mentioned you.”

Harry carefully wiped the porridge off Castor’s face and grabbed the diaper bag. “Thank you, Hermione. I need to head out now. I’ll see you all later,” Harry nodded at them. He glanced up to the head table and saw that his dad had already finished breakfast and left.

Harry and Castor rushed down to the dungeon where Harry quickly let himself into his dad’s chambers. “Arcturus! Castor!” Snape smiled at them as he pushed a pile of papers he was marking aside, happy for the opportunity to procrastinate some.

“Dad, I have a quick question about something I just learned at breakfast,” Harry said, putting Castor on the floor so that he could crawl around and explore. “Do you remember when Umbridge tried to dose me with Veritaserum in fifth year?”

Snape looked at him with a frown and a look of concern. “No, I didn’t know she tried, but I did suspect she dosed a few people, so I believe it whole-heartedly. That woman was vile! Even Azkaban is probably too good for her. I wish she would be brought up on charges for *something*.”

“You’ll get no disagreements from me on that. I just learned though that Veritaserum is lethal to Furies. Do you think it would have killed me if I had actually been dosed with it then before I came into my inheritance?” Harry asked with more detached interest in the theory than any other emotion.

Snape paled visibly and remarkably. “I’m taking that as a yes,” Harry nodded slowly.

“Right, so after Halloween, I went to the library and took out every book that I could find which mentioned Furies so the headmaster couldn’t find any information he might be able to use against you,” Snape explained as he motioned to a pile of books Harry had noticed on the end table before but hadn’t really looked at. “Well, I found all but one, and it was currently checked out, so he must have gotten some information.”

Harry snickered. “No, Hermione has it. That must be the one she was reading. How do you think I learned this information?”

Snape rolled his eyes. “Of course, she is the one who has it. That is much more desirable than the headmaster at least,” Snape reached over and picked up a small pile of four books. “From my studies, these are the ones I think you need to read, especially this one.”

Snape handed over a small brown leather book that looked immensely worn and which had a suspicious red-ish brown stain on the front which Harry really hoped wasn’t blood. “This one is a diary written by a Fury in the 18th century.”

Harry casually flipped through the handwritten pages that were covered in beautiful cursive and random ink blots. “What’s so special about this one in particular, besides that it has first-hand experience?”

“I was looking into Remus’s theory about what happened the night Lily died and you were attacked. It seems he was most likely correct about your part in what happened. The Fury who wrote this explains that in times of great need, you have access to your powers even before your majority and inheritance. It must be a significant and dire need though for them to manifest. The fact that you always had access to these powers means that you were never at any point in your life *not* a Fury, so yes, Umbridge would have killed you in your fifth year if she had succeeded in dosing you with Veritaserum.”

“I think the murder of my parents would count as dire need,” Harry nodded, looking at the journal with more interest in the writing now. “Great...randomly dosing students who might have a serious allergy or creature inheritance with potentially lethal potions...I’m frankly not shocked at all where that pink monster is concerned.”

“Yes, and I would guess your need to protect the philosopher’s stone in your first year is what led you to defeat Quirrell and Voldemort then...what you did was more than likely caused by accessing your Fury powers early as well. Also, I don’t know this for certain, but my guess that your desire to protect Black your third year tapped into your powers again to produce that unusually powerful patronus. A normal patronus could not chase away hundreds of dementors even with immense power behind it.”

“Why couldn’t I save Cedric my fourth year then or Sirius my fifth?” Harry asked sadly as he blinked a tear away at how much he had both done and not been able to do.

“They died too quickly, there was nothing to protect,” Snape explained as he reached over and took Harry’s hand in his. “If you notice, you have never once chosen vengeance except for that first time as a baby when you saw your mum die. You have never again used your powers for vengeance since then.”

Harry snorted and wiped his cheek. “Remus would say that’s a bad thing.”

Snape nodded and scooped up Castor who was tugging on his robes now. “Actually, it is. You are actively denying the strongest part of yourself. You were given this gift to be one who protects, yes, but also one who holds those with magic accountable. It is your duty as a Fury.”

“I don’t want to judge others though,” Harry closed his eyes and crumpled more into himself on the couch.

“Son, you deflected a lethal curse that there is no known shield for the one time you gave in to your vengeance side as a fifteen-month-old baby,” Snape said with a raise of his eyebrow. “Magic has deemed you worthy of great power. I think the fact you don’t want the power is part of what makes you in particular worthy of it. It is not random that our genetic traits activated in you when it could have lain dormant or manifested in someone else in our line.”

“Thanks, Dad. I’ll read over these,” Harry said picking up the books. “This all is just a little too much like the whole ‘Chosen One’ situation last year. I’ll reserve judgment, but I don’t think I like it.”

“Harry, I am sorry about Umbridge, and I’m so very glad she was unsuccessful,” Snape said, reverting to Harry’s given name with a look of sadness and understanding.

Harry gave him a short nod. “Just one more thing to add to the list of reasons why I hate her.”

Snape narrowed his eyes questioningly as Harry picked up Castor from his lap and the diaper bag from the floor. “Is there something else she did that I don’t know about? While I agree with you completely, you seem exceedingly emphatic as to her vileness.”

Harry shrugged. He figured his dad probably knew everything that had been going on that year. “Besides her being just as evil as Voldemort in my estimation? Did you know she was torturing students with a blood quill?”

“What?!!” Snape stood, scaring Castor who whimpered in Harry’s arms and buried his face in Harry’s shirt.

“Oh, Cas, it’s fine. Grandpa just got upset. You’re fine. No one is going to hurt you,” Harry bounced the baby whose lip started to tremble.

“Was this during her detentions?” Snape asked with a glazed look in his eyes as he unseeingly stared into his fireplace.

“Er, yeah, she’d make you write lines with it. I’m surprised you didn’t know. Hey, we have to head out. I’m going to take Castor outside to get some sunshine. Being in the castle all the time can’t be super healthy,” Harry started to leave.

“Harry, stop!” Snape’s hand shot out and grabbed Harry’s arm, an odd shine in his eyes. “You had detention with that woman almost every night for months! Was she having you write lines with that torture device the entire time?”

Harry held up his hand to show Snape. “Yeah, it used to have a scar across the top that said *I must not tell lies*. It was healed with all my other scars this summer though when I changed.”

“Why didn’t you tell anyone about this?” Snape took his hand and studied it like he could still see the words there.

Harry shrugged with a frown, not knowing why Snape was seeming to have a breakdown over this. He knew Harry’s life had been pretty terrible, all things considered. “I didn’t think there was anything anyone could do. Who was I supposed to tell? She was the ‘High Inquisitor’ or some such rubbish. Besides, it was mainly just me. If she had detention with me, she couldn’t have detention with anyone else. And, I’ve had worse, so no big deal.”

Snape sighed and rubbed his free hand down his face in frustration, still holding Harry’s hand with the other. “Please, Harry. Think about this from another perspective, from my perspective now. If it were Castor she did that to, tortured him for months, what would you do?”

Harry’s black eyes shone through the glamour for a second. “I think I wouldn’t have a problem choosing vengeance in that moment,” he said darkly.

“See! Even if I did not particularly like you or could safely show you any kindness at the time, and even though I didn’t know you were my son, I would have tried to help! I could have at least treated the wound so that it wouldn’t scar and offered to take on some of your detentions myself,” Snape explained.

Harry gave him a little grateful nod and smile. “Well, at least we now know that there are some reasons out there in the world where I would choose vengeance.”

Snape nodded and promptly grabbed his cloak beside the door. “Where are you going?” Harry asked since Snape had seemed like he was settled in with his marking for the afternoon when they had entered the rooms.

“I’m going to the lake with my son and grandson. The dunderheads’ papers can wait,” Snape said, throwing on his cloak and opening the portrait hole for Harry. “I would like a rundown of everything that has happened to you here at the school since your first year while we take in this nice day as well. Spare no details.”

Harry groaned while Snape followed him out of the room and the door slammed behind them.

A week later, Remus Lupin once more pushed his way into Harry and Castor’s quarters after classes ended for the day. Harry looked up from where he was playing with his son on the floor. “Remus! Hey! What’s up?”

“Harry, your father needs to see you,” Remus said seriously, coming to sit on the floor with them. “I’ll watch Castor while you go.”

“What’s wrong?” Harry asked, finally catching the deep concern in Remus’s voice.

“Something to do with young Mr. Malfoy. I’m not sure what though,” Remus replied as he picked up the toy Castor was playing with. “We’ll be fine here. Take all the time you need.”

Concerned now, Harry stood and stepped forward, tessering instead of running through the castle. Harry turned around at a sharp gasp from Draco who was sitting beside Snape on the couch. “Merlin’s balls!” The blond gasped in surprise.

“What’s wrong? I came as soon as Remus found me,” Harry said, rushing over to them when he saw the tear tracks down Draco’s cheeks. “Did someone hurt you again? Who was it this time?!”

“I’m not hurt, but Harry Potter is dead,” Draco sniffed and scrubbed at his cheeks, embarrassed to be caught crying. “He killed himself. He’s dead and everyone just thinks he’s off on holiday somewhere or some such rot!”

Harry looked over to his father who had a worried frown on his face. There was more going on than his supposed death here. Why was Draco so upset? “That’s horrible, yes, but you two weren’t super close,” Harry said putting a hand on Draco’s shoulder and trying to comfort him. “Ron seems to think you two hated each other or were rivals at least.”

“I know,” Draco breathed out tiredly, “I didn’t want him dead though. He even helped me last year get out of it all. Besides, he was the one who was going to kill the Dark Lord. What are we going to do now?! Dumbledore called me to his office an hour ago and explained what happened with Harry’s death. He said I have to go back now and apologize to my father and the Dark Lord, make nice and grovel and beg to be taken back in. He said that we can’t win the war without a spy on the inside. They’re going to kill me, Artie! You don’t just walk away from the Dark Lord! You don’t walk away from my father!”

Harry looked at his father in shocked horror. How could Dumbledore ask this of a student, even one of-age? How could he ask this of anyone really? Returning to the Dark Lord after walking away was a death sentence. This was going too far.

“You will *not* be returning to your father, and definitely not Voldemort!” He ordered darkly.

“But Dumbledore said...he said I *had* to, or we wouldn’t win the war. That everyone’s deaths would be because of me!” Draco almost sobbed at the end. “What if something happens to Pansy or Blaise or...or Granger even...?”

Snape looked murderous as Harry’s eyes flashed black through the glamour. “That bastard!” Snape snarled. “I’ll kill him myself!”

“Listen to me, Draco,” Harry said, taking Draco’s hands in his to get his attention. Draco looked at the now completely black eyes through his tear-filled ones. “You will *not* be returning to the Death Eaters. Nothing is your fault, it is all Voldemort’s fault, and Dumbledore had absolutely no right to put this on your shoulders.”

“But what are we going to do with Potter dead?” Draco sniffed, seeming to calm slightly at the support he was getting from his godfather and the friend he was quickly starting to regard as a brother since they *were* technically god-brothers.

Harry sighed. “Don’t worry about it. I’ll take care of it.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Snape asked his son with a wary frown.

“Just what I said,” Harry gave him a cold look. “You know as well I do that there are some things we can’t run from, no matter how hard we try. One of these days, I’ll have to stop running, whether I want to or not.”

“And what about Castor?” Snape growled. “What about me?” He added quietly after.

Draco looked between Snape and Harry in confusion. “What’s going on?” He asked.

Harry just frowned at them both. “Don’t worry,” he said to both of them. “I’m not going to do anything stupid. I’ve had it beaten into me my entire life, literally, that life isn’t fair. I can lie to myself as much as I want, but that lesson is one I’ve learned far better than any others. I’m going to keep lying to myself as long as possible, but we all know I’m a Fury. At some point in time, I’ll either need to protect someone from Voldemort or seek vengeance for someone I love. I can only avoid it for so long. At some point, I’ll have no choice.”

Snape and Draco just frowned at the young Fury and glanced at each other with fear in their eyes. They couldn’t disagree with him, but the implications were too concerning for them to really process. “Now, tell Dumbledore to shove off and don’t let him manipulate you. Will

you be safe over the holidays? You really shouldn't remain in the castle with him," Harry continued in their silence.

"You are welcome to come stay with us," Snape offered since he and Harry were leaving the castle for the holidays. "As your godfather, I am happy to take custody of you whenever you would like, even though you are of-age now."

Draco breathed out, still very concerned for his friend, and also happy about his godfather's offer. "I'm going home with Blaise. His house has impenetrable wards, and his mother is formidable enough to take on several Death Eaters singlehandedly. Thank you though, Uncle Sev."

"Good," Harry nodded. "Now, Dad, maybe it might be best for you to make it known to the headmaster that Draco isn't a pawn in his little game? I'm sure you would *love* to handle that."

Snape's lips tightened into a thin line. "Indeed. I think it's time for me to do just that, yes."

"Good, now, Draco. You're coming with me to dinner in my quarters. We can't have you going back to Slytherin house in this condition, you'll lose all respect in the hierarchy," Harry laughed and pulled Draco up from the couch.

"Hold on tight," Harry said as he stepped forward, pulling Draco along with him in the tesseract.

Snape frowned as he stepped out of his quarters to go see the headmaster. He knew it was too good to be true that his son would stay out of the war. He only hoped the Fury was strong enough and that his son embraced it fully before he was needed. The prophesy said he could do it and that he must...if the prophesy even still applied to him, but as a father, Snape just wanted to take his son and grandson and run. Hide them away until all this ended. Unfortunately, it seemed it was Harry who had to end it.

Snape billowed through the hallways, scaring several first years, and frankly second through seventh years as well, as he made his way to the gargoyle in front of the headmaster's office. "Ice mice," he growled at the statue which moved aside to expose the revolving spiral staircase.

Snape was still scowling ferociously when he pushed open the door to Dumbledore's office without even knocking. "Ah, my boy, to what do I owe this pleasure?" Dumbledore smiled his best fake grandfatherly smile at Severus.

"I just had an...illuminating conversation with my godson moments ago," Snape informed the headmaster as he bypassed the armchair to loom over the seated headmaster instead, his arms crossed and his eyes flashing.

Dumbledore just smiled at him more. "I believe your godson is an adult, Severus, and can make his own decisions at this point," the headmaster said with a careless wave of his hand.

Snape gave Dumbledore a snarl that would impress Moony in the middle of a full moon. "My godson has made his decision, and I am only passing along the message... 'bugger off.'"

At this Dumbledore finally did frown. He had counted on Draco's guilt to lead him to be the next spy. He was certain that, when the young man had left his office, he was eaten alive with guilt and regret over his plans the year before and his part in the war.

"But, Severus, surely you realize that we must have a spy in Voldemort's ranks in order to win this war, and since you have chosen to disregard your duties..."

With this, Snape cut off Dumbledore with a frustrated growl. "And why do we need a spy?" Snape asked dangerously. "You have Potter off in training. Surely, he must be about ready to take on the Dark Lord and end this all? I would think that everything should be coming to a head soon. Why else would be you training the brat?"

At this, Dumbledore had the decency to look a little ashamed. "Ah, well, Harry isn't quite ready..."

“Then, work faster,” Snape snarled with hidden glee at the headmaster’s uncomfortable situation. “What do you think the Board of Governors would think of a sitting headmaster recruiting soldiers from the ranks of students he had vowed to protect? As the head of Slytherin House it is my right to tell you that my snakes are off limits. If you insist on talking with any of them, I hereby require that I be allowed to sit in on these meetings.”

Snape turned to address the portraits of past headmasters and mistresses. “You all bear witness. I invoke my right of no confidence in the current headmaster in order to protect the children of my house. I expect you all to inform me of any meetings the headmaster has with a member of Slytherin House without my presence.”

“As we shall,” Phineas Nigellus Black gleefully called from his portrait. Snape noticed the other headmasters and mistresses nodding in their frames with varying degrees of agreement at his actions. Whether they agreed or disagreed with Dumbledore, they had to respect the laws of Hogwarts herself for a head of house to protect those in their care.

“Severus, you’re on dangerous ground,” Dumbledore warned with a glint in his eye that promised retribution.

“And I’m on contract with the board,” Severus smiled back evilly. “You can’t fire me until the end of this school year without taking it to the Board of Governors for a vote, where I’ll be happy to tell all about your little vigilante group that breaks about a dozen ministry laws.”

Dumbledore looked murderous at this new threat. “You’ve been warned Severus.”

“Yes, I consider myself on notice,” the man smirked as he turned and stormed back out of the office.

Snape almost ran directly into Remus Lupin at the bottom of the stairs. “How did that go?” The man asked with concern outlining his features. “Artie and Draco filled me in.”

Severus sighed as he led his partner back towards their chambers (yes, he was fully aware the werewolf had moved in and was secretly very happy about it). “Unfortunately, I fear this may be my last year at Hogwarts. Maybe research is more my calling anyway. How do you feel about that?”

Snape waited, hoping this man he had come to care about so much wouldn't be mad at his, admittedly rash and Gryffindorish, actions of earlier. However, Remus just shrugged. “I don't expect to have a job at the end of the year anyway. You know DADA is cursed. I'm surprised the curse allowed me to come back for a second go, but I think two years in a row is probably pushing my luck. Besides, we could set up your new lab somewhere close to wherever Artie and Castor end up. It would make babysitting so much more convenient.”

Snape smiled and pulled Remus into their quarters quickly where he intended to show his love exactly how appreciative he was of the support.

Meeting the Parents

Fred and Harry had met up a several more times after their first date, but since Harry was technically not supposed to leave the castle, it was much less than they would have liked, but still much more than were within any semblance of school rules. Though all Harry's friends now knew that he could come and go from the castle at will since the wards didn't interact with his tessering like normal wixen apparition, he still didn't want to press his luck that the headmaster would figure out he frequently left.

Fred, Harry, and Castor did finally have their dinner with George and Angelina though around mid-November. Harry and Castor made sure to arrive an hour early after having given Fred a shopping list for the night. He was well aware how useless in the kitchen both twins were at this point. After their first date and Fred not even knowing how to boil pasta, there was no way he was going to leave dinner to the twins. Frankly, Harry suspected that Mrs. Weasley was still sending them food regularly even though they had moved out of the Burrow.

As usual with anyone who met the Selkie, Angelina loved the baby, and he absolutely loved the attention. Castor was crawling around now and getting into everything, so George and Angelina were following him around the flat closely and making sure he didn't accidentally find himself victim to one of their pranks. "You guys really need to baby-proof this place if you ever expect to babysit again," Harry watched George scramble to grab some trick candy before the baby saw it. "Your flat is a disaster waiting to happen. I won't have my son turning purple or something because he put the wrong thing in his mouth."

"Mum would love to help with that I guess," Fred mused with a wrinkle of his nose. "I'm not so sure about turning her loose on our flat though. We may end up with floral curtains by the end of the day," he shuddered in fake dramatics.

Harry handed Fred an onion and instructed him to slice it like he would a potion ingredient. After a minute of making sure Fred was doing fine with his job, he went back to the conversation. "So, does your mum know about, well...me?"

Fred laughed, "Yeah, about that..."

Harry stopped stirring the pot on the stove and turned to his boyfriend with a raised eyebrow and more than a little trepidation now. "That tone concerns me."

"Well, you see," Fred started awkwardly. "George mentioned something about Angelina and Mum got all insistent that she be invited to Christmas Eve dinner and was making this huge deal about it. George was understandably a little irritated because she was being all pushy about it and everything, not that he didn't want to invite Angie, understand?"

"Uh huh..." He was starting to see where this was going, and was still very concerned.

"Yeah, so Georgie huffed all angry and said that if she was going to go all mamma bear on Angie then it was only fair that she also be spending that same amount of effort and energy on my new boyfriend," Fred explained with a grimace. "So, yeah...she knows now..."

"And how did she take that?" Harry asked, really worried.

"You are now invited, more like ordered, to join us for Christmas Eve dinner," Fred cringed as if Harry was going to shoot, or rather curse, the messenger. "She still doesn't know about Castor, and frankly she doesn't know anything about you either since I wasn't there at the time and George got out of there as fast as he humanly could when he realized he had mistakenly both outed me to Mum and told her I was seeing someone, but she does know you exist anyway."

"Are your parents going to have a problem with me being a guy?" Harry asked with a frown. He hadn't realized that Fred wasn't even out to his parents since pretty much everyone had known at Hogwarts. "We never really talked about it when I was there before, but Ron hasn't had a problem with me, or rather Artie, being out."

"Nah, no problems. I just hadn't had anyone to bring home before, so never really talked to the parents about it. She and Dad both have already sent several owls of support and wanting to know if you have any dietary restrictions for food and things like that," Fred shrugged. "Charlie's bringing his boyfriend as well. They met him back at Bill and Fleur's wedding, so I'm not even the first gay Weasley kid, pros and cons of having so many siblings I guess."

Harry smiled mischievously. “Hey Angie!” He called.

“Yeah, Arts?”

“You hear about Christmas Eve?”

“What? No. What’s happening at Christmas Eve?”

George groaned loudly. “So, Angie...”

The remaining weeks at Hogwarts before break went by quickly with classes and exams. There seemed to be a cold war being waged between Snape and Dumbledore with all the other professors (except Remus Lupin) extremely confused about what happened. The Slytherins were all informed by their Head of House that they were not allowed to meet with the headmaster alone, which caused even more speculation and rumors to run rampant across the school. Finally, the students piled into the Hogwarts Express for a well-deserved vacation away from the castle, the stress, and the revising. And, for the first year in a decade, Severus Snape joined in the crowd leaving the castle for the holidays, pulling the current DADA professor along behind him as if he were escaping the castle instead of heading out for holiday.

Harry, Castor, Snape, and Remus all settled into Spinner’s End with Remus seamlessly falling into place within the family. The peace didn’t last long though before Fred, Harry, Castor, George, and Angelina stood outside the wards of the Burrow on Christmas Eve. “You ready for this?” George asked Angelina, anxiety clearly showing on his face.

She just laughed, not concerned since she had actually met the Weasley parents before even if was only in passing. “I plan to hide behind the baby if I need to. Sorry, Artie,” she smiled over at the other ‘invited’ guest.

“Don’t worry, I plan to do the same thing,” Harry agreed with a tense smile and shifting the heavily bundled up baby on his hip. Honestly, he was more concerned about Ron than Mrs.

Weasley since he had never told his new/old friend about dating his brother.

“Oh, hush you two, you know they’re going to love you,” George scoffed, even though the anxiety hadn’t left his tone at all.

“It doesn’t hurt that you brought the baby though I’m sure,” Fred laughed, pulling Harry’s knit hat down over his pointed ears more since the blowing wind was bitingly icy. “You know Mum and babies, right George?”

“Yeah, you better watch out, my brother, once Mum knows you’re dating someone with a kid, she’s never going to let him go.”

“Not that I plan to either,” Fred said, wrapping an arm around Harry’s waist and giving his cheek a kiss.

“Erm, I never did think to ask, how do they feel about magical creatures?” Harry was still coming to terms with having to re-meet the family he cared so much about and was worried they would no longer like him.

George, Fred, and Angelina all glanced at each other. Fred shrugged. “I don’t know if Fleur is the best gauge for that. I guess we’ll find out. You already know Ron, frankly we’re lucky Charlie has a boyfriend currently or he’d try to steal you from me, and Bill will just be happy that the attention is off when he and Fleur plan on having kids, so it should all work out fine...probably.”

Harry stood rubbing Castor’s back and holding him as close as possible for another minute. “Ok, let’s go,” he said, taking a breath and walking firmly through the wards followed by the others.

George and Angelina went through the door first when they finally reached the house. “Mum! Dad! We’re all here!” George called out before an excited Ginny rushed forward to pull Angelina further into the house.

“I’m so happy to have another girl besides Phlegm to talk to!” Ginny gushed. “You have no idea! I can’t talk about dresses for one more second!”

“It’s good to see you again, Ginny!” Angelina said giving her a side-hug.

“And I heard Freddie was bringing someone new too?” Ginny said, turning and trying to look around the huddled party to see Harry in the back. Harry stepped out from behind Fred and pulled off Castor’s hat and heavy coat.

“Hi, Ginny,” he said with a little smile at his ex-girlfriend who he had actually not interacted with much at all as Artie Snape, even if he was friends with her brother.

“Snape?” Ginny raised a surprised eyebrow. “Well, you definitely aren’t who I was expecting. Oooo, just wait ‘til Mum sees the baby though. She’s going to absolutely flip!”

Ron came around the corner to see what the commotion was about. “Oi! Artie! What’re you doing here at my house? Your dad isn’t with you right?” Ron asked, looking out the window worriedly as if his Potions professor was just going to suddenly appear and ask about the essay he was supposed to be writing over break.

“Nah, little bro, Artie’s here as my date,” Fred smiled proudly as he took Castor from Harry so that Harry could remove his own coat next.

“Dad is spending tonight with Professor Lupin,” Harry explained, nervously looking at Ron who was giving him a calculating look and seemed much less lively than usual. “Trust me that none of us want to know what their plans are.”

“Well, you *could* have told me who you were dating, and I *will* be expecting to hear how you both met, but welcome to the Burrow,” Ron said, offering his hand but still looking really down and depressed for some reason.

Indifferent acceptance was not the expected reaction from Harry's friend. Harry had honestly expected Ron to blow-up angrily about not being told, that was the redhead's standard go-to. He looked with concern into his friend's vacant eyes. "Thanks," Harry shook Ron's hand. "Look, I'm sorry I didn't tell you about Fred and me, but everything was so new, and I hadn't officially been introduced to the family yet."

Ron gave a little nod and a shrug, "Whatever. At least it wasn't Ginny you were dating or something." He said, causing Harry to cringe inwardly.

"Don't worry about him, he's upset because he hasn't heard from his best friend and is getting really worried," Ginny explained after Ron walked back towards the kitchen, shoulders hunched. "He was half expecting to see him over break. He figured that if Harry were still alive out there somewhere, he'd get in touch for Christmas if nothing else. He was still holding out some hope..."

Harry winced but nodded in understanding. He was feeling really guilty for Ron hurting so much. "Come on, time to meet the parents," Fred interrupted his morose thoughts as he shifted Castor to his hip and grabbed Harry's hand with his free arm.

"Oh goody," Harry sighed sarcastically as he was pulled along behind George and Angelina.

"Mum! You remember Angelina!" George called brightly as soon as they entered the kitchen.

"Oh, yes dear, welcome!" Mrs. Weasley said, enthusiastically pulling Angelina into a hug. "George has always told us such wonderful things about you."

"It's good to see you again, Mrs. Weasley," Angelina said as soon as she was released.

"It's Molly, dear," Mrs. Weasley said, patting her arm and leading her over to Arthur Weasley.

“Welcome! And please call me Arthur,” Mr. Weasley said, shaking Angelina’s hand with a large smile.

Ginny cleared her throat loudly. “Mum, you might want to check out what the other twin is holding,” Ginny said in a stage whisper to her mother when Fred and Harry entered the kitchen.

Molly Weasley turned around and her jaw dropped almost comically at the sight of Fred holding a baby who was shyly trying to hide his face in the twin’s jumper. “Oh, my!” Molly Weasley gasped as her lips started to quirk into a smile. “Where did this beauty come from?” she asked as she walked over to Castor and bent down to look at him with a large smile.

“Mum, this is Castor,” Fred explained with a fond smile as his mother started baby-talking the small child telling him how cute he was and how his blue eyes were just gorgeous.

“Erm, his dad is Artie here,” Fred cut in when he realized his mother was completely oblivious to anything besides the baby at this point even though Arthur Weasley had already been looking over the Fury beside his son with a speculative expression on his face.

Harry had decided to not hide what he was since they would figure it out quickly anyway. The Prophet had run a story about what happened at Halloween, and the article had mentioned that the potion master’s son was the Fury who had chased away the werewolves. Therefore, Harry’s hair was pulled back into a low ponytail with his pointed ears prominently showing as well as the tattoos snaking up his neck from under his jumper. He was wearing his glamour ring though since his eyes did tend to make people outside of his little family nervous since it was hard to tell what he was looking at when they were all black.

“It’s good to meet you Mrs. Weasley,” Harry said holding out his hand nervously.

Molly Weasley looked up from the baby, taking in Harry’s appearance and focusing a little longer on his ears. “It’s good to meet you too, dear,” she said, taking his hand. “Artie, is it?”

“Yes, ma’am,” Harry smiled at her.

“Your son is adorable,” Mrs. Weasley smiled at him welcomingly.

Harry laughed, “So is yours,” he said as Fred put a hand on his shoulder.

Molly laughed and turned to go back to cooking. Harry looked over nervously to the rest of the gathered family. He noticed the very conspicuous absence of Percy Weasley who was still inexplicably avoiding his family. Harry didn’t understand how he could turn his back on all the love in that room.

“Hey, Charlie here!” Charlie said, quickly walking over and pulling a short, blond-haired man behind him who was clearly also a dragon handler judging by his muscles and burn scars. “This is Hodges,” he said, introducing his boyfriend.

“Pleased to meet you both,” Harry shook their hands. “Fred says you two work at a dragon reserve in Romania. I’d love to hear all about it!”

“Oh no! You’ll never get him to stop talking,” Hodges laughed as he nudged Charlie who already looked excited to talk about his absolute favorite subject.

“Bill!” Fred’s older brother Bill called from the table with a wave.

“Hey!” Harry waved back at him. “And, you must be Fleur,” Harry offered his hand to Bill’s Veela wife who was standing closer to them by the pantry.

“Oui, I see you’ve ‘erd about me,” Fleur smiled and shook his hand. “You are clearly a magical creature wiz a small babe. I ‘ope Fred did zee right thing and sent you a courting ring?”

“Ah, yes, he did,” Harry showed her the ring from Fred with a proud smile.

“Eet’s beautiful!” Fleur exclaimed appreciatively.

“Well, I’m happy my son remembered something I taught him anyway,” Mrs. Weasley called from where she was chopping up vegetables with her wand.

Ron laughed. “Yeah, bro, you got Zabini in trouble for not sending Hermione one.”

“No, ‘Ermione eez not a magical creature,” Fleur waved her hand dismissively.

“We were talking over by the Slytherin table, and the pure-blood crowd tend to be ultra-traditional,” Ron explained as if he wasn’t a pure-blood himself.

“You’re Slytherin?” Arthur Weasley asked, the first time speaking up as he eyed his son’s guest with a little suspicion now.

“He sure is!” Ron laughed before Harry could answer, finally looking a little more alive and enthusiastic. “Ask him his last name!”

Arthur raised an eyebrow. “Ah, and what might your last name be?”

“Erm, I’m Arcturus Snape,” Harry smiled weakly at the man who had never looked at him with this much suspicion before. Frankly, he thought they would have figured it out. But then, besides Ron’s comment, no one had mentioned he was still in school with Ron. They probably thought he was older.

“Severus’s son!” Molly exclaimed with a wide smile even though Arthur’s eyes narrowed even more.

Bill and Charlie started loudly laughing from where they were both sitting at the table now. “Oh man!” Charlie exclaimed. “I’d hate to be you, Fred! Dating the dungeon bat’s kid!”

“Severus has actually been pretty good about it,” Fred huffed as he sat down at the table with Castor on his lap, pulling Harry to the empty seat beside him.

“Oh, *Severus*, is it?!” Ron asked as he joined his older brothers laughing. Harry was glad to see his friend laugh, but there was still a vacant, haunted look in his eyes underneath it all.

“He’s chilled out a lot now that he’s not in constant pain from the Dark Mark and being tortured regularly,” Harry explained with a frown. Even though he had thought similar things to the Weasleys just months before, knowing more about his father now had him feeling much more protective of him. “Plus, now that he’s dating Remus, he’s much happier.”

Bill sputtered and sprayed water from the glass he was drinking from on the table and Molly Weasley dropped the pan she had just picked up. “Severus Snape is dating Remus Lupin!!” Molly exclaimed.

“Er...yeah, they’re doing Christmas together tonight before we do a family Christmas thing tomorrow,” Harry explained, never feeling quite as on the outside of everything at the Burrow before ever.

“They’ve been so cute trying not to be all sappy at the head table since September,” Ginny laughed but with a fake shudder. “Everyone’s been taking bets on when they’re just going to out and tell people. Any inside information for the betting pool,” Ginny asked Harry next.

Harry just laughed as he thought about it. “Those two...Well, they’ll probably be married for five years before they start telling anyone. I’m pretty sure I’m the one who’s been spreading it around more than them.”

“So, mate,” Charlie said leaning forward towards Harry in interest. “May I ask, what exactly *are* you?”

“Charlie!” Molly exclaimed, scandalized. “You don’t just ask a person that!”

“It’s not a problem at all Mrs. Weasley,” Harry smiled at her reassuringly.

“I’m a Fury,” he told Charlie.

“Wicked!” Charlie exclaimed and nudged Hodges who was also nodding in appreciation.

“You’re the one that stopped the werewolves on Halloween,” Arthur looked over at him, now with much less suspicion than before.

“My son was out there,” Harry nodded simply.

“Thank you, my children were out there as well,” Molly Weasley smiled at him, tearing up slightly.

Harry and Fred got pulled into a game of Exploding Snap with Charlie and Hodges while Fleur and Molly both played with Castor. It was a little tense when Castor needed a diaper change and Harry refused to allow anyone else to change him, but the evening went relatively smoothly until dinner. It was about halfway through dinner when Arthur, who still didn’t seem to have quite come around to the idea of his son dating a Fury yet, asked Harry, “So, how was it growing up with Severus? I bet you are remarkable at potions.”

Fred put his hand comfortingly on Harry’s back. “I’m only decent at potions, Mr. Weasley,” Harry smiled as he gave Castor some mashed potatoes. “My dad would love me to get better, but I’m only average and will sadly never be the genius he is.”

“I’m sure that just kills him,” Ron snorted.

Harry smiled at him. “And I didn’t grow up with my dad. We really didn’t have much of a relationship at all until I had to move in with him over the summer.”

“You remember dear, Severus said Artie lived with his mother,” Molly Weasley reminded Arthur.

Harry stayed silent, really hoping he wasn’t about to have to lie to the family he loved. “Ah, and what about Castor’s mother?” Mr. Weasley continued. “She died when your mother did, correct?”

This was not a question Harry wanted to be asked. It would always be safer for everyone to assume Castor was his son. If it ever got out that he was adopted, then it would open up questions about how that had happened, why a seventeen-year-old would adopt a baby, and most dangerous, why Harry was certain that Castor was magical. Fred glanced at him with a look that said he would help if he had any idea how.

“I can blow something up,” he whispered quickly in Harry’s ear.

Harry just smiled at him and decided to answer with as much truth as he was able. “There was a Death Eater raid...they had found out about Dad’s family and believed him to be disloyal, especially with me being what I am. Castor and I were out of the house, but Mum and...”

Harry realized he still had no idea what Castor’s mother’s name was, and he hadn’t come up with a fake name, so he stuttered over what to say. “Er...and Castor’s mum were having tea...”

It seemed his inability to say the name actually added to the believability since everyone’s eyes at the table looked at him and the baby sadly now. “Well, we weren’t actually together as a couple anymore. We just weren’t a good fit, but we were still good friends and making it all work for Castor. When I got home...there wasn’t much left...” He trailed off, not able to make up any more lies and still emotional at the very real death of Castor’s mother at the hands of his son’s biological father.

“Oh no!” Mrs. Weasley gasped with a sad look. “We didn’t realize. That’s so awful! I didn’t realize you were the one who found them, but of course, I should have thought...”

“Dad has been really good about everything,” Harry said with a smile and holding onto Fred’s hand as a lifeline now. “While he knew about my son, clearly, he hadn’t been really prepared to be a grandad with a baby living under his roof. Castor has really won him over though. I don’t think he’s going to let either of us get too far until Castor goes off to school at the very least.”

“I’d say,” Ron snorted again. “You should see him carrying the baby around Potions class. He’s even gotten every professor to have a swear jar in their classes so that Castor’s first word isn’t a swear word. He’s really gone soft.” Mrs. Weasley smiled as the older Weasley sons looked shocked at the change in the terrifying potions master.

“Ginny, how’s the Gryffindor quidditch team doing this year?” Angelina asked Ginny, taking pity on her new friend. Harry smiled at her, grateful for the subject change.

Ginny and Ron then both recounted in minute detail every single game so far to the family. Fred eventually mentioned that Harry (Artie) was a pretty decent seeker and that they’d need to get a game together over the break for everyone since they finally had enough people for proper teams.

“How about Boxing Day?” Ginny asked excitedly. “Angelina, you free?”

“I’d love to come back over for a quidditch game!” Angelina agreed vehemently. “What about you, Artie?”

“Sure, Dad would probably watch Castor for me.”

“You’re welcome to bring him, dear. I miss having babies around the house,” Mrs. Weasley smiled indulgently at the baby who currently had mashed potatoes in his blond hair and a huge smile with only one tooth showing.

“So, you don’t play for Slytherin?” Charlie asked, trying to size up the opposing seeker in their Boxing Day game.

“It’s against the rules to play if you have wings,” Harry sighed sadly as if it were the absolute worst discrimination.

“That’s it, no broom for you!” Fred laughed, a sparkle in his eyes. “Everyone else gets brooms, but I want to see my boyfriend fly with his wings!”

“Where is your friend ‘Arry?” Fleur asked Ron. “Wasn’t he a seeker, no?”

Ron looked over at his mother who just put down her fork quietly. Arthur Weasley finally spoke up. “Harry is off in training. He won’t be able to join us for the holidays.”

Ron tossed his fork down angrily at this comment. “Is everyone blind! Does no one really care what happened to Harry?! You know as well as I do that he wouldn’t just go off into training without contacting me or Hermione, especially over Christmas!” He then stood in frustration and stomped out of the room and up the stairs.

“Oh, dear,” Mrs. Weasley sighed.

“I’ll go talk to him,” Ginny stood worriedly.

“No,” Harry said, coming to a much overdue decision and passing Castor to Fred who gave him an understanding look. “I’ll go talk to him. I think I can help.”

Harry stood anxiously outside of Ron’s bedroom where he had so many good memories with his friend. He knocked softly before cracking open the door. “Leave me alone, Ginny,” Ron growled from his bed where his face was buried in a pillow.

“My hair is a little too grey to be Ginny. I don’t think I could pull off the red anyway,” Harry smiled as he came in and sat on the rickety desk chair across from the bed.

“What are you doing here, Snape?” Ron asked, confused by the unexpected presence in his room.

“I take it you’re worried about your friend, Harry,” Harry responded with a noncommittal shrug at the question.

Ron sighed and sat up to lean against the wall. “Dumbledore keeps saying that Harry is off in training somewhere, which Dad buys completely. Mum and I know something’s not right though. Harry would have contacted me or ‘Mione by now if he was ok. The kids with Death Eater parents keep saying that Harry’s dead. I don’t know what to believe anymore.” Ron took a deep breath and let out a little sob. “I just...I miss my friend...I don’t want him to be gone. If he were still alive, he would have contacted me by now.”

Harry nonverbally threw a silencing charm at the door as he closed his eyes and breathed in a steadying breath. He had watched Ron hurting the whole term, and he just couldn’t take it anymore. He couldn’t look into those vacant eyes for one more minute. Hermione still seemed to trust Dumbledore that Harry was off in training, but Ron, well, Ron had been believing the worst for a long while now.

“Ron...” he started, not sure how to handle. “I know what happened to Harry Potter.”

Ron quickly wiped his eyes and looked to Harry. “What?! What do you know?”

“Harry Potter is dead.” Harry said simply, begging for his friend to understand.

“What happened? How do *you* know?” Ron asked before Harry could continue with his explanations. “Did your dad see something?”

“I know because I killed him...I *had* to,” Harry continued with a sad look at Ron.

“What?!” Ron jumped up and advanced towards Harry dangerous.

“Wait! Let me finish!” Harry jumped back from the chair and tightened his grip on his wand.

“My appearance changed a lot this past summer when I had my creature inheritance, and you know about Castor...or at least part of his story. Well, it was too dangerous for me to have a child when everyone wanted me dead, when I was the top of both the ministry and a maniac’s hit list. So, I decided to spread it around that I had killed myself, to protect my son. I sent fake suicide letters to both the headmaster and Voldemort. I didn’t know that Dumbledore wouldn’t tell the Order and would lie instead. I thought there would be some closure for everyone with my death, but the uncertainty just seemed to hurt you all more, especially you. I’m sorry, Ron, but *I’m* Harry Potter.”

“No...” Ron stopped, but looked at him confused and very, very angry. “I know my friend. You are *not* my friend.”

This hurt Harry way more than he wanted to admit. He took in a sharp breath. “When we met on the Hogwarts Express, you tried a spell to turn your parent-betraying, traitorous rat yellow, a spell that Fred and George had given you as a prank, you’re terrified of spiders but faced down a nest of acromantulas when we found them in the Forbidden Forest, you snore like a freight train, we Polyjuiced ourselves as Crabbe and Goyle to sneak into the Slytherin common room our second year, Hermione turned into a cat hybrid then as well, Erm...you had a crush on Fleur fourth year, and played one hell of a chess game in our first year when we went after the philosopher’s stone...do I need to keep going? What can I say to convince you?”

“Harry?” Ron asked in shock and clear betrayal as he sank back down on his bed. He seemed to be searching for something, something that he recognized from his old friend to this new person in front of him. He finally seemed to find it in Harry’s glamourised eyes. “How could you do this to us...to me?”

“I’m so, *so* sorry, Ron,” Harry frantically rushed out. “I only did it to keep Castor safe. I told Dumbledore and Voldemort that I’d killed myself. I didn’t foresee whatever it is that Dumbledore’s trying to do. I always wanted to tell you as soon as it got a little safer, but I

couldn't tell you initially because I needed Dumbledore to not be suspicious of me, and he would have been if I was immediately friends with you and Hermione, but I really tried to make friends with you, to be there for you even if I wasn't me."

Ron just sat there with his mouth opening and closing as he tried to say something and then thought better of it. "Harry!" He eventually exclaimed as he stood and hugged his friend, going from mad to relieved as everything caught up to him. "I was so worried! I'm still so, so angry. And I don't forgive you, but I'm also *so* happy. Never, ever do this again!"

"I know, I'm sorry," Harry said patting him on the back and knowing he had a long road of apologizing ahead of him.

"Wait...who is Castor's mum?!" Ron pulled back as the shocked expression crossed his face. "You weren't even dating anyone that I know of! Well, Gin, but she's clearly not his mum... right? *Right?!?*"

"No, Ron...Ginny is obviously not Castor's mum," Harry laughed and assured him quickly. "Please don't tell anyone, but...I kind of kidnapped him..."

Ron's eyes went huge as his jaw dropped. "Excuse me...please, repeat that. Did you just say that you kidnapped a baby?"

"Er...yeah," Harry sheepishly smiled at him. "Castor's mum was a magical creature, and she was murdered by her abusive husband this summer. They moved in just a few months before to a couple doors down from my relatives in Surrey. When she saw that I was a Fury, she made me promise to take care of Castor...and well, you know about my oath thing. Well, I didn't at that time, so I of course, promised her."

"Merlin, Harry...how do you even find yourself in these situations?!" Ron sank back down on the bed, not able to stand anymore. "So, Castor is...adopted? Is his dad going to come after him?"

Harry shook his head. "His biological father was a muggle, so he can't get to us in the magical world. Since I'm a Fury, my oath was a legal magical adoption as well, so that man

has no rights. Castor's grandparents may have some rights, but I don't even know where to find them at the moment."

"Wait, does Fred know? Of course, he knows! Why else would he even have known you?" Ron asked, putting the pieces together and looking at Harry shocked. "You told Fred before me?!"

"Yes, Fred knows," Harry smiled nervously. "There was some legal stuff with Castor that I needed his and George's help with after I adopted him. They are his godfathers after Remus, by the way. I'm sorry I couldn't name you as a godfather, but you'll always be his Uncle Ron."

Ron thought for a minute before getting a shocked look on his face. "Wait? Does *Snape* know?!"

Harry laughed and leaned back in his rickety chair again, getting ready for explanations. "Yes, my father knows who I am."

Ron collapsed back down on his bed to look at the ceiling. "So...Snape really *is* your dad? Not James Potter? Merlin, Harry!"

"Yes, it was a very eventful summer," Harry smiled and started in on explaining everything that happened before he returned to Hogwarts.

"I can't believe all that happened in a month!" Ron laughed at the end of Harry's long explanation.

"Ron, please keep this to yourself. You can't tell your family or even Hermione. I need as few people as possible to know. I need to keep Castor safe...I have to, no matter what," Harry pleaded with Ron.

“Of course, mate. You know I’m always here for you,” Ron smiled at him sadly. “I just wish you could have told me before now.”

There was a soft knock at the door. Harry canceled the silencing ward and opened the door to a worried looking Fred. “Everything ok in here?” he asked.

Ron gave him a serious look. “You hurt my friend, and brother or not, I’ll make your life miserable,” Ron told him.

Fred laughed, glad Harry finally told his brother everything. “Oh, Ronnikins. I’m the second Weasley our Artie over here has dated. I think you should be warning *him* not to hurt *me*. Plus, Severus does that speech so much better than you.”

“Hey!” Harry protested. “I’m right here, and I’m not going anywhere,” Harry said pulling Fred down on top of him and almost breaking the rickety chair this time.

“Oi! Old furniture!” Ron protested. “And no one wants to see that!” He exclaimed with a grimace as Fred kissed Harry.

Fred, Harry, and Castor left the Burrow before anyone else did since Castor started getting sleepy, and therefore cranky. Harry sneakily put three presents under the tree before they left. He placed a bottle of Scotch his father swore by for Mr. Weasley, a beautifully engraved wooden box with preservation charms on it for Mrs. Weasley’s recipes so that she could pass them down to future generations, and a new pair of keeper’s gloves for Ron, all marked as being from the Snape family. The three made it to the door with Harry’s presents going unnoticed by the others. It was clear that Ron was much happier, though covering it well, as they said goodbye until Boxing Day.

Bill and Charlie were already planning teams and strategies for the game, so it promised to be an epic. “Hey, try to get Lupin to come play with us, he was a pretty good beater back in his day,” Bill called as the little family left through the front door.

Baby's First Christmas

Christmas morning saw Severus, Remus, Harry, Castor, Fred, George, and Dobby all around the tree Harry had insisted they buy and decorate at Spinners End. It was both his and Castor's first Christmas tree and they had great enjoyment in putting on the ornaments, many of which were tiny, framed scribbles that Castor had colored. It had been a struggle to get him to both color on the paper and not try to eat the crayons, but they had mostly succeeded (thank Merlin crayons were non-toxic!). Harry vowed that Castor would always have a happy Christmas and birthday too, and he would never know what it was like to be pushed aside while everyone else around him was able to celebrate.

Just after their early breakfast Castor was squealing in joy at unwrapping his presents, which of course, he enjoyed the unwrapping and the boxes much more than the toys and clothes everyone got him, many of which featured cartoon hippogriffs since they still seemed to be his favorite animal. Castor was clearly too young to understand what all was going on, but being able to tear into things and make a mess would be a favorite no matter what day it was.

Dobby even shared in the joy as he opened a package of socks (from Castor so he wouldn't mistakenly think he was being freed) that featured patterns of bacon and eggs and dancing hippogriffs. He also got a collection of pranks to pull around the castle from Fred and George and an assortment of chocolates from Snape and Remus (though everyone assumed it was actually Remus's doing). Surprisingly, a small box of various useful healing potions and a very scary and well-made dagger had somehow ended up under the tree for Dobby as well... from Winky if the squeal of delight from Dobby was understood correctly. How Winky had gotten the present to Spinner's End was frankly concerning to everyone, but also no one could really question the mystery and power of house elf magic.

Severus and Remus had admitted that they had opened their gifts from each other the night before. Since his dad blushed when Remus said that, Harry swore to never ask what they got each other. That was none of his business, and he really didn't want to know. Instead, Harry happily watched while his dad opened the present he had painstakingly worked on for the man. It was just a simple picture in a frame, but it had taken a lot of plotting and sneaking around to get it. It was a picture of Severus and Remus playing wizard's chess in their rooms at Hogwarts. Severus was holding a happy Castor who was trying to steal the chess pieces and Harry was laughing at the two from beside Remus. Harry had finally gotten the picture after charming the camera invisible in Snape's quarters and magically taking pictures randomly over a week's time when everyone just happened to be in the room. There were about a hundred blurry or awkward pictures with this perfect one in the midst of them.

Snape stared, expressionless, at the picture for so long that Harry became worried. “Erm, is everything ok, Dad?”

Snape looked up at Harry, his eyes gleaming. He said nothing but walked over and pulled his son into a hug. “Thank you,” he finally said in a raspy voice. “It’s the best gift I’ve ever been given. And I don’t just mean the picture...” he trailed off at the end, Harry understanding him completely.

“You’re welcome,” Harry sighed, glad his father liked the gift and hugged him back. It was their first real hug...he didn’t think it would affect him as much as it did, but Harry felt a lump in his throat that just wouldn’t go away.

When Severus finally stepped away and back to his chair, Harry cleared his throat and passed a square present to Remus. “I kept a copy, but that’s the original,” Harry explained, still emotional.

Remus unwrapped a thin and insignificant-looking black journal. He slowly opened it and gasped after reading the first page. Harry smiled sadly at him and said, “Sirius kept this journal during his time at Hogwarts. It mainly just explains each prank the marauders pulled and its success or failure. I found it in Grimmauld Place when I went to clear out some of his things the summer before sixth year.”

“Thank you, cub,” Remus smiled with tears in his eyes.

“You know we need to see that, right?” George asked as he tried to peer over Remus’s shoulder before Remus used the book to smack his arm to get the twin to back off.

“This is for you from Mum,” Fred said, giving Harry an embarrassed smile before passing over a familiar, squishy package to him. With a frown, Harry unwrapped it to find a green, knitted jumper with a gold ‘H’ on the front.

“She saw Hedwig at our place and asked if we could try to send it along with her. She didn’t seem to believe it would actually get to you.” Harry smiled at the jumper sadly. George walked over and waved his wand saying an unfamiliar spell that turned the ‘H’ into an ‘A.’

“That’s how we mess with the family so much by changing our jumpers,” George explained, squeezing Harry’s shoulder comfortingly.

“Thank you,” Harry smiled as he pulled the sweater over his head.

“I think she stayed up late last night making this,” Fred said, handing a small squishy package over next. “It came by owl early this morning.”

Harry laughed when he unwrapped a tiny, blue sweater with a ‘C’ on the front. “Look what Mrs. Weasley made you, Cas!” Harry said with a grin as he pulled the tiny sweater over his distracted son’s head. “Looks like you’ve been welcomed to the family.”

“You have too, you’ll see. They just think that I’m not really responsible enough for the enormity of dating a bloke with a kid...that’s why they’re being a bit stand-offish. They’re sure I’m going to screw this up,” Fred pulled Harry into a hug and pressed a kiss into the silver hair.

Oh, that’s why...Harry frowned. He had thought it was something about him that had the Weasley parents acting more suspicious and not quite as welcoming as they had with Angelina, he hadn’t realized it was because they didn’t exactly trust Fred. “They’re wrong,” he told his boyfriend firmly. “They don’t know you at all if they don’t see how good you are for me and Castor.”

“Mate...clearly our parents don’t know us very well,” George answered for Fred who seemed a bit broken up currently over Harry’s assurances. “In their defense, we were more than a bit of a handful growing with when there were five other kids that needed attention too. We just kind-of ended up taking care of each other without them...”

“I’m not going to screw this up,” Fred said in almost a whisper though everyone heard the promise he seemed to be making more to himself than anyone else.

“I know...For you,” Harry cleared his throat and handed a small package to Fred, trying to lighten the mood a little. Fred opened it to see a clear crystal on a long chain. “It’s spelled like my dad’s,” Harry explained. “If you’re in trouble, hold it and think of me. I’ll immediately tesser directly to you.”

“Thank you, Harry,” Fred kissed his boyfriend, not caring who else was in the room at all.

“What am I, chopped liver?” George asked as the only one who hadn’t gotten a gift from Harry yet.

“This is actually for both of you,” Harry said with a laugh, handing George a thick envelope.

“Uh huh, so he really gets two gifts,” George fake huffed.

“Just open it, prat,” Harry smiled as he rolled his eyes.

George quickly opened the envelope and pulled out a thick ream of expensive parchment. He read the first page and his face paled. “Is this real?” He asked with a gasp. “You aren’t pranking us, right?”

“What is it?” Fred asked as his dazed twin handed the parchment over.

“100% real,” Harry laughed when Fred gasped as well.

“Please tell me what you gave them that caused the Weasley twins to be speechless!” Severus smirked. “That is a feat unknown by humankind.”

“We can’t accept this,” George quickly spoke up and frantically shaking his head.

“It’s too much,” Fred added.

Harry laughed and crossed his arms. “You did this to yourself. All that paperwork you had me sign back in November at your shop, did you really think I wouldn’t read it?”

“I’m confused. You following this?” Remus asked Severus and Dobby with a confused expression.

“Not a bit,” Severus shrugged and just continued sipping his tea.

“The twins had me sign some paperwork for Gringotts because my name changed, and I also became of legal age. I had assumed I was a silent investor in WWW having given them my Triwizard Tournament winnings as start-up capital. It was all just legal stuff, but I learned by reading the documents that they didn’t have me listed as a silent investor at all. I’m on the company’s documents as a full and equal partner in the business,” Harry raised an accusing eyebrow at the twins who were shuffling a bit guiltily.

“We were going to tell you eventually,” Fred started.

“Yeah, mate, but we always saw you as more than just an investor,” George finished.

“So, what’s that?” Remus gestured to the parchment, impressed at what the twins had done.

“The deed to the shop and our flat above it,” Fred said, handing the parchment to Snape to look over.

“Indeed,” Snape raised an eyebrow in appreciation as he read the page, impressed at what his son had done, and done well too judging by the rate he had negotiated for a prime position in Diagon Alley.

“If I’m a full partner, I plan to pull my own weight,” Harry explained stubbornly. “I might not be good at inventing and the business side of things, but I can at least make sure the company is good financially by owning the building they are located in. I finally got a look at my vault statements and saw how much this partnership was increasing my galleons. I invested all of that and a little more back into the business by buying the building. So, no more paying rent for you guys.”

“A *little* more!” George exclaimed.

“Yeah, you guys have been very profitable,” Harry shrugged, unconcerned at what he had spent. It was a solid investment by what he had seen from the documents the goblins had given him.

“Thank you,” Fred kissed Harry deeply, so much he could feel it all the way to his toes.

“Yeah, thank you,” George echoed and shook his head, still stunned. “I’m not going to kiss you like my brother, but come here,” George pulled Harry into a tight hug.

“You’re both very welcome, and thank you for seeing me as a partner in all this,” Harry hugged George back.

After everyone settling back down and Dobby refilled everyone’s glasses, his own included. The rest of the presents were handed out. The twins got Remus chocolate, feeding the man’s addiction, as well as a new winter cloak. He was very confused though as he unwrapped his normal teaching robes which he already owned and wore all the time as a present from Dobby.

“Er, thank you?” Remus smiled questioningly at the elf.

“Ah, Master Wolfy, I fixed the pockets. You’s can keep your chocolates there now and they’s will never melt, no matter how hot it is,” Dobby smiled broadly.

Remus actually got a tear in his eye at that point, having had to clean melted chocolate from the pockets several times himself and pulled the little elf into a hug. Snape got a couple casual robes from the twins, neither of which were black. The twins, in turn, got a set of rare potions ingredients from Snape and Remus for their pranks.

Harry received a new defense book from Remus (as well as chocolate), a wand holster and dagger set from his dad, which he promised to teach him how to use (and Dobby now too since apparently Winky had thought he needed one). And lastly, Harry got tickets for all of them to go to Wizarding Disney over the summer from the twins who turned amused looks on Dobby who was jumping up and down at seeing a house elf ticket included. Apparently, Winky had gotten him hooked and he really did believe it was the happiest place on earth now.

It wasn't long before Christmas dinner rolled around. They never did figure out how it happened, but somehow Dobby had a place beside Harry at the dinner table and was the one carving the Christmas roast as the head of the family. Harry just kissed Castor's head and smiled around at his little family. It was probably the happiest he had ever been in his life.

Early on Boxing Day, Severus, Remus, Harry, and Castor appeared just outside the wards of the Burrow. Severus was carrying Harry's Firebolt and Remus had Severus's Nimbus 2000 he had recently upgraded to since Harry had declared Remus's old Cleansweep unacceptable even for a backyard family game of quidditch. However, Remus with a Firebolt would have raised way too many questions. Before any of them could even make it to the door, Fred barreled out to grab Harry and Castor into a hug.

"Oi, Fred, you saw us yesterday," Harry complained as he tried to breathe around the crushing arms and squirming baby.

"Yeah, but you have *got* to save me from Ron. Ever since you told him, he keeps trying to kidnap me and get me to spill everything."

"It's just breakfast," Snape sneered at the overly dramatic Weasley. "I'm sure you had a harrowing time."

“Well, Mum’s already asked 30 questions about Castor and what he got for Christmas and Angelina’s been obsessing over our quidditch strategy. It’s been a morning,” Fred said with feeling, taking Castor from Harry.

“I’m going to hide behind the baby for a while. You’re on your own, mate,” he smirked at his boyfriend.

“You lot get in here! The food’s getting cold!” Mrs. Weasley yelled from the door, causing even the older men to rush inside in order to not experience her wrath.

Fred’s plan was immediately disregarded since Mrs. Weasley stole Castor from him and started unbundling him, talking in baby-talk the whole time. She cooed at Castor over Fred’s protests when she realized the baby was wearing the jumper she had knitted him. Castor, on his part, just grabbed onto her robes and kissed her cheek, making Mrs. Weasley turn red and giggle, already besotted with the Selkie whether he was using his allure or not.

“Traitor,” Fred accused the baby as he kissed the back of his head anyway and went to the kitchen with his arm around Harry’s waist.

“Professor Snape!” Bill exclaimed with a smile when they all entered. “Are you joining the match? It would even out our numbers. Can you play?”

“I’ll have you know; I was a keeper for Slytherin in my time. I’m hurt you didn’t remember,” Snape held a hand to his heart in mock pain.

“Hey, I was a first year when you were a seventh,” Bill laughed. “I can’t be expected to remember everything.”

“Thank you both for the presents,” Mr. Weasley said, dishing eggs onto his plate and with a smile to the stoic man he had never expected to willingly enter his home let alone be somehow connected to his family now.

“The recipe box is beautiful!” Mrs. Weasley agreed enthusiastically as she sat with them.

“Artie did the protection charms himself,” Remus said with pride, fake shoving a red-faced Harry’s shoulder.

“Yeah, mate, thanks,” Ron said awkwardly, not sure how to address his friend now that he knew who he really was. He didn’t want to give anything away, and it was hard to pretend to be Harry’s friend but also only a casual friend instead of his best friend.

“Thank you all for welcoming Arcturus for Christmas Eve and all of us today,” Severus nodded as he nursed his coffee.

Mr. Weasley cleared his throat, seeming to try to engage with their previously unexpected guests. “I realized that none of us thought to ask the other day how you both met,” he said to Fred and Harry.

“Yeah, how *did* you meet Artie?” Ron grinned next at Harry who shot him a deadly look.

Fred just smiled having already come up with a story. “We met at WWW, of course!” He said before anyone else could start to make something up. “Artie stands out a bit with the whole Fury-look and the baby and all. I just had to go over and chat him up.”

“Castor loved the store, and we got *excellent* service,” Harry added with a smirk as he went along with the story.

“More importantly though, how did *you* take all this?” Bill asked Snape with a raise of his eyebrow and an evil grin.

“I think I remember him groaning and hitting his head on the table,” Remus laughed, referring to their Gringotts visit when Harry named the twins godparents.

“It is entirely possible that happened,” Snape said stoically as Harry snickered behind his hand.

“This is all very fascinating,” Angelina said impatiently from George’s side. “We need to get to business though. Bill and I decided on the teams.”

“We’re going with the Old Guys vs. the Young’uns,” George laughed in explanation.

“You can imagine who came up with those names,” Charlie gave George’s shoulder a shove.

“Yes, well, the Old Guys are: Bill, Charlie, Hodges, Professor Lupin, Professor Snape, and Mr. Weasley. The Young’uns are: Ron, Artie, Fred, Ginny, George, and me,” Angelina informed them.

“Does everyone have brooms?” Arthur asked with a look at the ones propped up in the corner of the kitchen now.

“We brought our own,” Remus nodded at him.

“We brought ours as well,” Charlie answered for him and Hodges who had a mouthful of bacon and still seemed to be half-asleep.

“No broom for Artie, I refuse,” Fred said, messing up Harry’s hair with a grin that was somewhere between mischievous and salacious.

“Oi!” Harry exclaimed, pushing him away with a grumble. “I just fixed that!”

George snorted at Harry’s belief that he had actually fixed his hair. It wasn’t messy like it was before he became a Fury, but the man still never put any thought or effort into it and either just brushed it and left it or tied it into a low ponytail. “Artie, mate, we really need to talk about hair products. I already tackled your dad; it’s your turn next.”

Snape sent his best sneer George's way. "And you're very welcome," George just smirked back at him.

"So, Artie," Arthur said, turning the conversation back to the interrogation of Fred's new boyfriend. "What do you want to do once you graduate with your NEWTs?"

"Yes, Arcturus," Snape smiled over at this son in clear interest. "What *do* you want to do? Do you still have dreams of becoming an auror as you did when you were young?"

Harry had actually been giving this a lot of thought. We *was* graduating in just a few months. And now he also had Castor to think about as well as his own future career. "I'm actually thinking of going into law. Maybe something having to do with children's rights," he explained. "The goblins at Gringotts gave me the idea when we were there before the term started. Apparently, as a Fury, oaths made to me are the highest form of legal and binding. So, I could use my powers as well as help make sure that no child grows up in a bad situation."

The Weasley family glanced at Castor and nodded, seeming to understand why anyone with a child would care about children's rights. However, Harry's little family and Ron looked to Castor's father and knew the additional reasons this was important to the man from his own past and from what Castor had lived through as well. Fred gave George a look over Harry's head, and his twin nodded, understanding the quiet communication. Since Harry's first year, and especially since the summer before his second, it didn't sit right with the twins that nothing had been done to the Dursleys. They agreed it was time. Those people couldn't get away with what they had done to Harry.

After breakfast, Mrs. Weasley unfolded a blanket on the ground outside and settled in with Castor and Fleur to play with the baby while the rest of the rest of the family took to the air. The quidditch match started out with Harry soaring over everyone with a whoop of glee, loving flying with his wings and feeling even more free than on his broom. Fred just gaped from the ground before Angelina smacked him on the back of the head and told him to pull it together. Remus and Hodges were excellent beaters, but they had nothing on the sheer brilliance of the Weasley twins and their destructive reign over the backyard quidditch pitch. Severus proved to be a more skilled keeper than Ron though, giving chasers Angelina and Ginny a run for their money. However, Angelina and Ginny flew circles around Bill and Mr. Weasley.

For Harry, it was very different playing without a broom. The moves he would normally do were out, but he also seemed to have more control over the air currents and his speed. Though Charlie Weasley was an excellent seeker, Harry didn't become the youngest seeker in a century for no reason. After a couple hours, it was Harry who was flying to the ground to bring victory home for the Young'uns while the Old Guys grumbled and commiserated with each other.

The rest of the afternoon was spent reliving and chatting about the quidditch game, finally culminating in a rematch scheduled for the Easter Holidays. Harry ended up having to pry a sleeping Castor from Mrs. Weasley's arms as the Snape family made to leave the house. As they were all walking out, George gave Severus a quick hug to everyone's confusion and mirth, more so to Snape's confusion who felt a slip of paper pressed into his hand as the smiling twin pulled away with a wink.

"Have a good night," he waved as the family finally walked towards the edge of the wards.

Snape unfolded the note that George handed him and read it in private once they were back at Spinner's End. It was his confusion and curiosity that had him waking up Remus who had crashed immediately after the exercise of the day, and he pushed the half-asleep werewolf through the floo to the twins' flat at 1am.

"Why?!!" Remus asked in a pout as he collapsed on the couch, still wearing his pajamas.

"Yes, what is the meaning of this meeting, which I am assuming is about my son since we're doing this while he and Castor are asleep?" Snape asked, more elegantly sitting in an armchair.

Fred and George both were pacing agitatedly in front of the men. "So, we think it's time," Fred started with a little growl of anger.

"Time to do something about the Dursleys," George continued.

“We’ve waited...”

“But, they can’t just get away...”

“With whatever it is that they did...”

“We don’t even know *what* they did.”

“At least not everything...”

“Guys, it’s way too late, or early rather, for twin speak,” Remus complained. “Though, I do agree with the sentiment. Even Severus and I can’t get a straight answer out of Harry about what he went through there.”

“The few comments he has made and the pieces we’ve put together do not look good. Without him telling us, there is no way to know what all happened to him since his medical history was basically wiped clean with his creature inheritance,” Snape agreed, running an agitated hand through his hair. “I’m not sure it’s the best plan to go behind his back though. It seems like a betrayal, and I have been doing my best to win over some trust after what I’ve put him through over the years.”

Fred sighed tiredly now. “I really don’t think he’s ever going to tell you. Any of us. I think he’s committed to the idea that Harry Potter is dead, and that Artie Snape can put all that behind him and pretend it was someone else. I think he’s trying to actively repress everything... whether he’s being successful with it or not, that I don’t know.”

“Either way, it will eventually come back to bite him in the arse,” George agreed. “We think it’s in his best interest for at least one person to know what he’ll be facing when that happens.”

Snape rubbed the back of his neck in frustration but seeing where they were going with this. “And, since I’m the only Legilimens in this group, I get voted in to find out from the muggles, correct?”

“That was our thought,” Fred nodded.

Remus reached over and squeezed Snape’s hand. “You know I would do it if I could,” he said regretfully. “I think the twins are right though. When it catches up to him, tomorrow or ten years from now, one of us needs to know what he’ll be facing in order to help him through it.”

“Also, it doesn’t sit right with me that they can just continue their lives without repercussions,” Fred almost growled. “If there’s something that can be done without any of us going to Azkaban, I would like to see some justice for Harry.”

Knowing whatever they did needed to be done before they went back to Hogwarts and still had some free time, the conspirators agreed that the twins would invite Harry and Castor over to spend the day with them soon, and that would leave Snape and Remus to handle the muggles. Fred wanted to join them desperately, but Snape made the point that if they didn’t want Harry to suspect anything, it would be best if Fred was with George when they made their visit. Now, they just had to keep Harry and Castor distracted while Severus and Remus snuck away to Surrey to deal with whatever they found on the hell that was Privet Drive.

A Trip to Surrey

It was just after New Year's when Snape and Remus found themselves standing outside number 4 Privet Drive, a house that looked like every single other house on the block. "Are you getting a unnecessarily creepy feeling from this place? It's making my skin crawl and Moony is getting restless," Remus said, eyes darting up and down the street. "Moony is normally this close to the surface when it's this far away from a full moon."

"I feel it too," Snape said quietly, staring at the front door and not willing to walk any farther. "This seems like an invasion of privacy, but I also feel compelled to know. I need to know what happened to my son. But...I am concerned how he will view what we are doing today. Are you sure about this?"

"No," Remus sighed, taking Snape's hand in his. "I think we have to though. Just remember, I'm here with you. You're not alone... whatever we find on the other side of that door."

"Thanks Remus," Snape squeezed his hand and took a deep, steadying breath before letting go and striding towards the door. "I think I'd rather be heading to a meeting of the Dark Lord's inner circle than entering this house. If we must though..."

Snape knocked sharply on the door and they both held their breaths waiting. Just a minute later, the door swung open as Petunia Dursley stared at them with narrowed eyes and a sneer on her face. "What are you two doing here? We were told the freak offed himself. We shouldn't see any of your kind anymore. My family has no more business with your world."

"Hi Tuney, long time no see," Snape growled at her words, his eyes hardening at her words.

"Leave my lawn at once!" She snapped.

"Stupify!" Remus called abruptly. Snape levitated her body inside the house before she could hit the ground.

“I couldn’t listen to a second more of that,” Remus grumbled with a low, inhuman growl at Snape’s questioning look his direction.

“Calm yourself, that is the tip of the iceberg I fear,” the potion master warned him, closing the door behind them.

Two more stunners were thrown out by Remus causing Dudley and Vernon to both hit the floor of the sitting room where Snape deposited Petunia. “Right, so who first?” Remus asked, getting down to business and looking at the group as if they were gum he had stepped in. “Let’s get this over with.”

Snape took in the floral sitting room devoid of even a speck of dust and the copious family pictures lining the wall without a shred of evidence of Harry having ever lived with them. “I will start with Lily’s sister, though I doubt there is any love for her nephew by our reception at the door,” Snape snarled and knelt down to lean over the prone woman on the ground.

“Legilimens!” He called as he stared into Petunia’s stunned eyes.

Several minutes later, Snape stumbled back, falling into a seat on the carpet and grabbed onto the end table covered in garish doilies to steady himself. “Bad?” Remus asked, clutching his wand tighter and both glaring at the stunned muggles and looking in concern at his partner.

“Bad,” Snape said simply, his face paler than just minutes before. “I’ll do the boy next. From what I saw in her mind, I think the uncle is going to be the worst.”

Dudley Dursley had Snape clutching at his sides and gasping for air, his forehead pressed against Remus’s thigh now, desperately pulling strength from the other man. “What did you see?!” Remus asked in concern, putting an arm around Snape to steady him.

“That boy! That *monster*! Is a sociopath if I have ever seen one! He’s well on his way to becoming the worst of our society. He has all the marks of a future murderer or even serial killer. He hurts without remorse, kills small animals, and feels no love or empathy towards anyone. He has never viewed Harry as a human but as prey...”

“Merlin! Has he killed a person yet?” Remus gasped, now pointing his wand at the teenager.

“No, but he needs mental health intervention and soon or he will definitely be heading in that direction,” Snape explained, using both his hands to scrub his temples as if willing the images to leave his mind. “He’s done enough to Harry and others to send him to prison, even if he hasn’t killed anyone yet.

“Hopefully the uncle is better then. He can’t be worse, right?” The werewolf tried to help as he kept one eye on the teenager.

“From what I saw in Petunia’s head, I doubt it,” Snape hesitantly walked over to Vernon. “From her perspective, he viewed Harry as even less of a human than their son, which is saying quite a lot. And she never helped nor cared.

With hesitation, Snape leaned over the large man, raising his wand one last time. “Legilimens,” he tentatively cast. This time he really did collapse on the floor, tears streaming down his face as he almost curled into a ball.

“Tell me, what happened?” Remus asked frantically. He clutched at his partner, trying to leech away some of his pain if it were possible.

Snape shook his head firmly. “No, Moony can’t know!” Snape said vehemently. “You can’t know.”

“Is it that bad? Merlin, obviously it’s that bad,” Remus growled in frustration at the whole situation and what Harry had lived through.

“It could be worse, but it is bad enough,” Snape shook his head, trying to dispel the images of his son being viciously beaten and starved and told he was worthless every single day of his life. Merlin, it was a surprise he *didn’t* actually kill himself. *How did he survive so long under this roof?* Snape asked himself in fear.

“I can’t believe we just left him here!” Remus wrung his hands feeling useless.

Snape slowly sat up and leaned against the end table, his eyes dark and his face devoid of emotion. “Remus, if I asked you to return to Hogwarts and mention to several people in passing that I was brewing in the dungeons, would you do that for me?” Snape asked calmly with a pleading look in his eyes to the other man.

“You’re asking me to give you an alibi,” Remus said slowly, no question at all in the statement.

“Yes, that’s exactly what I’m asking…” Snape looked into the werewolf’s eyes with hardened conviction.

Remus looked around the immaculate house and the monsters stunned on the sitting room floor. “I would,” he told Snape with a short nod.

Remus sat down beside him on the floor and looked at him seriously. “I want you to really consider this though. You have Harry and Castor to think about now. How would this affect them? What if you are caught? Any alibi I give will be suspect because I’m the one who would be assumed to have the most motive to hurt or kill them. Would Harry want you to do this? Are you sure you can’t tell me what they did?”

“You would kill them without question,” Snape nodded to Lupin. “I know how much control you have; I’m not saying anything against you, but Harry is Moony’s cub. I wouldn’t blame him for a second if he wanted to come out and play; hell, I’d help him.”

Remus nodded, his face extremely pale. “Can we turn them over to the authorities, either magical or muggle?”

Snape thought for a minute. “Maybe, but Harry’s guardians weren’t listed on any official documents in order to keep him safer from the Dark Lord, so no one really knows who they are, and definitely not where they live. Neither of us can go to the Department of Magical

Law Enforcement without them asking how we know this information. I have no reason to know, and it would be odd for you to have just found this out months after Harry disappeared. Besides, it would get back to Dumbledore and cause even more problems. I'm certain he knows of some of this, if not all. He has a vested interest in covering it up."

"You're the spy and a Slytherin. Is there a more subtle way of getting the information to the DMLE?" Remus demanded next.

Snape just rolled his eyes and groaned in frustration. Sometimes he really just wanted to take the easy way out and kill the bastards. "Yes, probably."

"And what do you believe Harry would want? Would hurting them help him or betray him?" Remus asked next, genuinely not sure about the answer to the question but willing to go with whatever Snape said.

"Fine," Snape growled with a sneer. "I must have been around Harry too long. I hear his voice in my head now. Things were so much easier before people counted on me or cared; you know."

"Easier, not better," Remus gave him a sad smile.

Snape straightened and pointed his wand at each muggle saying, "Obliviate."

Remus cancelled his stunning charms just as they closed the door behind themselves. "What will they remember?"

"Nothing, I erased everything since right before we knocked."

Remus looked down the street questioningly. "Did Harry ever say which house was Castor's original family's?"

Snape followed his eyes. “No. I wish he had though. That’s another house I would like to visit.”

“So, what next?” Remus asked, wrapping an arm around Snape’s waist in support.

“We need to go see a couple teenagers,” Snape growled in annoyance. Severus apparated both of them promptly to Hogsmeade and angrily trudged towards the castle. Remus recognized his need for silence and followed along behind him until they reached the Slytherin common room. “Wait here for a moment,” he instructed once they were inside.

Snape disappeared into the dorms and returned after a minute with Draco Malfoy and Blaise Zabini.

“I thought you both left for the holiday?” Remus asked in confusion at the two.

“We just got back, my mum had some international business the last few days of break,” Blaise explained with a shrug. “This time of the year is busy for her.”

Wisely, Remus did not follow up that statement with a question about Madam Zabini’s business. He knew she was a very high-level fixer for multiple governments from what Severus had told him, and that was all he ever wanted to know in those regards. “Well...I hope you had a good break.”

“It was excellent,” Zabini smirked at his expression and followed behind Snape who opened the portrait door.

“What’s going on, Uncle Sev?” Draco asked as Snape led them all into his office. “You weren’t due back with Artie until the rest of the students return.”

Before he answered, Snape threw up some seriously high-level locking and silencing charms all around the office, which was thankfully (and purposefully) devoid of any portraits. “I need to ask something of you both that is highly inappropriate for me to ask and may be

dangerous,” Snape warned them. “If you say no, then I will not think any less of either of you. Please consider the consequences of what I’m asking you before you decide how you wish to respond.”

Blaise and Draco looked between Snape and Lupin with twin looks of concern and also determination. “What is it, Uncle Sev?” Draco spoke up for them both.

“I’m asking you both to have a sensitive conversation. This conversation needs to be within hearing of Ms. Susan Bones, it does not matter who else hears, but Ms. Bones must be one of the people,” Snape said with a telling raise of his eyebrow.

“Of course,” Blaise nodded, understanding exactly what he was asking with a smirk at his head of house. “What would you like Amelia Bones, the head of the DMLE, to know?”

Snape nodded in approval of Blaise’s understanding. “Draco, you remember what the headmaster told you before break about the late Mr. Potter?”

Blaise gasped in surprise. “It’s true? He’s dead?”

Snape glanced at Remus, a thought just now sinking in for him. The werewolf seemed to have the same thought by the pained expression on his face. They hadn’t caught it before even though the twins had alluded to it, but Harry had distanced himself mentally so much from his former life with the Dursleys, that yes, it really was true that the Harry Potter from Privet Drive no longer existed. He couldn’t function at the level he was if not. It seemed Fred and George Weasley really were the ones who knew his son the best of them all.

“It’s true,” Snape said, hiding the catch in his voice and believing it to actually be the truth in that moment.

Draco’s face hardened with conviction, looking very Gryffindor in that moment. “How can we help? What do you want us to do?”

“Mr. Potter’s former address, and where his relatives currently live in peace and security, is 4 Privet Drive in Surrey,” Snape informed them dryly.

“Draco, mate, I think I would really like to discuss a conversation I accidentally overheard between Dumbledore and McGonagall the other day... One that had some wonderfully juicy gossip about our missing Golden Boy, maybe in the library,” Blaise smiled ferally at his friend. “I think Ms. Bones got back early as well because of the upcoming Wizengamot meeting, and I believe she was there studying when I went by earlier to pick up a book.”

“In this conversation, feel free to make up whatever horrors you can imagine that relate to child abuse,” Snape gave them a pointed look. “Make it bad enough that she would feel the need to pass on the information and that her aunt would find it shocking enough to investigate.”

“Merlin,” Draco shook his head sadly. “Uncle Sev...is it...is it true?”

The look both boys received from the older men confirmed it. Draco and Blaise shared a pained look and nodded at each other. “Well, I needed to spend some time in the library anyway,” Draco closed his eyes and let out a pained breath for the boy who had helped him get free of his family.

“You sure you don’t want this conversation to happen in front of Theodore Nott?” Blaise asked with a raise of his eyebrow. “I think justice might move a little faster with the dark. Politics aside, muggles attacking any wixen tends to bring swift punishment from all sides, and Nott’s side is faster than the legal system.”

“I vote with Blaise,” Draco agreed firmly.

Snape looked to Lupin almost pleadingly. “Boys,” Lupin looked over at them with a tired sigh. “I don’t think Harry would want us to turn his relatives over to the Dark Lord to be tortured and killed. Severus won’t tell me exactly what he learned about the situation, but I’m going by what I know of Harry. That’s just not who he was, even if we disagree.”

Draco rolled his eyes. “Yes, that would be very Gryffindor of him.”

“If Susan doesn’t go to her aunt, then can we tell the Dark Lord?” Blaise asked hopefully and with a vicious gleam in his eyes. “Or maybe Mum? She has some free time once she’s done with her current job.”

“I would support that,” Snape agreed. “I always held the upmost respect for your mother.”

“Sure,” Lupin shrugged really not caring beyond the fact that he would really rather be the one handling this...preferably on a full moon. “As long as someone handles them and soon.”

“Thank you,” Snape gave them both a tight smile. “Keep this between us as much as you can, ok? Also, let’s keep up the pretense that Potter is in training if at all possible for now since the headmaster is still spreading that rubbish.”

Blaise snorted, “We’re Slytherin, did you think you were talking to Gryffindors?”

“Of course not,” Snape smirked.

After Blaise and Draco left to plan their conversation, Severus owled the twins an explanation of their plan. The return letter was steeped in foul language that boiled down to the twins agreeing with the teenagers and wanting to sic Madam Zabini or the Dark Lord on the vermin. They gave the DMLE plan one week, and if nothing had been done, they vowed to find the nearest Death Eater and pass on all the information they could about the Dursleys, and imply the muggles knew more information about the war than they actually did to ensure the Dark Lord’s attention. Severus passed the letter to Remus who just smirked a very Snape-like smirk at the twins’ plan.

“James would really love those boys,” Remus said. He looked over at Severus before his face fell into an apologetic look. “I’m sorry, I forget sometimes.”

Snape shook his head. “No, you were friends. I know that my experiences with him were entirely negative, but he did eventually grow up into a decent human being. And I truly

believe he would have cared for my son as his own even if Lily had eventually told him what had happened. At least he would have been better than *those* people.”

“That’s for sure,” Remus said, pulling Severus into his arms. “Well, hopefully those bastards enjoy their one week, because one way or another, that’s all they have left of their freedom.”

“How was your break? Do anything fun?” Harry asked Draco, Blaise, and Pansy from where he had joined them in the Slytherin common room shortly after everyone had returned to campus. Remus was babysitting currently, so he was enjoying one of his rare nights as a ‘normal’ teenager without a baby in tow. As seventh years, their group had stolen the prime position around the fireplace in the common room to all the younger years’ consternation.

Draco and Blaise shared an odd look that had Harry raising a questioning eyebrow at them. It was Pansy who spoke first though. “Oh, well, nothing exceptional. My family, of course, joined Blaise’s on their annual trip to Wizing Disney. It was a bit of a meet the parents for Draco, even if he’s known them since he was a baby,” Pansy grinned at her boyfriend and cuddled up beside him even more if it were possible. Harry thought the blond would be wearing his girlfriend if she got any closer to him.

“Please, your mum loves me, even if your dad seems a little irritated at my current family-less status,” Draco huffed fondly at her. “I’ll win him over eventually. At least I am still the Malfoy heir, and there is nothing Lucius can do about it.”

“Wait...” Harry narrowed his eyes at Blaise as their plans sank in. There was coincidence... and there was *coincidence*, and he was pretty certain this was of that second one’s variety. “Blaise...you and your mum go to Wizing Disney every year for Christmas?”

Blaise shrugged, not seeing why his friend was making a big deal out of this. “Yes, I realize it isn’t what one would normally expect of the Zabini’s, but Mum started it when I was a child and my first stepdad went ‘missing,’ and we’ve had season passes ever since. We go every time Mother is single once more and every Christmas at the very least...you know, in celebration,” he added on with a wide and evil grin.

“Riiight...I’m not touching that first part,” Harry’s eyes widened as he really hoped Hermione knew what she was getting into with *that* family. “Does your family happen to have a house elf named Winky?” He asked instead.

Blaise slowly nodded, seeming very surprised Harry would know the elf. “Mum’s new apprentice is a house elf named Winky,” he explained with a shrug. “I understand it is unconventional, but house elves can go many places where wixen are not allowed access. It has been quite a beneficial partnership for my mother’s business. Have you met before? I understand she used to work at the school.”

Harry was somewhere between laughing hysterically and calling Dobby so he could yell at him. “Merlin, yes, she and one of the house elves here at the school took Castor to Disney a couple months back. Tell your mother thank you from me for the tickets. I had no idea what family Winky ended up with...”

“The Zabini’s have taken in quite a few strays this past year,” Pansy stretched over Draco to nudge Blaise with her foot, laughing at the odd connection.

“I am *not* a stray,” Draco huffed in fake annoyance. “And, just so you know Snape, that house elf scares me more than Madam Zabini, so... don’t cross her.”

“Merlin, no,” Harry laughed. “I’m more upset anyway with your old house elf Dobby since he was the one that planned the trip and who has been watching Castor when we have a double period. He knows not to take my son out of the country without clearing it with me first now though.”

“Dobby?” Draco frowned now, sitting up further and dislodging Pansy in the process. “I knew he was here at the school, but I didn’t know he was the one watching Castor. Are you sure you want *Dobby* watching your kid? When I was little, he once thought I was being attacked by one of my father’s prize peacocks that I was just playing with, and he *eviscerated* it... like only a few feathers left... understand?”

Harry shuddered, but not at what Dobby had done, it was at what Dobby’s resulting punishment from Lucius Malfoy must have been for killing something he prized... maybe more than his son from what Harry had gleaned from recent events pertaining to Draco and his father.

“Yeah... I think Dobby is just the man for the job then. I’m certain that I’m fine with evisceration if something is going after Castor. I would even agree to evisceration first and asking questions later if he really thinks my baby is in danger,” Harry vehemently agreed.

“Bloody hell, but you are your father’s son,” Draco chuckled and leaned back again on the couch, pulling Pansy back into her limpet position. “I can’t say I disagree with you, but Merlin... that baby going to grow up like...well, like...”

“Me?” Blaise raised an eyebrow when Draco looked at him apologetically. “I’ll have you know, I’m a very well-adjusted individual,” he protested in fake offense.

“Just don’t take my son to Disney without me,” Harry rolled his eyes while the rest of them laughed and teased Draco about being a stray puppy the Zabini’s had taken in.

The first day back in classes after break was a long day with Potions at the end. Harry was tired, Castor was tired, everyone was tired. Luckily, Castor had fallen asleep when Harry placed him in the play area behind the chalkboard. He just hoped the baby slept through the entire class and wouldn’t need his nappy changed halfway through since Snape had the class brewing a blood replenishing potion that was highly complicated.

Harry ended up working with Draco this time since Hermione had rushed to ask Pansy before Draco could. Draco was grumbling over some complicated ingredient that just wasn’t being cooperative as he tried to juice it by squishing it with his silver knife while Harry stirred continuously. Halfway through stirring, the baby monitor started vibrating.

Harry looked up, but Snape was on the other side of the room either making fun of or trying to salvage Ron and Seamus’s potion, he wasn’t sure which and really didn’t care. He tried to ignore the monitor while finishing the last 20 stirs, then he could finally check on Castor. 17, 18, 19, 20...right, now...(POP!!).

As Harry, put down the stirring rod and turned to check on the baby, a loud crack sounded in the room, and Harry was suddenly holding an armful of laughing and very smelly baby. Snape whipped his head around, as well as most of the class at the loud noise.

“Did he just apparate?” Draco gaped at the baby, the potion forgotten in his wide-mouthed stare.

“You can’t apparate within Hogwarts’ wards?” Hermione said, exasperatedly as she probably had hundreds of times over the years.

“Then what do you call what just happened?!” Draco turned to her, pointing at the baby in Harry’s arms.

Harry took a steadying breath. This was a very important moment, he acknowledged to himself, pulling on what he had learned from the parenting books. It was Castor’s first accidental magic. He would absolutely not react in anger or fear like his relatives had. He had to be better than them. He had to let his son know it was ok, and he was a special little boy. He took another breath and smiled happily at the baby.

“I’m so proud of you!” He hugged Castor. “You’re such a good boy, coming to find Daddy! I love you so much!” Harry kissed his head and his cheeks and his nose, causing Castor to laugh and clap more.

Snape cleared his throat, finally accepting what happened from the midst of his shock. He walked over just as Harry looked at his father with scared eyes over the baby’s head. He didn’t know how Snape would react. He hoped *he* had reacted ok.

“Good boy, Castor!” Snape smiled and rubbed Castor’s back, also planting a kiss on his head. “That was some very impressive, accidental magic.”

The class devolved into chaos as the rest of the students figured out that it must have been Castor’s first accidental magic. They all forgot their potions and started patting him on his back and telling him how smart he was. It seemed that house rivalry disappeared in the face of cute babies and their scared parent and grandparent as both Slytherins and Gryffindors

supported him, or maybe it was just the Selkie aura taking affect once more. Harry smiled over Castor's head at Ron who gave him a nod, knowing how Harry's relatives had reacted to his accidental magic and supporting his friend in how he handled his own son's. Snape ended up dismissing the class early since every single potion was ruined, and he couldn't bring himself to even be angry at that fact.

The next morning after Castor's Selkie version of apparition, the baby proved solidly that it wasn't that accidental. He popped into his father's arms no less than three times while Harry was trying to get ready for class. Having missed breakfast because of the delay in getting ready, Harry ended up having to call Dobby to feed and take care of Castor during his first class. As he was grabbing his bag to leave, Castor, who was at the table eating porridge with Dobby, turned and reached out to him one more time. "Da, da, da," Castor smiled and waved his tiny hand that was covered in porridge.

Harry immediately dropped his bag and ran over to his son. Forget Transfiguration, it was worth being late for his son's first word. "You called me Dada!! Cas, you are the smartest baby in the whole wide world. I love you so much; Dada loves you so much!" Several minutes later, Harry didn't notice or care about the porridge handprints on his robes as he dazedly headed to class very late.

Harry detoured by his dad's chambers, knowing he and Remus both had a free period that morning, and pushed open the portrait. He stuck his head in to see the two men reading on the couch. "Aren't you supposed to be in class?" Snape asked with a concerned look to his son.

"Castor said Dada this morning! His first word! His first word was my name!!!" With that, Harry closed the portrait hole, smirking from his gloating when he finally did walk towards Transfiguration and, probably, an angry McGonagall.

Snape leaned over to Lupin conspiratorially, "Yesterday evening he said Gee-Pa," Snape smiled. "Which is obviously Grandpa. I win, he said my name first, but don't tell Harry."

Lupin kissed him and then leaned back to his reading, but this time with a very sly look on his face. He knew that yesterday morning Castor had said "Moo," when Remus held him. So,

clearly, Moony was his first word, but he could keep that to himself.

It was almost a full week since the trip to Privet Drive, and Remus was searching the castle looking for the potions master. He wasn't in his rooms, the potions lab, or the Great Hall. The werewolf finally found his partner out by the lake, bundled up and watching the giant squid try to break the ice. "What're you doing out here in the cold by yourself?" Lupin said as he scooted closer to Snape who cast a warming charm over them both.

"I was just thinking about what happens after this year. Arcturus will graduate, you and I will probably be leaving, and well, everything will change," Snape shrugged. "I've gotten used to being here over the past...well, decades. It might not have been my first choice for a career, but I have gotten comfortable, maybe complacent."

"So, you don't know if you are excited or sad to leave," Remus agreed with the emotion, having felt the same way when he graduated. "You've been here much longer than me, but I know the feeling."

"Yes," Snape looked around and, not seeing any students, put his arm around the DADA professor. "Was there anything you came to find me for specifically or did you just want company?"

"Ah, actually yes," Remus said, sitting up more and looking at Snape with concern. "Kingsley Shacklebolt reached out because he thought I would want to know. The Dursley's have been arrested by the muggle police. He said the aurors were tipped off by a rumor, which we clearly know where that came from, and they went to investigate. They confirmed the rumors and turned the evidence over to muggle law enforcement since, barring Harry turning up, there is no wixen to press charges. Nothing is in the papers yet, and probably won't be until they are sentenced since it's being handled in the muggle courts, but at least it's moving forward."

Snape frowned at him and looked across the lake pensively. "Isn't this what we wanted?" Lupin asked him, concerned at the look. "They've been arrested."

Snape shrugged. "They deserve Azkaban, the uncle anyway, not some cushy muggle prison with no dementors."

Lupin sighed and shook his head sadly. "They've been arrested now; will you tell me what all they did? I know you feel that it's betraying Harry, but it's obviously eating you up inside. Let me share the burden."

And, so, Severus did. He told Lupin everything he saw in the Dursley's minds. The DADA professor listened quietly and held onto the other man's waist the entire time. Snape looked at him as he was finishing explaining the horrors and trying to blink away the tears. He looked into the glowing, amber eyes of a werewolf, gone was mild-mannered Remus Lupin, Moony was looking out at him.

"They deserve the dementors," the werewolf growled.

Support Groups and Dark Marks

Breakfast in the Great Hall was fairly standard for a Monday morning. The students were a little sleepier than normal, the professors a little crankier than other days in the week, and the food was always a little better because the house elves were fully aware of this. As for the houses, the Gryffindors were chatting noisily, the Ravenclaws were studying, Hufflepuffs were trickling in later than everyone else, and the Slytherins were laughing at whatever new and cute thing the baby was doing, usually just getting himself and his dad very messy with his food. Up at the head table, Snape and McGonagall were talking quidditch while Lupin tried to sneak more food onto Snape's plate and Dumbledore talked with Flitwick about some new dueling technique the master wanted to try out.

All the little side conversations and chatter suddenly got much quieter when the mail was delivered, and one by one, the students and professors opened their copies of the Daily Prophet. And suddenly all breathed in a break of surprise.

Boy-Who-Lived Abused. Relatives in Azkaban.

It was plain, blunt, and damning in black print emblazoned large as the headline on the front page of the Daily Prophet. Draco shared a congratulatory look with Blaise over the top of his paper before it was snatched roughly away by Arcturus Snape who seemed very surprised and suddenly exceptionally pale when he saw the article.

"Huh, that's interesting," Blaise read over Artie's shoulder. "Apparently Potter's relatives were somehow attacked in their muggle holding cell by a werewolf. They had to be moved to Azkaban so they wouldn't infect the other muggles. Merlin...it wasn't even a full moon. That's just...unheard of. Wonder who was powerful enough to be able to do that?" Blaise and Draco both glanced up to the werewolf sitting at the head table and eating a slice of quiche, unconcernedly.

As Arcturus Snape silently read over the article while trying to keep Castor from grabbing the paper, the professors were also reading the paper at their table. "I told you those muggles

were the worst sort!” McGonagall hissed over to Dumbledore, murder in her eyes. “Did you never check on the boy?! You said you had!”

“Minerva, I’m sure this is all just an exaggeration. This *is* the Daily Prophet, you know,” Dumbledore tried to soothe her. “You remember what they were publishing about Harry in both his fourth and fifth years... this is not different.”

“Does Harry know? Has anyone told him his relatives were arrested?” Lupin asked with a covert look over at the Fury reading the paper in shock at the Slytherin table.

“I’ll make sure he’s informed,” Dumbledore cheerily assured him before going back to the paper. “Now, that’s very interesting,” he continued with a frown as he read more of the article.

“A werewolf somehow got into the holding cells when it wasn’t a full moon and was able to infect both Vernon and Petunia Dursley. The son was already off in a mental health institution being evaluated. Now, that must be a very powerful werewolf, an exceptionally strong alpha wolf to be able to turn and infect someone without hurting anyone else and not on a full moon. Even Greyback would be hard-pressed to do that. Do you know anything about this Remus?” Dumbledore turned a searching and suspicious eye to his DADA professor.

Lupin avoided his direct eye contact, and probable legilimency, by buttering some toast. “Of course not, Headmaster,” he chuckled dryly. “I stay away from wolves such as those. They are very dangerous to anyone they’re around. You know me; I’m just the mild-mannered bookworm.”

Snape elbowed him in the side for laying it on a little thick. “Lupin probably couldn’t infect anyone on the actual full moon without his wolfsbane even if they were fed to him. I am interested to hear more about Potter’s relatives though and why we were always informed that he lived a very comfortable and pampered life when that is obviously not the case based on the charges brought before them by the muggles no less.”

McGonagall reached over and poured some more tea for Lupin. “Here you are, Remus. Would you like me to get you anything else? Coffee perhaps?” She asked him with a bright and knowing smile.

“No, Minerva. Thank you, but I’m good,” he smiled back at her kindly.

“No, thank *you*,” she chuckled softly, still shooting murderous looks towards the headmaster.

“Yes, whoever did this, well, personally it sounds very fitting that those disgraces for humans have to go through a painful change every month as well as be subjected to the dementors,” Flitwick sniffed as he put some more bacon on Remus’s plate with a knowing smile. “I wish Mr. Potter had asked for help. At least he is safe and away from them now though.”

Besides several concerned glances from Ron, and Lupin and his dad avoiding his gaze, no one directly addressed the article with Harry all day, which made perfect sense as he was Arcturus Snape and not Harry Potter. Classes went on as usual to his shock since Harry’s world felt like it had been turned on its end. The students talked about the article off and on throughout the day, but thankfully, there were very few details revealed to the public, so there was only speculation beyond the bare facts of “evidence of physical and verbal abuse and neglect over the span of years.”

Harry almost successfully pretended the article was about this whole other person who he didn’t know as he attended his classes that day. That was a different person, one he left behind, a person who no longer lived. That was his thought all day until he entered his rooms with a sleeping Castor that evening to find his entire family sitting around his fire and looking at him as if he would blow up at the drop of a pin.

Remus came forward and took Castor from Harry so that Harry could relax as he settled the baby in the crib and put a silencing ward around it. Harry sat in the one empty armchair they had left for him and looked over at his father, Fred, George, Ron, and Remus when he re-entered the room and sat beside Severus.

Harry looked at them all accusingly. “You did this?”

They looked between each other, not with regret but maybe a little guilt. “Are you ok, Artie?” Fred asked, looking like he wanted to go over to Harry but wasn’t sure if he would be welcomed now.

Fred relaxed when Harry finally held out a hand to him. Even if he was angry, he would never turn away comfort from his boyfriend. The redhead rushed over and shifted the Fury over in the armchair until they were both squeezed in with Harry basically sitting on Fred’s lap now.

“I was going for a hug, but I guess this’ll do,” Harry huffed in fond exasperation when Fred wrapped his arms around him tightly.

“You never answered, Harry. Are you ok?” Ron asked, leaning against the mantle and looking around awkwardly since this had been the first time he was included in the group and didn’t quite understand their dynamics yet.

Harry sighed soaking in the comfort of the arms around him. “They don’t know it’s me, everyone out there in the world, so, I guess, yeah. I could be worse, but I think I’m fine. If that makes any sense. I guess, there is some closure with the Dursley’s finally being arrested. Something that finally says none of it was my fault. I’m not so sure how I feel about Moony attacking them though. That seems like an unnecessary risk for you to take, Remus.”

Remus shrugged with a small smile. “That was some really powerful werewolf out there. Not me. We all know I’m like a beta or maybe an omega or whatever. I’m definitely not alpha material.”

Snape snorted and Harry outright started laughing. “Is that what you told Dumbledore when he asked?” Harry continued laughing as Remus pouted from the couch beside Snape.

“More or less,” Snape confirmed for him, even as he threaded an arm around his partner’s waist.

“Yeah, mate, anyone in their right mind knows that to have control like you do on a daily basis, you’re obviously a strong alpha,” George smiled from where he was standing by Ron.

“I disagree with Artie though. They had it coming. Good on you.”

“Well, considering the other options were letting them stay in a cushy muggle prison, killing them, or ‘accidentally’ letting their address slip to the Dark Lord, or worse, Madam Zabini, I think we can all live with this outcome,” Snape studied Harry’s expressions.

“How does Blaises’s mum rank worse than the Dark Lord?” Ron frowned suddenly. “Should we be concerned about Hermione?”

“Granger is in no danger,” Snape assured him with a short chuckle that seemed to shock Ron to the core. “Madam Catarina Zabini may have her own, unique moral code, but she does have one and will pose no threat to your friend.”

“Are you very angry at us?” George ended up asking Harry who still seemed to be processing everything.

“Do you all know what happened? Everything?” Harry asked in a small voice, seemingly trying to disappear.

“No,” Fred told him quickly. “Only your dad knows since he was the only legilimens we know.”

“And me, sorry cub,” Remus added sadly. “Your dad needed someone to talk to. To figure it all out.”

“We do not need to discuss everything that happened until you’re ready,” Severus said to Harry kindly. “I am sorry that we broke your trust like this, but you cannot hide from the past forever. Someone needed to know what you will be facing when and if that day comes and you have to deal with it.”

“I was doing very well with just pretending it all never happened, or rather happened to someone else,” Harry huffed.

“What are you going to do then when Castor is old enough to ask what happened to his mother?” Snape asked with a serious expression. “When he asks you how you knew she was in trouble? When he asks why you didn’t live with me when you were a child? Will you lie to him as you have, necessarily I know, to everyone else?”

Harry sighed. “So, this is some kind of intervention,” he said motioning to all of them gathered in his sitting room. “Deal with the traumas of your past or we’ll make you?”

“No, this isn’t an intervention,” Fred said from where his chin was now resting on Harry’s neck. “This is your support group. We aren’t going to push you, but we want you to know we’re here when you need us. For whatever you need us for.”

Harry looked over to his dad. They only one in the room who knew absolutely everything now. “So, what do you think of me now, Dad? You know it all. Everything I didn’t want to tell you. I’m the freak, right? The Boy-Who-Lived but who couldn’t protect himself from muggles.”

Snape hurried over and pulled Harry into the best hug he could with Fred still being wrapped around him. “Never, ever, say you’re a freak. You are wonderful and special and loved. I love you, my Harry, my Artie,” Snape said emphatically as he felt tears fall onto his shoulder.

Harry sniffed and tried to stop the tears until he finally got out a quiet chuckle. “You called me Artie.”

Snape pulled away and gave him a mock frown. “I must have suffered some head trauma from breaking a werewolf into a muggle jail. I’m sure I was injured in some way if I could slip up that badly.”

“I don’t know what you mean. Moony was on his best behavior, well, until he mauled some muggles, but before then, I was a perfect gentleman-wolf,” Remus huffed like he had been severely insulted.

“Ha! You admitted it!” Ron pointed at Remus laughing.

“I admit nothing,” Remus pointedly stared at the redhead with a hint of amber flashing in his eyes.

“I heard nothing, mate, nothing at all,” Ron quickly nodded his head in agreement.

It was then that Dobby popped into the room with a bottle of firewhisky and a tower of glasses. “Masters, I hears you’s had a rough day.”

“I love you, Dobby!” George reached over to grab the bottle and pour a glass for everyone.

Pansy sat across from Harry and Blaise at dinner before Astronomy class on Thursday. “Professor Snape is minding Castor tonight, correct?” she asked as she glanced around, making sure no one was listening in.

“Yeah, we have Astronomy,” Harry nodded at her, glancing around nervously as well since she looked all shifty suddenly.

“We need to meet after class. In your rooms?” She asked seriously.

“We’ll be out after curfew,” Blaise reminded her.

Pansy rolled her eyes at him. “If we can’t sneak around the castle without getting caught, then we don’t deserve the title of Slytherin. Besides, this is important.”

Harry nodded at her. “Of course, you all are welcome.”

“You may invite your Gryffindorks as well, if you must,” Pansy said as she stood and walked away. Blaise nodded in agreement over to Harry, from Pansy that was definitely a demand for Hermione and Ron’s presence.

Harry swung by his rooms before Astronomy to grab a familiar bit of parchment which he surreptitiously slipped to Ron as soon as he entered class. “What?... Why are you giving me this?” Ron asked when he recognized the Marauder’s Map.

“You and Hermione should come to my rooms after class,” Harry instructed. “Only use this if you need it. If you have to, come up with some lie about how Harry left it with you or with Fred and George since it was theirs originally or something. If it makes anyone believe more that he’s dead, that’s fine with me.” Ron nodded at his friend and slid the map into the pocket of his robes before he went over to Hermione who was already being told of the meeting by Blaise.

In the confusion of everyone returning to their dorms, the mixed group of Gryffindors and Slytherins were easily able to make it to Harry’s rooms in the middle of the castle unobserved after class.

“What is all this about, Pans?” Draco asked since he had been pulled along after class by Pansy as well.

The group all sat in what was starting to become their usual places in front of the fire in Harry’s rooms. “Bulstrode is a Death Eater,” Pansy started. Absolutely no one looked at her in surprise.

“We kind-of already figured that out, thank you very much,” Harry said unconcernedly.

“Yeah, we aren’t Slytherins and even we could guess that,” Ron snorted in amusement.

Pansy rolled her eyes at them. “Yes, she’s a Death Eater and already took the Mark, but she doesn’t want to be. She wants out.”

Draco nodded in understanding as the others looked on in concern now. “She approached you?” he asked.

“Yes, she knew you had gotten out and thought it would be easier to approach me than you,” Pansy explained, leaning against her boyfriend and taking a deep breath in. “She was wanting to go to Dumbledore and asked my opinion, but after what he tried to get you to do, I talked her out of it.”

“Wait? What did Dumbledore try to get Draco to do?” Hermione asked with a frown, and for the very first time not calling him Malfoy.

Harry had forgotten that the Gryffindors hadn’t been told what happened before Christmas since Ron hadn’t known who he was at the time, and he didn’t see them as often as his housemates. “Dumbledore tried to manipulate Draco into becoming his new spy within the Death Eaters since Dad can’t return. He wanted Draco to go and apologize to his father and Voldemort.”

Hermione frowned. “There’s no way they wouldn’t kill him if he tried to return.”

“Yes, something else that is obvious to us all, but Dumbledore was willing to sacrifice Draco on the off-chance that they might take him back,” Pansy said angrily. “That’s why I told Millicent to hold off a bit on talking to him.”

“What can we do?” Ron asked. Harry was so proud of the progress his friend had made in his regards to Slytherins. Just a couple years before and Ron would never have offered to help the Slytherin girl.

Pansy glanced over at Harry. “Well, right now everyone is still under the impression that Snape developed some potion or spell to remove his Dark Mark. It seems that very few people know the truth, except us that is.”

“You want me to remove her Mark?” Harry asked in understanding. “I could try, but I’m not really sure what I did the first time, so I don’t know if it will work again. In principle, I know what I was thinking at the time, so maybe I can replicate it.”

“If I can get her to go to Snape, will you at least try?” Pansy almost pleaded.

“Of course, Pansy! I just want you to make sure not to get her hopes up too high, but I’ll definitely try,” Harry assured her vehemently. He was almost insulted that she would think he wouldn’t at least put forth an effort.

“What about us?” Ron asked with a sarcastic smirk. “Do you just miss our company and want to see how we’re doing? Is that why we were invited? I’m touched, Parkinson.”

Pansy scowled at him, but good naturedly. “Everyone knows Dumbledore has some kind of Order he runs. It’s a terribly badly kept secret, and you both are probably in it or at least connected to it, so I was hoping you would keep your ears open to see if any other students try to go to him. I don’t want him to get his claws into anyone else like he tried to get to Draco.”

Hermione still looked utterly scandalized that Dumbledore would have done such a thing, but she nodded firmly at her new friends. “We will. I don’t know how much help we’ll be, but we’ll keep our ears open.”

“I’ll mention it to Fred and George too, they might hear something before these two,” Harry said, not expanding on why they might hear something first.

Hermione shook her head in bemusement. “It still seems so weird to me that you’re dating Ron’s brother. I didn’t believe him when he first told me. It just sounded so random.”

“What?!” All the Slytherins exclaimed. Oh yeah, he hadn’t told them, Harry winced...oops.

“You’re dating one of the *twins*?!!” Draco stood in surprise. “The *Weasley* twins...like the twin nightmares of chaos, Weasley twins?!”

“Huh, guess he doesn’t tell you all everything,” Ron grinned smugly. “Fred introduced him to the family on Christmas Eve. I have to tell you, I was pretty shocked to see his ugly mug walk through the door,” Ron teased his friend fondly.

“Ooooh, that explains the blue hair,” Pansy snorted in amusement now. “How in the world did you end up with one of the Weasley twins though?”

Harry shrugged after a warning glance over to Ron. “I met him at his store in the alley over the summer. We hit it off, and I really like him. He’s good for me and Castor.”

“Oh man, Uncle Sev!!! He must be so close to a nervous breakdown!” Draco laughed as the other Slytherins looked horrified at the thought.

Ron laughed as well. “He and Remus joined us on Boxing Day at the Burrow. He was surprisingly really good about it all.”

“I would pay to see that. Does anyone have a pensieve?” Pansy laughed. “Wow, Fred Weasley and Artie Snape. I don’t see it at all.”

“Yeah, dating a Weasel, I don’t get it mate,” Blaise laughed as well.

“Hey!” Ron said indignantly. “I’ll have you know that redheads are excellent lovers!”

Draco snorted and then just burst out laughing. “I’m sorry...I can’t...oh please...!”

Harry laughed at them both while Ron gave Draco a death glare. “Can we get back to business?” Pansy snapped her fingers in front of Draco’s face to pull him back together.

“Yeah, Pansy. Just let me or Dad know whenever you convince her to talk to him, and I’ll make sure to be there,” Harry said, stifling his laughter.

“Good, now, it’s way past curfew and there are five of us who need to sneak back to our dorms,” Pansy reminded them.

“I have a couch, a bed, and a floor if anyone wants to just stay and not risk Filch,” Harry offered with a shrug. “Castor is with Dad for the night, so you won’t be woken up by crying at 5am at least.”

Ron looked at him like he really would like to stay but shook his head. “Neville will send out a search party if I’m not back soon. I mentioned I’d be late, or he would already be searching the castle, I’m sure. He seems overly protective now that Harry isn’t here anymore. I think he’s worried I’ll run off to wherever Harry is or put myself in danger or something.”

“I’ll head back with you then,” Hermione said, giving Blaise a quick kiss before standing to go. “It almost feels like old times sneaking around the castle,” she added sadly.

“I’m good with staying,” Blaise said, stretching out on the couch and kicking up his long legs. “It’s pretty comfortable right here.”

So, it was decided, all the Slytherins would stay the night. Blaise took the couch, Harry transfigured one of the armchairs into a cot for himself, and Draco and Pansy were given the bed after many threats of what Harry would do to them if they tried any funny business in there. Ron and Hermione left the rooms in the middle of Harry’s threats with smiles on their faces.

Ron sleepily sat beside Harry at the Slytherin table the next morning, causing most of the Great Hall to look his way in shock and confusion. Hermione was now expected to sit there occasionally, but Ron, well that was a sign of the apocalypse.

“Ron, hey!” Harry welcomed him as he stretched out a kink in his back. His transfiguration skills lacked some when it came to comfort.

“So, did you have to skin the Slytherin power couple alive this morning?” Ron asked, noticing their absence at the table.

Harry laughed and blushed at the thought. “They ate early and left to finish something in the library. As far as I know, they were perfectly respectful of my bed, and I don’t want to know any differently. I did ask Dobby to change my sheets though, I’m not going to completely trust them,” Harry said with an added grin.

“As well you shouldn’t,” Ron nodded in understanding. He then cast a quick Muffliato charm around them. “Anyway, we’re going to have some trouble for a while on the secret keeping front. Hermione is upset.”

Harry frowned at him as his face fell. “You had to use the map?”

Ron sighed deeply. “Yeah, Peeves was in a corridor, and we ended up having to hide. I brought it out to see when he left. I told her that you sent it to me by Hedwig at the end of the summer. Artie, mate, her face just went from confusion to understanding to utter devastation in seconds. It took everything I had to not spill your secret. I bloody well almost cried, and I even know you’re alive and well.”

“I’m so sorry, Ron,” Harry said, giving his friend’s shoulder a squeeze in support. “I know it was difficult, and I’m aware I’m trusting you with a lot here.”

“She asked if I realized that it was basically the same thing as a suicide note, you sending me the map that is. What could I say but that I knew that and understood and that’s why I was so upset at the beginning of term?” Ron asked, taking in a deep steadying breath. “After everything in the Prophet and learning what Dumbledore tried to do to Malfoy last night, I think she’s finally starting to believe the rumors that you aren’t actually in training.”

“How did she seem to react to all that?” Harry asked as he looked around the Great Hall for his missing friend.

“She seemed upset that I didn’t tell her before, but kind-of understanding as well. Between this and the Malfoy thing, well I think her core beliefs are pretty shaken right now,” Ron assessed.

“Keep an eye on her Ron,” Harry said, coming to a decision. “If she seems like she needs to and could hear the truth and be convinced not to tell any of the professors, then I’ll tell her the truth. We’ve always been in this together; I don’t want her to be in pain. She just believed so much in Dumbledore...”

“Yeah, mate, I know. I’ll keep a look out for her and let you know if I think we can let her in,” Ron agreed and cancelled his spell. “Now, I guess I should get back to my table.”

Harry raised his eyebrow at his friend and just pulled the platter of sausages over. “Why? You’re already sitting in front of an empty plate, and I have thirty minutes before I need to collect Castor from Dad. Fill me in on all the new Gryffindor gossip.”

Ron smiled at him as he reached over and added sausages to his plate.

The United Nations of Magical Creatures

Though it had only been a couple weeks since school started again after the winter break, it had seemed like much longer with everything that had been happening with his relatives, with Ron and Hermione, with planning for Bulstrode's Mark removal, and with Castor now playing with his new powers. Harry's crystals he made for his father and Fred were suddenly lifesavers when Castor now popped to all of them, and sometimes Blaise and Draco as well, at random times throughout the day when he was tired of being in his playpen or napping.

Harry almost had a nervous breakdown when Castor abruptly popped away from where he had been playing in his granddad's chambers. Harry ran through the halls and quickly found Blaise and Draco, but no Castor. He called Dobby, but Castor wasn't with him. The entire group now running through the castle had been about to start a search of the school and grounds when Fred activated his crystal that had been paired with Harry's. For some reason, Castor had decided to apparate from Hogwarts to Fred all the way over in Diagon Alley (in another bloody country!) who had been helping a customer one minute and holding a laughing baby the next. Harry tried to rationally explain to Castor why he couldn't do things like that, but how do you convince a less than one-year-old baby to stop doing something, anything?

Harry was certain that Castor was going to give him a stroke way before he hit twenty, not even thinking as far in the future as a century. The baby seemed happy, healthy, and was overall safe as long as he only apparated to friends and family, but that still didn't mean that Harry wasn't terrified sometimes multiples times a day when Castor fell over, bumped his head, got fussy... or apparated to another country.

The new family finally reached the Saturday morning before Castor's first birthday, which was the next Friday on January 23rd according to the tests Snape had run on him over the summer. Harry was already in planning mode for a small party that included all his family and friends to celebrate his son's first birthday. In the midst of all the flurry of activity, Harry was very happy when Dobby popped into his rooms to talk about food.

"So, Dobby, I was thinking a hippogriff cake..." Harry paused when he saw the look on the little elf's face. He looked excited, concerned, worried, and hopeful all at the same time. "What's wrong Dobby? Did something happen? Are you ok? Is it Winky?"

"We's all fine, Master Artie. Don't you worry. I's did what you asked me months ago, and I's found a cousin," Dobby said, twisting his little toga in his hands nervously.

“A cousin?” Harry asked confused. He didn’t remember asking Dobby to do something months before, especially something having to do with any relatives.

“I’s found the Selkies,” Dobby clarified with large, excited eyes.

Harry dropped the piece of parchment he had been writing birthday plans on and glanced over at his son playing in the playpen with his stuffed hippogriff. He felt excited, but there was also a sinking feeling in his stomach of dread suddenly. “Did you find Castor’s relatives?” Harry asked in both hope and fear of what that would mean for his family.

“Yes, Master Artie. Dobby found Master Selkie’s grandparents,” Dobby’s head bobbed up and down in acknowledgement and with a loving glance to the baby.

“How did you find them? Where?” Harry had to sit down. His legs just couldn’t hold him up any longer. Would they try to take his son away from him?

“They’s been looking for their daughter for years, Master Artie sir. Dobby talked to an elf that they’s also talked to when they were looking,” Dobby explained nervously.

Harry let out a breath. He could do this. Really, he could. He knew he needed to get in touch with Castor’s family, but he was so very worried they would try to take his son from him. He knew they legally couldn’t, but what if they didn’t approve of him? What if they were angry that he kidnapped their grandson? They deserved to know their grandson was safe and healthy though. They deserved to know what happened to their daughter.

Harry steeled his resolve. This must be done. “How do I get in touch with them, Dobby?” He finally was able to respond.

“I’s can take a message to them, sir,” Dobby offered, his large eyes kept turning to the baby in worry.

Harry slowly pulled over another piece of parchment and wrote them a letter for Dobby to deliver. He kept it simple since he figured it would be better to explain everything in person. He knew he would not want this news over a letter if he were in their place. Also, he was certain they would want to meet their grandson. Because of this, he mainly just told them that he had adopted their grandson and asked if they would like to meet him in London to talk and to see the baby.

“Here Dobby,” Harry handed over the parchment in fear, his hands shaking slightly. “Bring me back their response if they send one.”

“Yes, Master Artie,” Dobby said, promptly popping away.

To say that Castor’s grandparents were anxious to meet with them would be a complete and utter understatement. It was only a few minutes later when Dobby returned with a letter from Aurelia and Julius Triton offering to meet with them at the Leaky Cauldron the next day for lunch where they had already booked a private room for them to use. Harry quickly penned his acceptance to send with Dobby before taking Castor down to the dungeons to tell Severus and Remus the (hopefully) good news.

It took all of Harry’s persuasive abilities to keep Severus and Remus from joining him and Castor the next day to meet the Tritons. He didn’t want to overwhelm Castor’s grandparents with a lot of people when he had only mentioned himself and their grandson in the letter. He didn’t know much about Selkies in general, but if they were (understandably) overly cautious about dealing with wixen, then a room full of wixen they didn’t know sounded like a horrible idea. Finally, Severus and Remus agreed when he made the point that he was a Fury sworn to protect his son, so nothing could reasonably come between them. It wasn’t comforting that his dad and Remus were just as nervous as he was though.

On Sunday, Harry tessered himself and Castor to the Diagon Alley side of the Leaky Cauldron to collect themselves before entering. He straightened Castor’s coat and the little jumper Mrs. Weasley had knitted him and wiped the drool off the baby’s face before tucking his own pointed ears more solidly into the knit cap he was wearing out in the cold.

“You ready, Cas? You want to meet your family?” The baby seemed quieter than normal, probably picking up on Harry’s anxiety as they finally entered the pub and made their way to the private rooms upstairs.

Harry took a deep, steadying breath outside of room 6, where the Tritons told him they would be waiting for him. He gave a quick knock to the door before pushing it open. A tall, thin couple with graying hair, blue eyes like Castor, and kind but anxious faces stood to meet them.

“Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Triton?” Harry tentatively asked with a nervous smile over Castor’s head.

The woman’s face lit up in a bright smile as she took in Harry’s appearance. “You’re a Fury!” She exclaimed, somehow figuring it out even with Harry’s eyes glamourised and his ears covered by the hat. Harry supposed that steel grey hair was probably a dead giveaway for people who knew anything about Furies.

“Oh, thank Poseidon! We were worried our grandson would be with someone who couldn’t protect him or who would want to use him, but a *Fury*, that is better than we could have hoped for. Please, call me Aurelia, and this is my husband, Julius.”

“You said your name was Arcturus Snape? Correct?” Julius asked as he reached out a hand to shake Harry’s, also with a kind smile on his face though he seemed a bit more reserved than his wife.

“Yes, sir. You can call me Artie though,” Harry took the hand. “This is Castor,” he said, turning the shy baby so that they could see him a little better. “I unfortunately don’t know what your daughter named him originally. She didn’t have time to tell me the one time we met. I would really like to hear about her and for Castor to know about her when he grows up too.”

Aurelia and Julius smiled at the baby but thankfully didn’t move to try to take him from Harry, seeming to realize the Fury would have some instinctual problems with that. Instead, they motioned for Harry and Castor to sit at the table that was already filled with tea and sandwiches. “Our daughter was named Myra,” Aurelia explained sadly. “We found Castor’s birth certificate while we were searching for her, and he was named Thomas before he came into your care. However, I’m certain that was not a name our daughter would have chosen since it doesn’t fit Selkie naming traditions,” Aurelia continued with a frown. “She would

have named him Markus after Julius's father. She loved her grandfather. That *man* who took her from us must have insisted on the name."

"Can you tell us what happened to our daughter?" Julius asked, eyes shining with unshed tears. "After seeing you're a Fury now, I think we have many of our questions answered about *how* you came to adopt our grandson, but that doesn't explain why."

Harry looked at them nervously, not knowing how to explain what he had only witnessed for one summer and one horrible night. Castor reached out shyly to Aurelia. Harry had to take a breath and forcibly make himself release some of his mental hold on his son to finally ask, "Would you like to hold him?"

The largest smile yet lit up Aurelia's face, making her look years younger instantly. "More than anything!" She exclaimed as she tentatively reached out and took her grandson and kissed his blond hair in awe.

"There's something about me you should know, besides just that I'm a Fury," Harry took off his knit hat and ran his hands through the silvery stands of his hair nervously. "My name is Arcturus Snape, but that's only been my name since I adopted Castor. I changed it to keep him safe. I changed as much of my life as I could to keep him safe."

"Why would your name put our grandson in danger?" Julius asked him, very confused.

"Before...before everything...my name was Harry Potter," Harry explained to them with a significant look, wondering if his name had reached even as far as where the Selkies lived.

"Oh," Aurelia said simply over Castor's head. She blinked at him a few times. Clearly, they knew the name. "That's...unexpected."

Harry nodded in understanding that this was quite a lot of take in. "When I came into my inheritance was the same night that I adopted Castor. I lived over the summer with my relatives in Surrey. Your daughter moved in at the beginning of the summer just a few houses down from us. Your daughter and Castor passed by me when they were out on walks a few times before my inheritance, and I could feel that they were magical creatures...and I could

also tell that something wasn't right, but I didn't know what to do about it. That night...the night I came into my inheritance, I felt her pain and her calling out to me, to anyone, to protect, so I went. I was too late to save your daughter from her husband. I'm so very sorry."

There was a look of resignation on the faces of Myra's parents. They had already assumed she must have died when she had given her son to another to raise. "She made me swear to care for her son," Harry continued and motioned to himself. "Which you know is the same as a magical adoption for someone like me."

"Yes," Julius agreed simply and with sadness on his face.

"I love your grandson with all of my heart. He is my son now," Harry told them, pleading for them to understand, to please not try to take his son away from him. "I will do whatever it takes to keep him safe and to raise him in a happy home. Even when that means I have to turn my back on who I was before."

"And what does this mean for the war the wixen are facing?" Julius asked significantly as he leaned back and studied the young man in front of him, the one so many people had their hopes pinned on.

"I don't know. Clearly, I'm not a wixen anymore myself," Harry answered honestly. "Castor, or Markus, is my first priority now above anyone else."

Aurelia bounced her grandson on her knee a few times and smiled as if coming to a decision. "I think Myra would like the name Castor. It's much better than Thomas anyway. I believe she would approve of your choice."

"What if we add Markus to it?" Harry smiled in a small hint of relief. "Castor Markus Harrison Snape?"

Aurelia and Julius smiled at each other. "We would like that," Aurelia agreed. "It suits him."

Julius reached over to take Castor from his wife and hold him for a while. “Hello, Castor. I’m your grandfather,” he told the baby seriously.

Aurelia laughed happily. “Well, I guess we know that we’re the only grandparents, so we can pick our own names for him to call us then. That is, if you will allow us to see him sometimes?” Aurelia asked in nervous anticipation.

“Of course!” Harry laughed. “I was planning to invite both of you to his first birthday party next week. I wouldn’t dream of keeping the two of you from your grandson! I want him to know all about you and his mother. I am also very well aware that I’m not equipped to teach him how to swim when he’s old enough! *Please* help me there!”

Aurelia reached across the table and pulled Harry into a tight hug at that. “Thank you so, *so* much! You have no idea how worried we’ve been about our grandson and how much we have missed our daughter. You’ve given a little part of her back to us.”

“I’m sorry I didn’t get to her sooner,” Harry hugged her in return. When she finally let go, Harry looked to them and shrugged with an embarrassed smile. “And actually, where grandparents are concerned my father is actually still alive. It turns out James Potter was not my biological father. My Fury side comes from my biological father’s family.”

Aurelia looked at him speculatively. “There’s a potions master by the name of Severus Snape, isn’t there?”

Harry smiled at her. “Yes, that would be my father. He loves Castor as much as I do, and probably spoils him more if we’re being honest. He seems to be going with Grandpa for now anyway, and his partner is Uncle Moony to Castor so far.”

“Oo, can I be Nana?” Aurelia clapped her hands together. “Julius could be Papa maybe?”

Julius laughed. “If I must,” he said now while Castor was playing with his nose, something the baby always seemed to do with new people, probably comparing them with Dobby and Snape’s noses.

Harry wanted to ask the question but was concerned how they would take it and if it would be bringing up traumatic memories. He had to know though. “Do you know...how did your daughter end up with Castor’s biological father?”

“Ah, she fell in love with the wrong person,” Aurelia said sadly. “She eventually trusted him with who she was and her secret, and he turned on her.”

“It’s part of the danger of being a Selkie,” Julius added, looking at his grandson in loving concern. “We wanted her to settle down with another Selkie. It’s the safest option for us, but she met that muggle on a trip inland. He started out charming enough, but the lure of control and her power was too much for the bastard.”

“We never even met him,” Aurelia added. “We only knew about him from her letters, before those letters stopped coming altogether.”

“Please tell us...is Castor’s skin safe? That man doesn’t still have it, does he?” Julius asked with a more than a tinge of fear in the question.

Harry smiled at them reassuringly. “Yes, it’s hidden in my Gringotts vault. She was thankfully able to give it to me before she died. I made sure Castor saw me put it in there so he knows where it is, but he is so little I’m sure he didn’t understand at the time.”

“You’d be surprised,” Julius said, handing Castor back to Aurelia when he started squirming. “He’s a Selkie. That skin is just as much a part of him as his human one. He *knows* where it is if you showed him. He knows you aren’t his master as long as you don’t keep that knowledge from him.”

Harry let out a sigh of relief. He had been so concerned about Castor and how he would grow up and how he would view Harry. It was nice to know that he would understand even now. “Right, so, about his powers...please tell me there’s a way to keep him from apparating all across Britain!”

Aurelia and Julius laughed loudly, causing Castor to clap and giggle as well. “Oh my, he’s already started?” Aurelia laughed again. “Oh, Julius, you remember the time Myra popped across the island to see her friend and it took us an hour to find her. We were so worried!”

“That was not a fun day!” Julius agreed, looking momentarily nostalgic.

“We transport the same as house elves,” Julius turned to explain to Harry. “There is no way to keep him from going where he wants to, I’m sorry to have to tell you.”

Harry groaned in frustration. “How do I keep him safe then? Even the Hogwarts wards don’t keep him in the castle.”

Julius patted his shoulder in understanding. “The good news is that he’ll only go to people he knows well and trusts. It’s frustrating, but until he’s old enough to understand, I recommend just making sure all the people in his life know how to contact you quickly if they suddenly end up with him in their arms.”

“I guess that’s better than him just going anywhere,” Harry sighed in resignation now. “At least for now, I’m still at Hogwarts so it’s mainly people in the castle: my father, his Uncle Moony, a couple of my friends there, and my boyfriend who works in Diagon Alley. If we add the two of you to that, he’ll be going farther afield though. I’ll need to make you a contact crystal so that you can get in touch with me quickly if he ever decides to go visiting.”

Aurelia kissed the baby’s cheek making him laugh. “Just wait until his telekinesis kicks in. You’re going to have fun with all the flying objects around you!” She laughed.

“Oh Merlin,” Harry groaned dramatically.

Harry and Castor visited with the Tritons for over an hour that day. They enthusiastically agreed to return for Castor’s birthday party, which was being held in Severus’s quarters at the castle. This necessitated Harry filling them in on the lie of how Castor came to be in his care, but they were unsurprisingly happier to say Harry had been in a relationship with their daughter than the bastard who had killed her. So, Harry left them with his father’s floo information and a promise to see them soon and for many more visits in the future.

Harry wasn't able to focus in any of his classes the entire day of Castor's birthday. The baby had been passed between Harry, Severus, Remus, and Draco whenever they had a free period so that he would have someone to play with all day and didn't have to sit through any classes before his party that evening. They wanted him to feel like it was his day, and that he was the most important.

The whole day, Harry was a ball of excitement and nerves. Even though it was highly likely that Castor wouldn't remember his first birthday party as he got older, Harry still wanted it to be perfect for his son. Also, the plain fact that Harry had never had a birthday party himself, caused him great anxiety in the planning. After realizing where some of his son's stress was stemming from, Severus decided to take over part of the planning and had decorated his chambers for the event so that Harry could relax some.

Shockingly, Harry and Castor entered Snape's quarters to find it decorated with dancing hippogriffs and quidditch posters. A large cake in the shape of a hippogriff was also sitting amongst the food that Dobby had prepared. "Well, I don't even know what to say," Harry laughed in amazement at everything his father had done. "This was not what I was expecting."

"Did you expect bats and potions ingredients?" Snape sneered fondly at his son as he took Castor to give him a big hug.

"Erm, maybe?" Harry laughed sheepishly.

All the guests had the exact same response as Harry had entering Snape and Remus's quarters. Draco went as far as breaking down laughing as soon as he entered while Ron looked like he might pass out in shock. The floo flared and Fred and George joined the party carrying a large, wrapped present.

"You know, there was a dare going around..." Fred began.

“To see who could actually get into the dungeon bat’s quarters...” George continued.

“When we were in school.”

“I don’t think any Gryffindor ever managed it.”

“And here you have five.”

“It seems Gryffs in the dungeons have become commonplace, Fred.”

“I know. We’re just not special anymore, George.”

Ron, Hermione, and Remus joined in laughing while the Head of Slytherin House glared at the twins. Everyone was surprised when the floo flared once more and an older, aristocratic looking couple emerged. “Welcome!” Harry called as he rushed over to pull the couple into the group. “Everyone, meet Aurelia and Julius Triton, Castor’s grandparents. Er...Myra, Castor’s mum, these are her parents.”

Harry looked around with a smile and his eyes stopped on Draco who shockingly seemed to recognize the names, if not the people, who had just walked into Hogwarts. He shook off his confusion to deal with it later and turned to the couple. “Aurelia, Julius, this is my family.” Harry motioned to each member in turn. “Severus Snape, my father.”

“It’s so good to meet you,” Aurelia smiled at him kindly.

“I’m also a potions master by trade, and I would love to speak with you. I’ve admired your work for a while now. I’m sad we were not able to meet while Myra was still with us,” she added at the end, sharing a little smile with Severus at the lie.

Severus actually smiled even more at her and stopped holding Castor quite as protectively as he had before she had spoken. “Indeed. I’ve heard of you as well in the Potions journals. I

would love to talk.”

“This is Remus Lupin, Dad’s partner,” Harry motioned to the DADA professor. “My boyfriend Fred Weasley and his twin George. The other redhead is their little brother Ron. Then we also have Hermione Granger, Blaise Zabini, Pansy Parkinson, Draco Malfoy, and that’s Dobby in the back, he’s Castor’s nanny when I’m in class and a close friend now as well,” Harry finished as the Tritons smiled at the gathered party around them.

“We’re pleased to meet you all,” Julius smiled at them, not seeming awkward in the odd group of new people in the slightest.

“Ahem,” Dobby cleared his throat in the back. “Dobby has the foods ready. You’s should all get a plate before it gets cold.”

The party was a complete success. Castor got so many new toys that it was shocking to say the least. Way too many of those toys made loud noises with bright lights though in Harry’s opinion, especially the gift of some sort of roly seat Castor could sit in to learn to walk, but it annoyingly made animal noises when it moved across the floor, which was, of course, from the twins.

As everyone was mingling, Julius Triton came over to speak to Harry. “So, what is with all the hippogriffs as decorations?” He laughed as he cornered his grandson’s father by the hippogriff cake.

“No clue,” Harry laughed with him. “Your grandson is obsessed though. I took him to see the herd in the Forbidden Forest, and he was more excited than he was for Christmas day.”

They both looked over the room, just basking in the feelings of love and support. Draco and Pansy were snuggled together into the couch and chatting with Hermione and Blaise who were both crammed into the same armchair. Ron was laughing in the corner with George, Remus, and Dobby (which probably meant they were planning some sort of mischief). And Severus, Fred, and Aurelia (who was holding a sleepy Castor) were talking around the punchbowl.

“My wife and your father are trying to convince your boyfriend to take his potions mastery,” Julius explained with a gesture to the group.

Harry grinned. “I’m sure he could. He and his twin are geniuses with inventing, but Fred is the brains behind anything potions. Their store is quite successful, even in the middle of a war.”

Julius leaned against the wall and grinned at Harry. “You know,” he began. “If I could choose a way for my grandson to grow up, and if he couldn’t be raised by my daughter, this would be it.”

Harry looked at him in shock, his eyes saying just how much that meant to him. “Thank you, sir.”

Julius laughed and waved a hand dismissively. “No sirs for me. We’re family, and your family obviously is filled with love here, so we are pleased to now be a part of it. Plus, it looks like the United Nations of magical creatures in this room. Growing up with so many magical creatures will give my grandson knowledge and safety in the midst of this prejudiced society. You have us for his Selkie background, you for him to learn of Furies, his (I would imagine) soon-to-be grandfather who is a werewolf, the veela uncle, and a house elf who I honestly can’t decide if he’s serving or attending this party.”

Harry laughed. “For Dobby, it’s definitely both.” He paused and raised an eyebrow in confusion.

“Wait? Veela? Who’s a Veela here?” Harry hadn’t felt any other magical creatures, but he also knew all these people very well, and they all just felt like themselves...could he have missed a Veela somewhere in the mix?

Julius laughed and motioned towards Draco on the couch. “I’m surprised you didn’t know. The Malfoy name is well known in creature circles as Veela descendants whether they are open about it or not. It seems he and his mate are very happy together as well.”

Harry smiled over at Draco and Pansy with a little chuckle. “Well, I guess that does explain some things,” he shook his head in amusement. It seems Pansy actually did know a thing or two when she was extolling the virtues of creature mates.

Julius and Aurelia had to leave shortly after this discussion to return to the Selkie island. They promised a trip back soon though to see Castor and spend more time with him. Harry definitely did not let Draco get away before pulling him aside though.

“So, Dray, Veela? Care to share anything?” Harry smiled at his friend. “A little bird told me that you and I might have more in common than I originally thought.”

Draco laughed and punched Harry’s shoulder playfully, not seeming to care at all that he had been outed. “I assume the Tritons told you.”

“Yes, you seemed to recognize their name as well,” Harry said questioningly.

“The Tritons are basically like the Malfoys in their circle, so yes, I do recognize the last name,” Draco raised an eyebrow meaningfully. “Didn’t your girlfriend...Myra, right? Didn’t she tell you that?”

“Er...no, I can honestly say that it never come up,” Harry’s eyes widened. “So...you know about Castor then?”

Draco immediately put a calming hand on Harry’s shoulder. “I, Draco Lucius Malfoy, promise to never tell anyone of Castor Snape’s creature heritage unless it is to save his life or he gives me permission,” Draco said quickly as a line of magic flared from him to Harry who breathed a sigh of relief.

“Thank you so much, Draco. I can’t tell you how worried I am all the time for him!”

Draco smiled at him slyly. “You know...Uncle Sev is my godfather, and you’re his son, so that does by default mean that you’re my brother now.”

Harry smiled and held out a hand to him. “Brothers?”

Draco took the offered hand with a grin. “Brothers!”

“I wonder,” Harry laughed and crossed his arms. “I wonder if Veela males have wings like the females. If they did...well that would be a pretty epic seeker game between us in my opinion.”

Draco leaned forward conspiratorially. “You’re on, but after graduation. I would really prefer to not get kicked off the Slytherin team.”

Harry frowned now as that sunk in. “Wait, does Dad know you’re a Veela?”

Draco rolled his eyes with a smirk at his brother. “Of course he knows, he’s my godfather, and much more of a father to me than Lucius ever was.”

“He’s so in trouble,” Harry smirked evilly over at his father who just raised a questioning eyebrow in return. “I told him I couldn’t play on the team because of my wings, and he never said anything.”

Draco shrugged and put his arm around Pansy as she joined them to leave the party. “You know Uncle Sev; he’s really good with secrets.”

Mark Removal

Chapter Notes

Short chapter, but it's moving things along

It was several weeks after Castor's birthday party, and nothing much had happened of note, which was probably a bad sign. It was Sunday night, and Harry and Fred somehow remarkably had the night to themselves in Harry's rooms at Hogwarts. George had gone out with Angie and her parents, and Remus had begged to look after Castor for the night. After a wonderful dinner that Harry cooked in his tiny kitchen after Dobby bought the supplies, Harry and Fred found themselves snuggled on the couch together. Fred gently pushed Harry back into the cushions and leaned over him, a fierce look in his eyes.

"So, you planning to kiss me or what?" Harry smiled back at him before Fred did just that with enthusiasm.

Fred and Harry had been taking things slow, but Harry was starting to think that speeding up some wouldn't be such a bad thing. Why had he wanted to take this slow? He couldn't remember currently. As Fred began to kiss behind his ear, Harry ran his hands under the redhead's shirt, eliciting a gasp from the twin. He responded in kind by nipping Harry's ear with his teeth. Harry groaned and shifted under Fred, pulling him tighter and more onto himself.

Fred started to slowly unbutton Harry's shirt just as a throat was dramatically cleared by the portrait hole. Both men dazedly looked up at the intruder with varying degrees of frustration and irritation.

"As much as I would really love to just stay and watch the show, I was sent to retrieve Artie," Blaise chuckled with a mischievous grin on his face.

"Not so sure your girlfriend would appreciate that," Harry grumbled as he rebuttoned his shirt and Fred rolled off of him slightly with a groan.

Blaise laughed, not even having the decency to look embarrassed in the slightest. “Yeah, she’d be pissed I didn’t bring her along.”

Harry shook his head to dispel those images now. “Ew, please, less information about you and Hermione’s love-life.”

“I’m just going to stay right here for a bit, if you don’t mind,” Fred grumbled from where his face was buried in the couch.

Harry patted him on the head and stood. “Ok, demon-spawn, where are we going?” Harry glared at Blaise. “Also, remind me to change the password to my rooms.”

He just laughed. “Your dad needs you. Bulstrode finally showed up.”

With that comment, Harry did rush out of the room to head to his dad’s quarters. Blaise broke off from him in the dungeons to return to his common room while Harry pushed through the portrait hole into the potion master’s chambers, worried at what he would find inside.

Severus was anxiously pacing in front of a clearly upset and teary looking Millicent Bulstrode and Pansy Parkinson who was trying to comfort her friend. “Arcturus, thank Merlin!” Snape breathed out. He absolutely did not do well with crying girls.

“Hello, Pansy, Bulstrode,” Harry nodded at them and walked over to sit beside them on the couch.

“Pansy and Professor Snape said you could help me,” Millicent sniffed from the couch as she rolled up her left sleeve showing a Dark Mark. “I don’t understand how you can, but please...if it’s possible...”

Harry winced and took her arm to look at it closer. “Maybe, please don’t get your hopes up. I removed my father’s Mark, but that doesn’t mean I actually understand what I did. I will try my best though,” he reassured her with what he hoped was a comforting smile.

“Thank you,” Millicent said as the Fury kneeled on the floor in front of her to get closer to the Mark.

Harry looked over at Pansy and Severus. “Erm, maybe back up a bit and give us some space,” he suggested since they had both leaned over him to see what he was doing, and he was starting to feel a bit claustrophobic. They both sheepishly moved over to the wall to give him breathing room.

“May I?” Harry motioned to ask permission to start.

Millicent nodded and held the arm out, sniffing back her tears. “Please, I just want my life back...to be free of all this...the pain, the orders, the everything...”

Harry held her arm closer and studied the Mark with his much sharper vision from his inheritance. He was looking through the magical connections and signatures to see if he could catch whatever thread he had instinctually found before with his father’s to break it. “So, how did you end up joining him? Was it your family?” Harry asked conversationally, to keep her mind off him just staring at her arm awkwardly.

“Oh, well...she actually begged me to let her join even before she turned 17. She was excited to take my mark,” a voice deeper than Millicent’s sneered above Harry’s head as the girl’s arm twisted to grab ahold of Harry’s in a bruising grip.

Harry’s head jerked up in shock as he gazed into red, vertically slit eyes where Millicent’s should have been. Harry immediately tried to let go of her arm, but he was being held in a vise grip. Harry found himself immediately swung around with a conjured dagger pressing into his throat, drawing blood by the feel of it.

Severus and Pansy looked on in dread as Lord Voldemort glared at them from Bulstrode’s eyes. Severus made to raise his wand, but Voldemort dug the dagger into Harry’s neck more,

blood dripping down Harry's throat and soaking into his white t-shirt. "I'll kill him before you even finish an incantation," the Dark Lord promised, and everyone believed him.

"What do you want?" Severus asked dangerously as he pushed Pansy behind him more for her protection, gripping his wand so tightly that Harry was concerned it would break.

"Where is Harry Potter?" Voldemort stated plainly and dug in the dagger a little more, but Harry refused to make any sound even as he wanted to cry out.

Severus looked at the Dark Lord in confusion at this question. "Potter is dead. I thought you knew that. All the little Death Eaters running around have been telling anyone who would listen that he killed himself over the summer," Severus responded. "What makes you think he's alive? Even the Order is starting to not believe Dumbledore's lie that he's off in training somewhere anymore."

Lord Voldemort chuckled darkly. "I'm not an imbecile. A body was never found. Potter isn't strong enough or smart enough to destroy himself that completely. Even if he threw himself off a bridge, his body would have washed ashore and Greyback would have been able to find it by now. Now, Potter might not be strong enough to wipe away traces of his death, but he does know the muggle world enough to disappear there. So, you're still in Dumbledore's back pocket, where is he? Where does the Light think he may have gone?"

Severus raised an eyebrow, trying to bite back his concern for his son who was looking very pale currently. "Why don't you just send some Death Eaters into London and find him if you're so sure he's hiding in the muggle world?"

The Dark Lord actually grimaced at that question. "Apparently, you were the only Death Eater I had who was raised in the muggle world."

Severus suppressed a chuckle at how Fate must be laughing. "I hate to tell you since you are currently holding my son at knifepoint, but I know absolutely nothing. I'm not on the best of terms with Dumbledore right now either. Even if I was asked to look for the brat, I would not have gone nor cared. You are well aware that Potter and I hated each other, no matter what side I am actually loyal to...which turns out to be neither surprisingly. So, why don't you let the girl and my son go? We're neutral in the war at this moment."

Harry winced this time as the dagger drew even more blood. Voldemort was seething mad. “You haven’t been neutral for one moment! You are a traitor, and I loathe you even more than that idiot boy who just won’t die! How dare you remove my Mark!! I’ll see you and your son die slowly and painfully!”

Severus almost sighed in relief when he saw the glamour drop from Harry’s eyes. Finally, the Fury was kicking in, sensing the need to protect. Harry inhumanly growled deep in his throat. How dare Tom Riddle threaten his father! How dare he put someone Harry cared about in danger! He *would* protect those he cared about if it were the last thing he did.

The Dark Lord/Bulstrode started screaming in agony. It was like Quirrell all over again. Everywhere Bulstrode was touching the Fury, burns erupted on her hands. Bulstrode was much healthier than Quirrell had been at the end of his possession, but the pain still pushed Voldemort from her body causing her to collapse unconscious at Harry’s feet. Just to be extra sure he couldn’t return to the castle, the Fury grabbed onto Bulstrode’s mark and broke the connection between her and her master, just as he had done with his father before. She was severed from the influence of the Dark Lord as the Mark disappeared from her arm.

Black eyes turned and studied Severus who was still standing protectively in front of Pansy who was whimpering in fear. “You ok? Are either of you injured?” He asked almost frantically.

His father sighed in relief and rushed over, pulling Harry into a tight hug. “Are *you* ok?” He laughed. “Thank you for saving us! I didn’t know what to do, and you had a knife to your throat!”

“I’m fine, Dad,” Harry smiled into his shoulder, feeling the Fury intensity slowly start to drain from his body. “What do we do about her though?” He motioned to the unconscious student on the floor.

“I say we turn her over to the aurors,” Pansy suggested with venom at the betrayal from her friend. “The Dark Lord did say she was his willingly.”

Severus eventually released Harry and conjured his doe patronus. “Nuntius,” he cast next. “Go to the headmaster, say ‘Albus, I need you in my chambers as soon as possible.’”

The patronus disappeared through the door before Snape pulled Harry back into his arms. “Really, I’m fine. It’s just a little scrape,” Harry’s voice was muffled in Severus’s robes.

Severus pushed his head to the side to study the wound. He cast a quick healing charm and the wound closed up, just leaving the trail of blood and a very slight scar in its place. He was still looking over his son for injuries when Dumbledore suddenly entered the rooms without knocking.

“What’s happened, my boy?” the headmaster asked, taking in the scene in front of him with a frown.

Severus turned his attention to the headmaster but didn’t take his arm off his son’s shoulders. “The Dark Lord was possessing Millicent Bulstrode. He held my son at dagger point while questioning me about Order business. I told him nothing and then he threatened to kill me... us,” Snape explained tiredly as the adrenaline left his body. Neither Harry nor Pansy batted an eyelash at the slight fudging of the truth.

“Ah, so, how did this happen?” Dumbledore asked, motioning to the unconscious student with obvious burns on her hands.

“I protected my family,” Harry said simply with a sneer at the man. “He had no right to threaten those under my protection. I pushed him out and removed Bulstrode’s Mark so he couldn’t return, at least through her this time.”

Dumbledore smiled. “Well, well. That seems to have worked out nicely then. Why don’t I call the aurors and we get Ms. Bulstrode taken care of?”

It didn’t take long to have Shackbolt and Tonks enter through Snape’s floo to collect Millicent Bulstrode to take for healing and questioning at the ministry. Severus, Harry, and Pansy all adamantly told the same story Severus had told the headmaster before they were

finally released for the night. Severus gave Harry one last hug before he left his father's chambers, no one noticing the calculating look the headmaster gave the Fury on his exit.

Harry, beyond tired from the ordeal and his magic usage, finally pushed through the portrait into his rooms to find Fred still sitting on the couch, reading a book and waiting for him. "You're still here," Harry smiled, not knowing how much he needed Fred until he was there and oh so very thankful for him.

Fred looked up at him in concern. He frowned and then rushed over in surprise when he caught sight of the dried blood on Harry's shirt. "What happened?! I thought you were just going to Severus's rooms! How did you get injured there?! This is a lot of blood!!"

Harry pulled him into a hug and just breathed in his boyfriend's scent for a moment, happy he was once more safe in Fred's arms. "I'll tell you everything, but will you stay? Sleep here with me tonight?"

As Fred pulled back to look at him in surprise, Harry clarified quickly. "Not a euphemism, I really do mean just sleep. Castor is staying with Remus, and I know I'll have nightmares if I'm alone. I think I've lost a bit too much blood to do more than sleep this time. Will you stay?"

"Of course, I'll stay. Anytime, every time, whenever you need me," Fred kept an arm around his shoulder but led his love towards the bedroom. "I'll stay for as long as you want me to." Fred said stopping and turning his concerned eyes back to the shorter man.

"Harry...I just need you to know...I love you. I don't know what I'd do if I lost you. And, I have a feeling by looking at you that I almost did tonight and didn't even know it."

Harry stretched up on his toes and kissed Fred, tangling his hands in the red locks. "I love you too, Fred Weasley."

The Beginning of the End

Chapter Notes

Warning: Bit of a cliff-hanger at the end of this one.

Classes picked up and the students were busy as it headed into March and OWLs and NEWTs were looming on the horizon. Harry woke up early on a Saturday morning when Castor started stirring within his wings. He grimaced but with a chuckle as he pulled the blanket over to clean baby drool from his chest. It smelled like a diaper change was very necessary as well.

“Well, Cas, eventually we’re going to have to get used to separate beds. What do you think?” Castor just made gurlly noises and grinned at his father with his only two teeth showing. Harry felt his heart melt into a puddle of goo. “Eh, maybe when you’re older. You’re too cute right now.”

With a groan and stretch of his wings, Harry stood and temporarily put Castor in his cot to change and get ready for the day. With a concerned frown, Harry rifled through the drawers and then the diaper bag, and then his backpack looking for a clean diaper. He found a few in the diaper bag, but the drawer where he kept their main supply was empty. He rubbed the back of his neck in confusion. He could have sworn that he had a stack in the drawer the day before, but maybe he was mistaken. They *did* go through quite a lot of nappies. He’d have to send Dobby out on a diaper run to get more.

After using one of the last clean diapers to change the dirty baby, Harry then tried to get his son dressed for the day. After trying to put on three different shirts and two pairs of trousers, Harry finally admitted that the baby must have had a growth spurt seemingly overnight or maybe the clothes had shrunk in the wash. All Castor’s clothes were now too small though. He didn’t want to just use a spell to enlarge the clothes because the spell was sure to fail at an inopportune moment, leaving the baby in uncomfortably tight clothes. Harry sighed, he had so much homework and studying to catch up on, especially for his Ancient Runes OWL. He really needed to take Castor to get new clothes though.

After glancing between his bookbag and Castor guiltily for a minute and not being able to decide the best course of action, Harry finally decided that he would have to ask Dobby if he wouldn't mind taking the baby to get some new clothes, just a few changes for now, when he went to get diapers. He took his diaper-clad child to the sitting room and was about to call Dobby when his portrait hole was pushed open.

"Dad!" Harry smiled happily at Severus. "What're you doing here this morning?"

Severus raised an eyebrow at the almost naked baby. "Going extra casual today?"

"He seems to have outgrown his clothes overnight," Harry laughed with a shrug. "He's getting to be such a big boy!" He cooed and made some faces at his son.

"Also, we seem to be running low on diapers as well. I was just about to call Dobby to see if he would take Castor to pick up some new clothes and diapers since I'm woefully behind on Ancient Runes and I have a Charms essay that's killing me."

Snape picked up his grandson and bounced him on his hip. "I can take him," he offered. "I was just about to ask if you needed anything from Diagon. I am accompanying Draco to Gringotts in just a little while to fill out some paperwork to separate his accounts from his father's since they are now almost legally no longer related, according to his grandfather's will," Snape explained, looking very excited to spend the day with the baby now.

Harry breathed a sigh of relief at the offer. "Oh thank Merlin, I have much more faith in your sense of style than Dobby's. There's no telling what Castor would be wearing after a day of shopping with the elf. I love Dobby, but he really does believe that orange and pink look good together. I'm just too far behind to take him myself right now. I'm regretting adding that Ancient Runes OWL even if I absolutely hate Divination."

"Divination is a waste of your time and runes will serve you much better, especially if you plan to enter the legal field," Snape snorted before placing a hand over his heart dramatically. "I am touched however by your faith in my fashion sense. Fred and George must not have corrupted you as much as I believed."

“Just, don’t buy black clothes,” Harry wagged a finger at him but with a little smirk at the man.

“I’ll have you remember that I was the one who purchased for him both the quidditch shirt and the one with the dancing hippogriffs!” Snape said indignantly. “I can shop for a child. I suppose I have some whimsy left buried very, *very* deep within.”

Harry snorted and really tried not to laugh at the stoic man. “Ok, ok. Are you going to glamour yourself or something? Diagon is still dangerous for you, probably Draco as well.”

Snape rolled his eyes, nonverbally calling his son an idiot. “Of course. It’s not like I haven’t been a spy since before you were born.”

Harry raised his hands in surrender. “Fine, take your crystal though and keep out of trouble.”

“The irony of you telling anyone to stay out of trouble must have Fate laughing maniacally somewhere,” Snape smirked before going into the nursery to temporarily enlarge some clothes for the baby for the short time until they could buy more.

Harry put his finishing touches on his unnecessarily difficult Charms essay before fanning it for a bit to dry the ink. Flitwick must be trying to cause mass anxiety attacks before NEWTs in Harry’s opinion. He was wondering how the trip to Diagon Alley was going for his dad, Castor, and Draco. They had been gone for a couple hours, so they should be back soon even with having to deal with the bank. Harry really hoped they remembered diapers or they would be in a dire situation fast. Maybe he should send a reminder patronus? No, that would seem like nagging... he didn’t want to make his dad irritated when he was so nicely babysitting.

Just as he was about to pull over his Ancient Runes textbook to start his headache inducing dive into that subject, the floo dinged and green fire flared before the Weasley twins suddenly stumbled into Harry’s rooms.

“Hey guys,” Harry looked up at them with a dazed smile before he registered what was going on, and he jumped to his feet in surprise and fear. “Castor?!”

Fred was holding his crying godson in his arms while stroking his back. Castor’s face was bright red, snot was flowing from his nose, and he looked inconsolable. “It’s ok, baby. It’s fine,” Fred kept repeating and stroking his back to calm him down. Both twins just looked at him, lost for what to do to help the hysterical child.

“What happened?! Is everyone ok?” Harry asked, grabbing his son and hugging him close while he checked for any injuries. Thankfully, there didn’t seem to be anything wrong with the baby at all. “Where’s Dad and Draco?”

The twins looked at each other in confusion before looking back at Harry. “We don’t know,” George responded. “Castor was with them? Where were they?”

“What?! What do you mean, you don’t know?! They were in Diagon at the bank! What happened? Where is my family?!” Harry gasped out, not seeming able to breathe any longer as all kinds of terrible scenarios filled his brain.

“It’s ok, love, we’ll figure this out,” Fred said as calmly as he could when he was also now very worried. He led Harry to sit back down on the couch since he looked like he was on the verge of an actual panic attack.

“Dobby!” George called out while Fred got the other two settled.

A loud crack sounded in the rooms, and the house elf looked between the room’s occupants with clear concern at the situation he’d found himself in. “How can Dobby help masters?”

“Please go get Professor Lupin as quick as you can,” George instructed, his voice tight with anxiety.

Dobby quickly apparated out of the room with a crack once more. Fred opened his mouth to explain what happened as another loud crack immediately sounded again. “What the bloody hell?!!” Remus shouted as he collapsed to the floor at Dobby’s feet.

“What happened with little master?” Dobby asked Harry anxiously, coming over to also inspect the crying baby for injuries.

“You can’t just grab a person from the middle of the Great Hall and apparate them without a warning!!” Remus frustratedly complained as he pulled himself up from the floor where he was sure to have a few bruises now.

“It seemed urgent,” Dobby shrugged in unconcern at the werewolf’s plight. “What’s wrong with Master Castor?”

Harry, Dobby, and Remus all looked at the twins to explain. Fred looked between them, lost himself. “We don’t know,” he started. “I was just standing behind the counter and checking out a customer at the store when I was suddenly holding an armful of crying baby. He was inconsolable. We didn’t know where he came from but figured Hogwarts would be the best guess since you’re usually with us if you aren’t here, hence why we came here. He’s never popped over to me so upset before. Usually, he giggles like he knows he did something to cause chaos when he ends up with us. We figured something had to have happened to him.”

“He was supposed to be shopping in Diagon Alley with Dad and Draco. They were going to the bank and then getting him new clothes and diapers,” Harry explained almost frantically.

Harry’s eyes narrowed as he thought about it more and the pieces started to fit together into a diabolical puzzle. “Come to think of it, does it seem strange to any of you that we suddenly ran out of diapers and Castor outgrew his clothes all at the exact same time?”

Everyone’s eyes narrowed as they thought it over. They all suddenly jumped when a low growl erupted from an enraged looking house elf. There was murder in Dobby’s eyes before a loud crack and he was gone. “What the bloody hell?! Where did he go?!” George exclaimed.

“What was that about?” Lupin asked as he sat in one of the armchairs, his brows knit together in concern for his partner.

“Do you think Severus and Malfoy are in trouble?” Fred asked Harry, sitting beside him now on the couch. Thankfully, Castor was started to calm down some and his eyes began to get a little droopy.

Harry shook his head with a frown. “Dad hasn’t activated his crystal, so he must not be in any danger.”

Remus shook his head sadly at his cub’s misplaced belief there. “Harry, he’s your dad. You must realize, he’s never going to activate that crystal unless Castor is in trouble. He’d never call you for himself and place you in any kind of danger.”

“What?!” Harry stood, causing the baby to get fussy again. He’d specifically given the man the crystal for if he was in danger. Why wouldn’t he use it? “But...I gave it to him to get help?”

“He’s your father, he’s absolutely not going to put his son in danger. I know Castor is just a baby, but even if he was an adult, would you ever knowingly bring him somewhere that would be dangerous,” Remus explained sadly.

Harry was fuming. “No, I wouldn’t, but this is different. As much as I absolutely *hate* it, I’m still Harry Bloody Potter and a Merlin be damned Fury!! If the rest of the bloody wixen world can ask and expect me to save them, then my dad has more right than those people!”

Remus just shook his head, knowing he was correct in this instance. Before he could protest further, Dobby popped back in, this time with two other elves. One of the elves, Harry immediately recognized as Winky, only this was Winky as he had never seen her before. This elf was clad in black leather, almost like battle armor, and she was holding a vicious looking knife in one hand and the elbow of a sobbing female house elf who Harry recognized as Misty, Severus’s elf at the school in the other.

Harry looked between them. “Er...Winky...Hey...good to see you again.”

Winky gave him a little nod before seething murderously at the sobbing elf who tried to pull away from her. “You’s do NOT move,” she ordered dangerously. Harry was immediately very afraid of Winky and wondered what that other poor elf could possibly have done.

“What happened, Dobby?” Remus asked. “Why are they here?”

“I’s bought diapers two days ago!” Dobby informed them with venom and a dangerous glint in his eyes. “Baby’s clothes were also plenty big. This Misty fault!! She is the only other elf allowed around Master Snape’s rooms, the older or younger. Winky will find out what Misty did!”

“Misty, can you tell us what happened?” Harry asked the sobbing elf kindly but in dread at what Winky would do as well as what his dad’s elf might have done.

“Master, Headmaster, sir, h-he...he told’s Misty. He say to take the diapers and change the clothes,” the elf sniffed in distress. “Master Headmaster is all Hogwarts’ elveses master... we’s must do what he says!”

“There’s always ways around orders,” Winky seethed and squeezed the elbow she was holding harder, getting a whimper from the other elf.

“But why?” Harry asked them in confusion. “Why would he do that? What is the purpose of shrinking clothes or throwing away nappies?”

“Master Artie is a Fury,” Dobby growled, understanding the headmaster’s game as the strategist he was. “I’s bet old Master Draco never needed to go to the bank either. I’s bet the headmaster sent the letter to gets Master Potion Master to leave the castle since students must go with a faculty member. The clothes would gets someone to take the baby too to gets the right size, most likely Master Potion Master since he was already going to town.”

Harry turned green and felt nauseous as it all sank in. “He turned them over to Voldemort, didn’t he?”

“What? Why?” Fred and George both asked, eyes wide in fear.

“How else would you get a Fury to go after a Dark Lord? You cannot make a Fury serve you, but you *can* use their instincts against them if you understand what they care about the most,” Remus sighed in horrified understanding as he sunk into the chair more. “I’ll kill him,” he added in with a low growl.

“We save my dad and brother first, then we can kill the headmaster later,” Harry frantically begged the werewolf to focus as he started pacing and trying to figure out what their next steps needed to be.

“Wait, how did we get Castor then?” Fred asked, feeling an ominous tingle running up and down his spine that seemed to hint towards terrible things to come.

Harry shook his head, trying to clear out the horrible images his imagination was conjuring of what could be happening right now to this family. “Castor has popped over to you at the store several times already. Dad probably told him to go to you as soon as he sensed trouble and knew you were the closest to them on the alley. So far, Castor has never popped from anywhere *into* Hogwarts only around the castle or outside of it, I’m not sure if he’s strong enough to get through the wards to enter the castle yet.”

“So, what do we do?” George asked, trying to get them all into planning mode.

“Wait,” Dobby, said sternly. “Misty, needs to be gone. She’s should not be here for this. Winky... do you wants her or should I sends her to the head elf for putting our baby in danger?”

Winky flipped the knife in her hand as she stared at the other terrified elf. “Winky wants her...she wants to introduce Misty to her’s mistress... putting Winky’s baby in danger is unacceptable.”

“Merlin, don’t kill her! She was just following orders!” Harry put a stop to whatever that all meant. He might agree that she could have found a way around the orders, but she also didn’t seem to have a reason to know they were harmful at the time. He didn’t even want to parse through the fact that both elves seemed to think his child was theirs as well... and maybe

Blaise's mother too... when did she meet Castor again? Did she go with them to Disney?! Thoughts for another time.

"Winky won't kill her," the elf showed all of her teeth as she grinned at him. "Mistress Zabini just wants a little word. We'll deliver her back to the head elf shortly..." At that, Winky and the other elf immediately popped out of the room.

"Merlin, she's more terrifying than a Death Eater," Fred commented to Dobby with his eyes wide in shock.

"Thank you, Dobby," Harry said with a sigh as he handed Castor to Remus. He was absolutely *not* going to worry about Misty right now. Many people had assured him that Blaise's mum had some kind of moral code, he just hoped that pertained to Winky as well.

"What are you doing?" Remus asked, with worry etched across his face since Harry seemed to be readying himself to go somewhere.

"I'm going to go get my dad and brother back," Harry said firmly as he removed his glamour ring. His eyes turned black, his fangs lowered, his wings shot out, and his claws extended from his fingers all at the same time as he readied for battle.

"I'm coming too," Fred stood.

"No," Harry turned to him with the dark, clicky tone in his voice. "This is my responsibility. This is what I was born to do."

"You can't do this alone," Fred disagreed with a touch of hysteria in his tone at the possibility of losing Harry.

Harry laughed and the dark laugh caused a shiver to run up everyone's spine in the room. "Don't you get it? This is literally my purpose in life. I must go, whether I chose it on my own or was manipulated into it, it doesn't matter. I'm just now starting to understand that and

who I am. Voldemort is abusing magic. It's my *job* to set it right, to make sure he sees justice before he completely throws our world out of balance. No one else can do that. I was *born* for this, prophesy or no prophesy. You'd just be another person for me to save and to distract me."

"Wait, Harry," Remus stood and clutched the baby to his chest, his eyes shining with tears. "If you go, go seeking vengeance. If you go just to protect, Sev will get Draco out, but he won't leave you, not for anything. I'll lose both of you then. I can't lose either of you, please. Go to end this. Go *knowing* that you will be standing alive at the end and Voldemort *will* be dead."

Harry gave him a short nod before looking over everyone in the room. He kissed Castor once on the top of the head. "Just in case, Remus, Castor's skin is in my vault," Harry told the werewolf, causing the twins to look at him in confusion. "I love you all."

With that Harry took a step and was gone. Remus sank to the floor with a heart wrenching sob as he held a crying Castor to his chest.

The Scapegoat

Draco was confused, terrified, and so very pissed off. He had gotten a letter from Gringotts earlier in the week requesting that he stop by as soon as possible to fill out some paperwork for his accounts. It made perfect sense because his father had tried to disinherit him over the summer, triggering a clause in his grandfather's will separating their accounts and effectively taking him out from under his father's control. What didn't make sense was the absolute and utter confusion of the goblins when he, Severus, and baby Castor arrived at the bank to talk to his account manager.

Always the good spy, Severus was immediately suspicious of the circumstances that made them leave the castle's wards during the regular term. He grabbed Draco's shoulder right when he was in the middle of a sentence and steered him to walk quickly towards the apparition point outside of the bank to get them back to the safety of the school.

In his confusion, Draco started to protest that they needed to buy diapers before he caught a glimpse of Snape's expression of hardened anger and alertness. Immediately, he knew something was wrong. Draco realized just what must have happened when they were suddenly surrounded as soon as exiting the marble building. Severus may have looked completely different from normal with all the glamour charms he was wearing, but Draco was obviously a Malfoy since they didn't see the need to glamour his looks just for the bank and Diagon Alley.

"Little Malfoy and the traitor," McNair sneered as he held his wand to Snape's throat. "And a tiny hostage to boot. We really are lucky this morning. Our lord will be so pleased, though... I'm not sure all of our hostages need to be alive...what do you think?" He asked another Death Eater to his left. Draco glanced around for help, but the alley was almost deserted with it being fairly early on a Saturday and with them being in the middle of a war.

Castor started crying loudly, picking up on his grandad and uncle's fear and causing the Death Eaters to close their circle around their prisoners quickly. Draco noticed Avery fishing something out of a pocket, probably a portkey. They had to get away and now, they couldn't go with that portkey, or they were as good as dead.

"Go to Uncle Fred now," Snape told Castor insistently. Draco didn't think it would work, but the baby was in distress enough, that he must have understood something of the situation since he popped away immediately to the shock of all the Death Eaters who had already cast

an anti-apparition ward as soon as they surrounded the group. Draco felt something painfully smash into his back and then the familiar tug of portkey travel.

As soon as they crash to the ground, Draco heard a high-pitched voice cast, “Finite Incantatem!”

Draco looked to his side and saw his Uncle Sev was back to his normal looks where he was trying to stand from where the portkey had unceremoniously dropped them. “Well, well, it looks like your son’s information was good this time,” the Dark Lord said with a smirk to Theodore Nott’s father as he approached the two prisoners.

“Imagine my surprise when I learned the two of you would be in Diagon Alley today, away from the castle wards and during a normal term surprisingly. It was almost just too good to be true, so imagine my surprise now when I have you both here before me,” Voldemort continued with what could pass for a smile on his lip-less face.

The Dark Lord nodded to two Death Eaters on either side of Severus and Draco before Draco’s world exploded into pain. He screamed, cried, and most definitely pissed himself. He didn’t care what anyone said about the Cruciatus Curse who had never experienced it for themselves; if you were under it, then nothing else mattered besides hoping that you died and quickly. After what seemed like forever, the curse was finally released. Draco looked up to realize that his insane bitch of an aunt, Bellatrix LeStrange, was cackling as she cast the same curse on Severus while his own bloody father was casting it on himself, before the pain began again. It wasn’t the first time he had wished death on his own father, but this time he wasn’t even surprised at the feeling and thought he might even be able to do it himself at this point without much remorse.

As the pain stopped once more, Draco heard, as if from within a long and echoing tunnel. “Who the hell are you?” The blond teen slowly turned his pounding head just enough to see a Fury, his brother, standing just outside the ring of Death Eaters. He didn’t know if he wanted to cry in relief or cry out in warning for Artie to leave them and save himself.

“You have my family,” Artie growled in the darkest and most terrifying voice Draco had ever heard him use at the assembled group.

“Ah, so the little birdy came to save his father,” Voldemort mocked the Fury as Bellatrix characteristically cackled maniacally from the other side of Severus.

“Crucio!” Voldemort himself cast, causing Artie to suddenly crumple to the floor. Against all odds, the Fury began crawling closer to his family while still under the spell. Draco gasped and cried as the black eyes of his friend and brother found his own grey ones.

“You have come to join them in death,” the insane megalomaniac continued laughing.

“No!” Draco heard Severus cry quietly from his side. It sounded as if the man’s heart was completely broken and his world ripped away from in with just that one word.

“Oh, what is that, traitor? I didn’t quite hear you,” Voldemort mocked with a sneer as he looked over to Severus, briefly letting up on the spell.

Draco smiled as he caught sight of Artie and realized what was actually happening. Looking away from the Fury...that was Voldemort’s mistake. The Fury rose with wings extended and glowing black eyes. He extended his hand and a golden cage suddenly sprang into being and wrapped around himself and Voldemort, separating them from the rest of the Death Eaters.

The pain was a means to an end. Pain and him...well, they were old friends and not something Harry feared anymore. Harry instinctually knew that he needed to get closer to Voldemort for his powers to be effective, and the snake-like man did so like to monologue, so he just had to keep him occupied and talking as he crept closer. Harry looked over to his dad and Draco trying to find a way to get them to safety. He wanted to get them out before anything happened, but there were too many Death Eaters around them.

When the Dark Lord turned to Harry’s father, he finally saw his opening. Just like in the graveyard in Harry’s fourth year, only this time entirely intentional, Harry raised the golden cage of magic to keep the Death Eaters out of his business with the Dark Lord. This was between him and the blasphemer of Magic, no one else was allowed to interrupt.

“Avada...” Voldemort started to scream out, but his wand completely disintegrated halfway through the incantation while Harry smiled a menacing smile, his fangs bared.

“No, no, no. No, killing curses for you,” Harry laughed a little hysterically since his instincts were flooding his mind and body. He wasn’t really sure if there was much Harry in there at all right now since he was mostly Fury at this point. “Magic gave you that wand, and Magic can take it away when you are no longer worthy.”

“Reducto!” Seething, Voldemort wandlessly threw a blasting curse towards the Fury, which he easily deflected with his holly wand. Harry had been prepared for the wizard to be able to do at least some wandless magic, so he was thankfully not taken off guard...that blasting curse had been much stronger than he had planned for though, and he winced at the magical backlash from when it hit the golden cage.

“Stop!” The Fury within him bellowed and the Dark Lord became suddenly very still. His red-vertically slit eyes were shifting every direction, but his body was unmoving. “I, Arcturus Severus Snape, given the right of judgeship by Magic herself as a Fury, do hereby begin the criminal trial of one Tom Marvolo Riddle on the charge of abusing the gift of magic and being unworthy of the further stewardship thereof. How do you plead?”

Voldemort suddenly found his mouth unbound. “Come join me. You’re obviously powerful and deserve to have wixen prostrated at your feet. We could rule this world together, yo...”

Voldemort once more found his mouth bound shut. “I’m taking that as you pleading guilty,” Harry smirked at him with a little shrug. “I’m trying to do this right, so bear with me please as we work this out together. There is a process apparently which my instincts are insisting upon.”

Harry glanced around at the Death Eaters shooting off curses and hexes at the golden cage. He clicked his tongue. “Well, that won’t do at all, they are being very distracting to my process,” he said before reaching out and magically grabbing hold of the connection Voldemort had with each of his Death Eaters, the connection he had felt twice now as he broke the Mark on his father and Bulstrode.

Feeling the connection, Harry metaphorically put his finger on the pulse of it and sent a powerful stunning curse through the link and watched while all the Dark Lord’s followers in

the room fell to the floor at once. “So... *that’s* how you anchored your soul to this realm to keep from dying? You tied yourself to all your marked followers. Yes, well, that will have to go.”

Voldemort silently screamed through his magical gag while Harry severed his connection with every Death Eater, but conveniently left the ink of the Mark on all their arms. The aurors had a hard enough job as it was, he didn’t want to make their lives any more difficult. “Now, let’s continue. We have quite a bit of work to do here. Let’s start with the evidence. As evidence of you abusing the gift of magic, you are charged with...” At this Harry seemed to be counting something in his head which was really just the connection he had recently broken being read like a diagnostic by his Fury side.

“Yes, that’s 43 counts of murder committed by your own hand. Many, many others committed at your behest. Also, torture and many human rights violations, acts of terror, attempted genocide, and child endangerment of basically everyone at Hogwarts from your own time there and mine as well.”

If looks could kill, then Harry would definitely be dead. Voldemort’s eyes were trying to bore a hole into the young Fury. As a magical judge though, once a Fury began a trial sanctioned by Magic, it was useless to fight against it. As soon as he had embraced vengeance and who he was as a Fury, the power to judge was immediately unlocked in his mind, and he could clearly see the just and right path ahead of him. Magic herself was leading and guiding the trial against one who had wronged her gravely and hurt her and her children.

“I sentence you, Tom Marvolo Riddle, to be stripped of your gifts deeming you unworthy of them,” Harry continued as he raised his hand and pulled the magic from the Dark Lord, returning it to the earth where it could be healed and gifted to another born in the future. As the magic drained out of his body, Harry’s stasis spell was dispelled. Voldemort shrieked in pain, writhing and he fell to the floor. He screamed blood curdling screams until they choked off and he crumpled to a pile of dust on the stone floor.

Harry felt around for Riddle’s magical signature around them, and it was well and truly gone. “Too bad magic was the only thing holding you together anymore,” Harry said in fake sadness as the golden cage disappeared with a wave of his hand. Finally, Harry pulled his wand out of the pocket of his robes again and pointed it at the ceiling. He had never cast the spell before, but he knew the incantation, and he figured if Pettigrew could cast it, then he surely could.

“Morsmordre,” he cast through the roof, breaking the wards on the building and lighting up the sky with the glowing Dark Mark.

“Why?” Severus looked from the ceiling to Harry, so very, very confused at everything that just happened.

“How better to get both the ministry and the Order here as quickly as possible?” Harry shrugged. “Are you both ok? Are you bleeding anywhere?”

“Yes, we’re fine, or we will be rather,” Severus said after looking over Draco who was shaking very badly but who was smiling as what had just happened sank in.

Severus saw it coming before anyone else, even Harry. He was beginning to understand his son so much better than he ever had before. When the adrenaline finally left his body, Harry looked over to the pile of dust on the ground, and it all finally sank in. The Fury within him receded, and Harry finally fully returned. It was over, and he had killed a man. Harry crumpled to the floor as Severus rushed over, sobs wracking the teen’s frame.

Severus wrapped his arms around his sobbing son. “I love you so much,” he said, kissing Harry’s hair. “You did what you had to do. You saved us. I’m so proud of you. I love you,” he continued as Draco stood and stared at the destruction around them in awe. Draco finally realized they were in his manor, and it was almost unrecognizable at this point. The Death Eaters were all still splayed out on the ground, unmoving and the Dark Lord was no more.

The seconds silently ticked by with just Harry’s sobs breaking the stillness, until loud pops of apparition rang out through the echoing ballroom. The trio turned towards the heavy doors as they were pushed inwards by a crowd of aurors and Order members. Kingsley Shacklebolt led the group in with Moody, Tonks, and Arthur Weasley behind him, followed by five aurors and Dumbledore himself, more proof that Dumbledore had set this whole thing up or why would he have shown up under the Dark Mark.

“What happened here?” Shacklebolt asked in shock while they all surveyed the room. The aurors were all nudging the unconscious Death Eaters and taking their wands when they

realized the unconscious people were still alive.

“Where’s You-Know-Who?” One auror asked the group huddled together on the ground.
“This seems to be his inner circle.”

Draco silently pointed to the pile of ash several meters away from the father and son still on the floor. “He’s dead?” Dumbledore asked in a tone of both disbelief and glee, his blue eyes twinkling.

“He’s dead, and he cannot return this time,” Harry assured them all as he finally stood with Snape’s arm still protectively around him. Harry looked at Dumbledore, pure hate shining from his eyes at the man. He promised then and there that he wasn’t done with the old man yet, not by a long shot.

“You killed the Dark Lord?” Moody growled in shocked disbelief at the young Fury.

“Harry Potter killed Voldemort,” Artie said loudly in the room.

Artie felt Snape’s arm tense around him, and he saw Draco cast him a quick, questioning glance out of the corner of his eye. It had come to him suddenly, sometime between casting the Dark Mark and the aurors arriving. The loophole or the out that Dumbledore and the Voldemort had given him when they had insisted so many times that only Harry Potter could kill the Dark Lord. They had both kept the rumor going that Harry was alive and out there somewhere training. Why not use the Boy-Who-Lived as a scapegoat? Give the fame to the one the wixen world insisted it go to anyway.

Dumbledore raised an eyebrow and looked over the room as if looking for his wayward Chosen One. “And where is Mr. Potter now?” Shacklebolt asked Artie, clearly concerned for the boy if he was actually still alive.

“He left,” Artie shrugged innocently. “He didn’t want to wait around for the media circus. He said he never did want any of the fame.”

“Mr. Snape, is it?” Shacklebolt continued his questioning, now pinning Artie with a searching look.

“Yes, sir,” Artie nodded.

“Can you tell us what happened here?”

“Wait, how do we know he’s telling the truth?” Moody snarled behind him suspiciously while he was magically binding the unconscious Death Eaters.

“How about Veritaserum?” Dumbledore offered with a wide smile. “I’m sure Professor Snape could procure us some.

Artie gave a bitter laugh at Dumbledore (hopefully) unknowingly trying to kill him, though he wasn’t so sure how unknowing it actually was. “Headmaster, I’m a Fury. Veritaserum is highly poisonous to me. Can I just give you an oath? I *am* a Fury. It’s considered magically binding everywhere in the magical world and seen as even more official than Veritaserum in all courtrooms.”

“The boy’s right. Furies can’t take Veritaserum,” Moody agreed with a grunt. “An oath would do it though.”

“What about the others?” The auror who had spoken before asked, looking at Draco and Snape as if they were gum under his shoe.

“I believe my oath and testimony would hold up under a court of law without having to go to the drastic measures of interrogating two victims of kidnapping and torture,” Artie pinned the auror with a warning glare, his black eyes disconcertingly flashing.

“An oath then, my boy,” Dumbledore twinkled at them, ignoring the warning tone coming from the Fury.

Artie chose his words very carefully as he watched Tonks and the other aurors secure all the Death Eaters to take them to the ministry. “I, Arcturus Severus Snape, give my oath as a Fury that I will only speak the truth in this room from now until the moment I leave the building.” A blinding flash of light went from Artie to everyone in the room.

“Now, you said Harry Potter defeated Tom?” Dumbledore asked as he leaned nonchalantly against a pillar and let everyone else do the clean-up work. “Please do tell us what happened.”

Draco gave Artie a terrified look as the Fury began. “Dad, Draco, and my son Castor went to Diagon Alley this morning to go to the bank and do some shopping. While they were out, they were ambushed by Death Eaters. Dad told Castor to pop over to my boyfriend Fred Weasley, Arthur Weasley’s son, who works on the alley. You see, my son’s magic has been kicking in powerfully recently, and he has been able to apparate at will.”

“That’s very impressive,” Arthur added in with a small smile that the baby would feel safe going to his son.

“He is,” Artie smiled back at him kindly. “As you can imagine, Fred and George were shocked to suddenly have a crying baby in their store. They found me and we determined quickly that something must be wrong, and Dad and Draco must be in danger since they had not contacted me about losing Castor. So, I tessered directly to them here at what I’m guessing is Malfoy Manor.”

“Tessered?” Shacklebolt asked with a raise of his eyebrow.

“It’s the Fury version of apparition,” Moody answered for Artie. “I’ve done some research back in my day. Can’t be too prepared for what you might face,” he gave as explanation to Artie’s questioning look.

“Anyway, Dad and Draco were here and, as you can see from the state of their nerves,” Artie motioned to both of their trembling hands. “They were being tortured under the Cruciatus Curse when I arrived.”

“We’ll try to be quick so we can get them to Madam Pomfrey then,” Shacklebolt offered, causing Artie, Draco, and Snape to give him thankful looks.

“So, turns out Harry Potter was here as well,” Artie continued as he saw Draco giving him a warning look, but remaining quiet. “He somehow sent a stunning curse through Voldemort’s link to his Death Eaters.”

“Wait,” Arthur Weasley held up a hand, realizing the implications of this. He quickly cast a patronus. “Go to Amelia Bones and tell her to hold in custody anyone who has passed out at the ministry or St. Mungo’s.”

Artie nodded to him in appreciation at his thinking. “You can continue now,” Shacklebolt, prompted impatiently.

“Er...yeah, so Voldemort and Potter talked, or really, Voldemort taunted him. I tried to get Dad and Draco away, but there were just too many Death Eaters around. Potter ended up doing some kind of magic, but I don’t know a specific spell to tell you what it was, if it even was a spell. Anyway, I can see magical signatures as part of being a Fury, and whatever Potter did, it completely erased Voldemort’s signature. It took his magic and broke his connection with the Death Eaters. It seems that Voldemort kept himself alive by tying his soul to the Dark Marks. Potter broke that connection and the magic he was using to sustain himself, so Voldemort just crumbled away it seems. I recommend having someone study that dust, but he’s definitely gone,” Artie explained to everyone’s shock.

“So, what did Harry do then?” Dumbledore asked, looking at the Fury as if he were starting to see the holes in the story woven for them.

“From my understanding, Potter has been out of the public eye for the past year and liked it a lot. He knows that he will be forever under the thumb of the media and the ministry if he stays. I don’t think the public will be seeing Harry Potter anytime soon. He fulfilled his duty that you all expected of him and now wants to be left in peace,” Artie said with a shrug. “I think he’s a pretty nice guy that deserves some peace. Don’t you think?”

“I agree,” Snape said firmly, causing the Order members to at him in shock, knowing his past relationship with the boy. “Also, to corroborate the story, I, Severus Tobias Snape, do vow to

tell the truth within this room until I leave.” Magic swirled from Snape to his son.

“Potter showed up while Draco and I were being tortured. He killed the Dark Lord, and I agree with my son; I doubt he will appear in the magical world again any time soon. Now, may we please leave to get some medical attention. My godson is in very bad shape if you can’t all clearly see that for yourselves.”

Artie nodded in agreement. “You have all the Death Eaters, the Dark Lord is dead, no one here murdered anyone, I think that should be all you need from us. Am I correct?”

“Of course,” Shacklebolt agreed before the other aurors or headmaster could say anything. “Just stay where we can ask you more questions if needed.”

“We’ll be at Hogwarts,” Artie said as he grabbed onto Draco and his Dad before tessering them directly to the Hogwarts infirmary.

Draco and Severus were comfortably placed on hospital beds in no time with pain and nerve potions shoved down their throats by a concerned medi-witch. Harry conveniently forgot to inform her he had also been under the Cruciatus Curse. There was no way he wanted to get trapped in the hospital wing for the weekend.

“How in Salazar’s name were you able to say all of that under oath?!” Draco asked Harry as soon as Madam Pomfrey went into her office to grab something.

“*Very* careful wording,” Harry smiled at him unrepentantly as he sat on the edge of his Dad’s bed and held his hand tightly. He knew that they might have five minutes before Remus, Castor, and the twins ran in, so he was enjoying the quiet while it lasted.

“That was some very impressive, and very Slytherin, strategizing back there. I especially appreciated the distinction that none of us ‘murdered’ anyone instead of ‘killed,’” Snape squeezed his son’s hand with a grateful smile on his face. “However, I am very aware you

should be in a hospital bed as well. I *will* be shoving potions down *your* throat this evening. Since you saved our lives, I suppose I can grant you a reprieve from Poppy's tender care though."

Harry chuckled at his father. "Well, I might have killed old snake-face, but I definitely didn't murder him," Harry scoffed. "And you are so much better than Pomfrey! She's scary."

"You said Harry Potter killed him," Draco reminded him with a pout, trying to keep them on topic.

"Ah, I swore to tell the truth," Harry smiled at him. "I didn't swear to tell the *whole* truth," he added, not really clarifying much at all.

"Salazaar himself would be proud," Snape smirked. "To think, I thought you wouldn't be sorted into Slytherin... I am proven wrong."

"But..."

"Draco, just let it go and be grateful," Severus smiled at his godson. "We're *free*, finally, enjoy it."

Draco slowly nodded at them but with a suspicious look on his face before the rest of the family crashed through the doors of the infirmary. Remus threw himself onto Severus and held onto him for dear life while Fred grabbed onto Harry similarly. Blaise, who was holding Castor, joined Pansy at Draco's bedside while George, Ron, and Hermione all tried to pat Harry on the back wherever they could get past Fred's arms. It didn't take fifteen minutes though before Madam Pomfrey was running them all out of the room to give her patients rest. Harry took Castor from Blaise and decided that he was going to take a long shower, play with his son, and then sleep the best night's sleep he had in years.

Two days after Voldemort's demise, Harry was dishing a spoonful of eggs onto his plate while Castor chatted away with his Bazy (Blaise) unintelligibly while Blaise very seriously agreed like he understood exactly what the baby was saying. Harry had a feeling the Zabinis were solidly now a part of their lives, whether they liked it or not. Thankfully, when he checked, Misty was still alive and working in the kitchens now. Her eyes looked haunted though and she refused to talk about what had happened. Harry figured he should probably write a letter to Madam Zabini and invite her for tea or something once the summer started and before she could take offense at anything he might possibly do.

It was then during breakfast when ten aurors suddenly shoved their way into the Great Hall in a whirlwind of red robes. Surprisingly, Harry didn't recognize a single one of them from the Order, but the rude one from the other night was most definitely there. The student body and professors looked on in shock while the aurors grabbed onto Draco Malfoy, Severus Snape, and Remus Lupin. "You three are under arrest by order of the DMLE and coming with us for questioning," the auror in charge of this operation bellowed loudly within the hall.

"What are the charges against these men?" Blaise stood and asked indignantly before Harry could even snap out of his shock at what was happening.

"They are suspected of Death Eater activity," the same auror sneered at the Slytherin in obvious prejudice.

Harry, finally processing, stood and also faced the man who was tall, muscled, and who had a dangerous glint in his eyes. Harry looked him over in obvious disregard. "First of all, none of these men are marked, and second, in what world would Remus Lupin of all people be suspected of Death Eater activity? No offense Draco," Harry added to this friend who just gave him a wry shrug. Of course, Draco and Snape would be suspected, even if they were innocent.

"He's a werewolf," the auror said with a menacing look before snapping his fingers for the aurors to lead their captives away.

"That's not a crime!" Harry yelled after him as a great deal of the students and professors began protesting around him. "When is their trial?!" The aurors ignored everyone, even the headmaster who was only protesting half-heartedly causing even more anger from Harry.

Pansy and Blaise both turned pleading eyes to Harry when the aurors left. "What're we going to do?" Pansy asked, fear in her voice.

Harry thought for a minute as a mischievous smile slowly crossed his face that caused scared shivers down everyone's spines around him. "You've been hanging out with the Weasley twins too much, mate," Blaise remarked with narrowed eyes. "I hope that look means you have a good idea though."

"Actually, I think we need to go talk to your girlfriend for this one," Harry smirked at Blaise and pulled the both of them over to the Gryffindor table and a very worried looking Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley.

Legality of Furies

Twenty minutes after Harry's family were all arrested, Harry, Blaise, Hermione, and Pansy met outside of Severus and Remus's quarters, all having taken different routes to get there since Harry was paranoid that someone might be watching them now (*ahem, Dumbledore and the portraits). Harry opened the door with his dad's password and let them all in. "Where's Castor and Ron?" Hermione asked as she surveyed the assembled group.

Harry took in a sad breath as his eyes glanced over the space. The rooms seemed so empty and sad without his dad and Moony in them. There was a cold cup of tea on the side table probably left by his dad who always seemed to have tea in his hand when he was in his rooms and a scarf over the back of the sofa that was Remus's. It just looked lonely now.

"Dobby is watching Castor for the day over at Blaise's house since I'm not sure how safe the castle is right at this moment..." he started.

"Wait? What? Why my house? How does this Dobby know how to get to my house?" Blaise asked in complete shock, seeming to not know yet about his mum's involvement in everything. "Does Mum know about this?"

"Er...so...your mum's elf that I asked about a while ago, Winky..." Harry started again while they all settled into the couch and armchairs. "Well, you know she and the elf that's been watching Castor are friends; he is Dobby. Apparently, your mum knows Castor too somehow...it's possible they all went to Disney together. I haven't really gotten the full story yet though since so many things have been happening."

"My mum and your son are friends...?" Blaise raised an incredulous eyebrow even as he put an arm around Hermione's shoulders on the couch.

Harry just shrugged and snorted. "It would frankly be the *least* shocking thing that has happened to me and my family this year, but yeah, at least Winky is and your mum got pulled into all this somehow as well."

Blaise seemed to be thinking all this over before he finally looked back and shrugged at Harry with a smile. "Sure, brilliant. Mum will watch out for them. She might owl some suggestions for us too if this Dobby character fills her in...which will most definitely happen if she gets a hint that something might be wrong."

"She might even show up at the gates if she gets too concerned, so we may should keep her updated if we don't want a suspicious murder to happen at some point," Pansy added with a smirk.

Harry gave her a little grin. "We'll keep that as a last resort for now."

"Or first, your call..." Blaise just shrugged uncaringly. Draco would be safe; he was certain of that. Blaise just wasn't sure if it would be his Fury friend or his fixer mother who stepped in. Since Snape and Lupin were also taken, currently Blaise was betting on the Fury, but time would tell.

Hermione blanched slightly at the possibility she might be very shortly meeting her boyfriend's very intimidating mother, but she quickly brushed it off for the more important conversation ahead of them. "And Ron... where is he? He would be useful in planning anything since he can usually think through different strategies quickly."

"He'll be here," Harry assured her with a smile. "Right now though, Ron is in my rooms. I asked him to floo his dad to see if he had any information about what is happening at the ministry. My floo isn't connected to the castle's floo network, so it can't be monitored by anyone in the castle... probably not the ministry either if we're being honest."

Blaise raised an eyebrow from where he sat on the couch by Hermione. "How did you get a floo not connected to the castle's network? I always assumed you were using your strange apparition-thing to leave and bring people in."

Harry smirked at him. "You've met Dobby, haven't you? If not, you really should... Winky isn't the only scary house elf around. There is a reason those two are friends."

“So, you think Dumbledore had some part in this if you are concerned about being seen in the castle and the floo network,” Hermione put the pieces together. “Why would he cross a Fury though? Wouldn’t he know that’s a bad idea? From everything I’ve read, your vengeance is pretty terrifying.”

Harry walked over to the bookshelf where his dad had put all the books on Furies he’d stolen from the school library and started removing the whole stack of books. “I doubt he realizes I suspect him since, as far as he knows, we’ve had almost no interactions besides some short conversations this year and after Voldemort was killed. And honestly, he might not know it’s a bad idea.” Harry placed the large stack of books on the coffee table in front of everyone.

“Dad removed all the books on Furies from the library after Halloween so Dumbledore couldn’t meddle in my life. I think it might have backfired on us though.”

“What’s the plan to get them out then, Artie?” Pansy asked, looking like she was only barely holding herself together with her mate having been taken from her and now in danger once again in a very short span of time.

“I’m still coming up with it. This is a bit of a work in progress,” Harry admitted with more than a little frustration. “Hermione, you mentioned something a long time ago... something about Furies presiding over trials and some laws concerning it. Do you remember? What did that book say, exactly?”

Hermione smiled at her new friend remembering something she had said from months ago. “Yes, there were a lot of laws passed in the late 1300s about Furies and trials. There must have been an active Fury in Britain then or something. The book I had was very vague, but there might be something in all of this,” she said motioning to the large pile of books as if she were being offered cake or a surprise present instead of reading material.

Harry gave her a large, knowing grin in return. “I have it on excellent authority that you are the best researcher at this school. You think you can help us sort through all this?”

Hermione was already flipping through a book that had seemed to suddenly just appear in her hand. “My absolute pleasure!”

“All right guys, look for anything legal-related in these books,” Blaise said, getting down to business and passing out a large text both to Harry and Pansy. With a fond smile, he settled in to help his girlfriend.

A few minutes later, Harry stood from where he was not sprawled on the floor to answer a knock at the portrait hole. He opened the door for Ron, who was followed in closely by the Weasley Twins. “I hope you don’t mind, I grabbed these two idiots while I had access to your floo,” Ron motioned behind him.

Fred rushed over and smothered Harry in a bone-crushing hug. “I’m so sorry! It should have been over. I’m sorry that things just keep happening to you. It’s not fair!”

Harry just leaned into the hug more, taking in the comfort. “What did you learn from your dad?” Pansy asked as Ron sat on the floor at Hermione’s feet and grimaced at the pile of books.

Ron let out a sad sigh. “My dad’s a bloody mess, mate,” Ron said to Harry when Fred finally let him go. “He wanted me to pass along just how sorry he is about what happened. He was talking about maybe quitting his job at the ministry because of everything. I’ve never heard him actually consider quitting before for anything, and we all know some shitty stuff has happened there.”

“What *did* happen, Ron?” George asked, squeezing into the couch beside Blaise who seemed happy to move closer to Hermione while Fred just sprawled out onto the floor with Harry.

Ron ran his hand over his face in frustration at the whole fucked up mess. “Dumbledore had all the members of the Order make an unbreakable vow way back in the first war to never disclose who their spy was. It sounded like a good idea at the time, especially since they were certain there was a mole in their midst...which we all know was Pettigrew now.”

“That sounds like a good idea to me. Why is it not?” Hermione looked up from her book with a frown to ask.

“Well, it still applies now to the second war,” Ron grumbled.

“When one of the aurors asked Dumbledore after you lot left Voldemort’s lair-place if Snape was a spy or a Death Eater, Dumbledore said he was definitely not a spy for the Order. None of the Order members could speak up and disagree with him because of the vow,” Ron explained sadly. “My dad is seriously messed up about it. He’s really started to come around to liking Snape after Boxing Day and you dating Fred and all. No one could really explain why Draco was with Snape either since the goblins had no record of sending him a letter to go to the bank. There were speculations actually that Artie removed their marks to protect them *from Harry*, if you can believe it. The aurors are leaning towards that they had always been and were still Death Eaters and maybe just unmarked.”

“Bloody hell, this is insane!” Harry growled and his fangs flashed in anger.

“What about Remus though?” Hermione asked in complete shock at the turn of events.

“Umbridge... need I say more?” Ron sneered as if he would really rather be strangling the woman than talking about her at all. “She’s using the opportunity to round up any magical creature she has issues with. Frankly, I’m surprised she didn’t have Artie arrested as well since he’s a magical creature.”

“Yeah, that really wouldn’t go in her favor,” Harry said darkly and meaning it as a promise. “Most of you probably don’t know this, but I have some pretty damning dirt on Umbridge from my past and would be more than happy to see her taken down and fed to a dementor. I almost wish she *had* arrested me.”

Everyone stared at the pile of books or off into space thinking for a minute. It seemed that their world had turned against them. The people that were meant to protect them were attacking their family. Hermione cleared her throat nervously. “I hate to ask this since he’s finally gotten peace from all this, but what about Harry? What if we asked him to speak up for Snape, Draco, and Remus? I don’t know how to get in touch with him, but you saw him, Artie. You have all those intense Fury powers; couldn’t you find him if you wanted?”

“No!” Fred and Ron exclaimed at the same time, surprising everyone, especially Harry who had already been considering it.

“Look,” Ron began when he got a look from Fred and George to go first. “I’ve been Harry’s best mate since our first year. He didn’t deserve anything he was put through in his home and here in the wixen world. He did what was asked of him and got rid of that monster even when that was *not* his responsibility. I think it’s time he was left in peace, no matter what the consequences to the rest of us are. I completely understand him cutting us all out of his life, and I bloody well support him in it. He needs to make a clean break of it, or he’ll just get pulled back in to the politics and they’ll never let him go. The wixen world insists on making him their poster-boy and don’t realize he just wants to live a normal life. We need to let him have it. There *has* to be another way.”

Harry blushed at the sincere words of his friend and gave Ron a small smile and nod of appreciation that was also returned nonverbally. “I think in these books is another way. We just need to find it. I think it will have something to do with the legal system and Furies,” he finally said, wanting to do what Ron suggested, but also keeping as a last resort him returning as Harry Potter somehow.

After everyone had taken a book once more and Hermione started a chart with their compiled and organized information, they were interrupted again. This time a rush of fire appeared right in the middle of the group, leaving Fawkes standing on the coffee table. “Dumbledore’s spying on us!” Pansy exclaimed as she scrambled behind her armchair.

“No, I don’t think so,” Harry shook his head. Remembering that Fawkes had seemed to know who he was from the very beginning. He bent down to look at the Phoenix better. “What’s wrong, Fawkes?”

The firebird turned sad eyes on Harry and seemed to gaze into his soul. Harry very clearly felt the message the bird was communicating to him. “*Help me. Free me,*” was reverberating between their eyes clearly.

Harry sighed. Someone else asking for his help. If anyone deserved it though, Fawkes did. He saved his life in second year, and Harry was happy to be able to return the favor. “Of course, Fawkes. I’ll do whatever I can,” he smiled at the bird who had saved him and placed his hand on the warm, red feathers.

Fawkes trilled in gratitude before flaming out once more. “What was that about?” Fred asked, staring at where the bird was moments before.

“Well, it seems we aren’t the only ones upset with Dumbledore right now,” Harry laughed and looked around. “Erm, Pansy, will you go with me to the library. We need to pull some books on familiar bonds to add to the research project. We now need to free a phoenix as well as a werewolf, a potions master, and a blond prat.”

“And all the other magical creatures that have been rounded up by Umbridge,” Hermione reminded him with an angry glare towards wherever Umbridge may be. Harry groaned in frustration as Pansy joined him to go pull some extra books from the library. It was going to be a very long day, probably *days*, as they approached the trials.

It turns out the legal system in the 1300s were either brilliant or idiots, depending on how you looked at everything. In Harry’s opinion, he was going to go with brilliant since it was helping them currently. There were several laws put into place giving Furies power over trials since Veritaserum hadn’t even been invented yet. Having a Fury preside was the most effective and efficient way to get to the truth in the case with the least amount of fuss. The odd part of all this was that they had set it up so that only a Fury could repeal the laws with the firm belief that Furies were ordained as judges by Magic herself.

So, there were all these laws on the books that pertained to Furies and that could only be repealed by a Fury. Which, of course, no Fury was going to repeal them and limit their power. Also, there was some truth it seemed in the belief that Furies served Magic, so it all did make some weird, twisted sense. The issue was following all the archaic procedures and getting the wording right to make it all safe and legal. Hermione was on procedure since rules were her jam and already had a to-do list going for Harry to memorize and follow. For the wording, Dobby was of course called in and Winky was consulted via owl as well. If anyone was going to catch a loophole, the elves were going to be the ones to find it.

Blaise was tasked with getting in touch with his mother to fill her in and have her call on her contacts to get the dates and times of all the upcoming trials. They couldn’t trust the ministry to publish the correct times and locations, as evidenced by Harry’s experience before his fifth year. Blaise’s mother was well dialed in to the political scene though and was happy to help after everything was explained. Her only requests in payment were a visit from Hermione to meet her son’s girlfriend over the summer as well as another trip to Disney with her Castor. Hermione was a little worried, but Blaise assured her that Mrs. Zabini only actually killed her husbands (who were all Death Eaters or assassins) and was an excellent mother and kind person besides that. So... only slightly reassuring.

Fred and George both headed off to the ministry the next day to talk to Kingsley Shacklebolt. After much discussion, they decided he seemed the most trustworthy of the aurors they knew, and he was the in the best position to help them. The twins went to explain to him their plan and to enlist his help in clearing a way for them to put it in place with the trials.

Lastly, Harry and Pansy were back-up, research support, and all-around revenge planners. As the two most directly affected by the recent arrests, they had decided that Dumbledore and Umbridge must be taken down as well. Maybe even a few more ministry officials for good measure. So, adding to freeing their family, they were researching how to take down those who had unjustly messed with their lives who weren't even on trial currently.

Day one of the Death Eater trials were held on a Wednesday, bright and early in the morning. The full Wizengamot were in attendance, presided over by Minister Scrimgeour, Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement Amelia Bones, Head of the Wizengamot Albus Dumbledore, and overseen by Undersecretary Dolores Umbridge. Besides the officials, the courtroom was packed with the public and the press as well. Everyone was excited to see the official fall of all things Voldemort as it was almost celebratory as the assembled group were out for blood.

Day one saw many of the arrested magical creatures facing trial, Remus Lupin included. Many of the assembled public seemed confused about the list of defendants in the first day trials, but no one complained, expecting there must be a good reason why these people were awaiting trial and trusting the ministry. They *must* have been arrested for some reason, right? Even Madam Bones was looking at her docket with a questioning crease between her eyes at the names. Causing many members of the press to speculate and start frantically taking notes, Madam Bones suddenly and openly gaped at the last bit of information on the page. Veritaserum had been waved for questioning by the ministry. It was deemed not necessary to the trials.

“What is this?” Madam Bones hissed quietly to the minister as she pointed at the document, anger in her eyes.

Scrimgeour only gave the page a cursory glance before going back to organizing his files. “These trials are mere formalities. Everyone up for trial has been proven beyond a reasonable

doubt to be in collusion with He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named.”

Madam Bones looked in absolute horror at the minister as he sharply banged a gavel on his desk to get the audience quiet so they could begin. “Quiet, please,” the minister called out as the noise levels suddenly dropped to near silence. “Now, up first we have...”

A loud bang of the door being thrown dramatically open sounded at that point and caused everyone turned to see a tall man with bright, silver hair pulled up into a bun to show off pointed ears, completely black eyes, and outstretched bat-like wings stride towards the front of the courtroom. “What is the meaning of this!” Umbridge exclaimed in fear and loathing at the magical creature.

The Fury turned to face the assembled body in the courtroom before casting a *Sonorus* charm on himself so that everyone could easily hear. “I, Arcturus Severus Snape, Fury, ordained by Magic herself, do on my authority as judge and overseer of all the blessings Magic bestows call this court into session!”

Trial and Punishment

Chapter Notes

Just the Epilogue left after this one!!

The courtroom was deadly silent as everyone stared at the intimidating Fury who was calmly staring right back at them (Well, he was freaking out on the inside, but they didn't need to know that). Then, he opened his mouth once more. "By the laws of this land, and by Magic herself, this courtroom is now under my jurisdiction, and you are all bound to me for the duration of the trial."

There was a collective gasp as a bright light of magic shot from every single person in the courtroom to the outstretched hand of the young man who absorbed them in a glow of magic around him. Once the murmurs had calmed down to a less deafening level, Harry began to explain. "Now, since there hasn't been a Fury in Britain for quite a long while, let me explain our laws to you all. I basically serve as judge, jury, and Veritaserum while court is in session. Everyone who walks into this room becomes bound to me to answer any question I put forth to them honestly, under pain of losing your magic or instant death depending on the severity of the infraction. I do not decide which, Magic herself does. So, if you would like to keep your life and/or magic, then you will tell no lies while we are in this room. Any questions?"

There was a stunned silence only broken when Minister Scrimgeour stood. "You cannot do this. This is ludicrous! Aurors, arrest that man!"

"Actually, I can," Harry turned and smiled at him, his black eyes serving to add an extra intensity to his glare. The aurors had already been well briefed by Kingsley about the law in these regards, and none of them moved an step from their posts...possibly under the impression they might lose their magic too (Kingsley might have been a little over-dramatic about consequences when he was explaining).

Harry looked around at the gathered body, nervous about what was coming and his role in it all. Scrimgeour was furious, Umbridge looked like she was about to have a stroke from sheer anger, Dumbledore looked confused and extremely angry, but Madam Bones actually looked very relieved. That was interesting. "I had hoped the judicial body of the wixen world would

actually know the laws they are sworn to uphold, but it seems that not all of you do. As a Fury, justice is mine to oversee. If I so choose, any courtroom in this nation will be bound to me. And...I so choose.” He added darkly at the end with the smallest of glares towards Dumbledore.

“He is correct,” Madam Bones spoke up for the first time since he had walked into the room, a small smile on her face now. “It’s an old law, but it *is* valid and binding. Fury Snape is now presiding over these trials. How do you wish to proceed, sir?” She asked with a nod of her head.

Harry gave her a respectful nod in return while flabbergasted she had actually called him ‘sir.’ “I will interrogate all prisoners listed on the docket for today and will return for each and every trial after. Madam Bones, I request that you check all ministry records of those arrested and make sure *everyone* is actually scheduled a trial. Make sure no one has been assumed guilty without first facing a judicial body. Aurors Shacklebolt and Tonks will be happy to help you with this.”

Harry turned to the rest of the courtroom after a nod of agreement from Madam Bones who was already making notes on her parchment. “Now, I am the only one permitted to ask questions directly of the defendants, but I will listen to the members of the Wizengamot if they have suggestions for questions that need to be asked. I will *listen* that doesn’t mean I will ask your question since I understand how my magic works better than you do, and I will not have anyone placed in undue harm. I am also permitted to call others to trial that haven’t been arrested since sometimes a line of questioning will bring up the need to question others, so please, let’s stick to doing everything very above-board and legal from here on out.”

The gathered judicial body were glaring at the young Fury almost murderously though many just looked scared. Harry was fairly certain that the force of the collective glare of hate rivaled Voldemort’s own in that moment and it was with great effort he kept his wings from shivering.

“Now, aurors, bring the first prisoner please so we can get started.”

Day one of the trials seemed to be Umbridge’s vendetta day as it turned out that most all the prisoners were magical creatures of some kind. Harry had a few standard questions that Dobby and Winky had come up with that he asked pretty much every prisoner as they were

seated. Depending on their answer, he would either continue with questioning or stop. These questions were:

Are you now or have you ever been a follower of Lord Voldemort?

Did you ever knowingly offer goods or services to help further the aims of Lord Voldemort and his followers?

Do you support the goals of Lord Voldemort in the oppression of peoples under the protection of this nation.

And (the one Harry gleefully asked) What were you told was the crime you were arrested for committing?

From the questioning, most of the prisoners were immediately released to their utter surprise and relief at how simple and quickly it went. Their answers to the last question were all some variant of “I’m a werewolf, so I must follow the Dark Lord” or “All vampires are in the services of You-Know-Who.” Some had supported Voldemort in the past but had turned away when they saw his brutality. These Harry questioned a little further, but most were also released since supporting or agreeing with something were not illegal, only the actions taken from there. Surprisingly, based on Umbridge’s track record so far, she had rounded up two marked Death Eaters and one unmarked follower. There was also a supporter who had yet to commit any actual crime, she was released with a warning.

The Death Eaters were all three sentenced to Azkaban for varying amounts of time based on their crimes. One, which just happened to be Fenrir Greyback, was sentenced to the dementor’s kiss as well since Harry and most of the courtroom felt like they needed a long shower after his gleeful and detailed explanation of all his crimes.

When Remus Lupin was brought in for questioning, the tension visibly left his body in relief when the light of magic left him and settled on Harry who was smiling at him comfortingly. Harry asked all his standard questions to his Uncle Moony, getting the expected responses heard from most of the those who had been arrested. Then, he asked the Wizengamot if they had any questions to add, as he had with all the other prisoners.

Umbridge cleared her throat with a “Hem, hem,” which made Harry’s skin crawl and his hand cramp in memory of pain.

“Yes, Madam Umbridge?” Harry asked, trying to keep his face neutral when he turned to the pink-clad monster.

Umbridge gave him her dangerously sweet smile. “Remus Lupin is also on trial for attacking a muggle family. A...” she checked her notes. “Vernon and Petunia Dursley. He must be questioned about that as well.”

Harry gritted his teeth but had actually planned for this with Dobby and Ron this time. Harry smiled just as sweetly back to Umbridge. “Of course, Madam Undersecretary. I would hate to be remiss in asking any questions this illustrious body might have,” he nodded to her, knowing what was coming for the woman.

He turned back to Lupin who was looking uncomfortable at this new line of questioning. Harry smiled reassuringly at him and asked a question no one had seen coming. “Professor Lupin, who is Harry Potter to those assembled here in the courtroom today?”

Lupin also looked at him in confusion, but he had to answer because the Fury’s magic was pulling on him. “Harry Potter is the Savior of the Wizarding World. He has saved the lives of most people in this courtroom and our society as a whole for bringing down Voldemort when he was 15 months old, stopping his return when he was 11 years old, also when he was 12, he struck a blow to Voldemort’s forces at 15, and he killed the Dark Lord and brought his followers to justice at 17 years old. We all collectively owe him a life debt.”

Harry smiled even as his eye twitched slightly at really not needing to hear his deeds that dramatically and bluntly explained. He had really hoped to get to the life debt though and was happy he didn’t have to ask more leading questions to get there. “And, as a known associate of Harry Potter’s, can you please tell us who Vernon and Petunia Dursley are to Harry Potter?”

Now, Lupin was catching on and smirked a very Snape-like smirk that had his amber eyes flashing. He had been dating that man too long, Harry concluded. Lupin spoke louder so all could easily hear. “Vernon and Petunia Dursley are Harry Potter’s aunt and uncle who viciously abused him his entire life.”

There was yet again a collective gasp in the courtroom. Harry surreptitiously looked to the back of the room where he knew Molly and Arthur Weasley were sitting to watch the trials.

He smiled slightly at seeing the murderous gleam in Molly's eyes. That was one person on his side at least even if there weren't any others, which it seemed there were actually many based on the shocked mumblings throughout the room and the violent scratching of quills from the press section.

"Professor Lupin," Harry began again kindly. "Do you know the extent of the abuse Harry Potter faced at the hands of his relatives?"

"Yes, I do," Lupin grimaced and gave Harry a very sad look.

"And sir, what do you believe a just punishment would be for these people who harmed a child under their care?"

"A slow and agonizing death, probably ending with a dementor's kiss," Lupin's eyes flashed amber violently.

Harry rolled his eyes at Lupin's expected and over-the-top response. "Were Vernon and Petunia Dursley given a slow and agonizing death ending with a dementor's kiss?"

"No," Lupin answered simply leaning back in his chair and causing the steel chains to clank ominously around him. "Both Dursleys are currently in medium security at Azkaban with limited exposure to the dementors."

Harry gave a short nod before addressing the assembled courtroom. "I have a problem here, Madam Undersecretary and assembled Wizengamot," Harry spoke to the judicial body. "A life debt has been called into question. By the laws of Magic, everyone here is under this debt. If fulfilling the debt requires a slow and agonizing death for these people and they were given a much, *much* lighter sentence, then I cannot by the laws of Magic punish anyone for an act of violence against them. Actually, I could punish them for *not* fulfilling their debt. However, I also cannot re-try any past cases as that would fall under double jeopardy. So, whether Remus Lupin attacked these people in the past is not even a question I can ask as it's not relevant to these proceedings. The question is: why did no one else?"

Everyone in the courtroom looked very nervous at the rhetorical question, hoping it didn't become an actual question to them. "Remus Lupin, I hereby declare you on my authority free to go," Harry turned to the man as the chains fell from his hands loudly.

Remus was the last prisoner of the day. Everyone started to shuffle around as if preparing to go. "I'm sorry all, please bear with me a moment longer. We have one last trial today," Harry spoke to the courtroom causing Madam Bones to look at him, raising a questioning eyebrow. "I asked each and every prisoner why they were arrested and almost every single one of them answered with an illegal reason for arrest. This must be dealt with before we break for the day. I hereby arrest and call to trial Madam Undersecretary Delores Jane Umbridge!"

There was an uproar in the courtroom when the aurors stepped forward and arrested and led Madam Umbridge to the defendant's chair as she shrieked and protested the entire way. When the chains bound her to the chair, Harry stood in front of her with his arms crossed. He gave her a sweet, little smile. "Madam Umbridge, did you issue the arrest warrants for any of the people on trial today?"

"Yes," she forced out between clenched teeth.

"How many?" Harry expanded with a small smirk.

"All of them," Umbridge glared at him, promising death if the chains were not there.

"Well, well," Harry smiled even more. "That in itself is enough to sentence you to Azkaban; however, I have been at Hogwarts for the past year as many here know, and I have heard some stories about when you taught there two years ago. Some of these stories may be rumor, but if they are true, will land you with a much harsher sentence than illegal arrests, so we must address them." Umbridge paled at this admission.

"So...Madam Umbridge, have you *ever* tortured an underaged child with a blood quill?"

The courtroom was in upheaval once more but quieted quickly to hear the answer. "Yes, yes I did," Umbridge ground out between clenched teeth.

“Did you order dementors out to a muggle neighborhood to kiss an underage student who had been convicted of no crime?”

“Yes.”

The entire Wizengamot were in a shocked silence as the questioning continued. “Did you attempt to cast an Unforgivable Curse on a student, specifically, the Cruciatus Curse?”

“Yes.”

“Did you illegally interrogate and attempt to interrogate underage students with Veritaserum?”

“Yes.”

“Did you do all of these to the Savior of the Wizarding World, Harry Potter whom you owe a life debt to?”

At this, one witch on the front row actually passed out while many other paled significantly. “Yes, I did,” Umbridge answered with no remorse and only hate in her eyes.

“Because of your admittance to the life debt and your attempt to effectively kill the one you hold the debt to; I am unable to sentence you to anything besides a similar death. I hereby sentence you to the dementor’s kiss, the same you attempted to inflict on the one to whom you owed a life debt,” Harry said with a tired sigh. He really didn’t want to have to sentence anyone to death, but Magic left him no choice in this matter, and he really did believe Umbridge deserved it.

As Umbridge was led out of the courtroom, as one, the assembled group stood and began arguing with each other over everything they had learned that day and over what they

believed the other should have known. The press section were almost bowling people over in their hurry to leave the courtroom and get their articles out before the other papers. After a nod to Madam Bones, Harry tried to make his way out of the courtroom. He had almost resigned himself to just tessering instead of fighting the crowd when he was gathered up into a tight hug by Molly Weasley of all people.

“Thank you, Artie!” She gasped in his ear, holding onto him for dear life. “Thank you for bringing justice to my son Harry!”

Harry returned the hug and smiled back at her. “You’re welcome. I’m sure Harry really appreciates your support, wherever he is.”

Mrs. Weasley wiped the tears from her eyes and gave him a watery smile. “You come and bring Fred and the little one to dinner once this is all over, ok? I want to thank you proper. Oh, and call us Molly and Arthur please.”

“Thank you, Molly,” Harry smiled at her happily feeling like he finally had back another piece of his family. “We will, just as soon as all these trials are over with. Now, I think I need to make a quick exit,” Harry added as he saw some of the Wizengamot members trying to make it over to him through the crowd. He shrugged at them cheekily and immediately tessered away.

Day two of the trials had many of the younger Death Eaters on the docket and those who weren’t believed to have committed the more heinous acts. Someone had tried to move the time of the trial up significantly to keep Harry from attending, probably Scrimgeour, but Madam Zabini, Shackelbolt, Madam Bones, and a few other random ministry officials all sent him owls with the new time. Harry laughed at the flurry of owls making sure he was able to attend the new trial.

The second day went similar to the first, though this day actually did have more Death Eaters who had committed legitimate crimes. Bearing the mark in itself was not a crime, so a few, very young, marked Death Eaters were released with warnings since they had yet to commit any actual crimes in the Dark Lord’s service. It pained Harry to have to sentence some of his

former schoolmates, no matter how deserved. He saw Bulstrode, Crabbe, Goyle, and Marcus Flint all heading to Azkaban for using Unforgiveables on innocents.

Draco's trial was also on the second day. He looked confused when he was chained to the chair in front of the friend he saw as a brother. "Draco Lucius Malfoy, are you now or have you ever been a follower of Lord Voldemort?" Harry asked.

"No," Draco responded proudly.

Knowing Lucius and Severus were on trial the next day, Harry deviated from his questions some. "Did your father insist you become a Death Eater?"

"Yes, he did."

"What did he do when you refused?"

Draco shifted uncomfortably. "He held me under the Cruciatus Curse for a very long time. I- I don't really know how long."

"How did you escape?" Harry asked, pacing in front of his friend but giving him an encouraging look.

"My godfather had given me an emergency portkey. I used it to get away and get to him. He patched me up and took me to a friend's house to stay where it would be safe," Draco responded.

"Why didn't he take care of you himself?" Harry stopped and looked at Draco with a reassuring smile.

Draco smiled back slightly. "For two reasons, first he is my godfather, so that's the first place my father would look for me. Second, he was a spy in the Dark Lord's ranks. It would put his

position in jeopardy if he refused to turn me over when asked.”

Harry smiled once more, thankful that Draco had thought to mention his dad was a spy. “Who is your godfather, Mr. Malfoy?”

Draco proudly said loudly into the courtroom. “Severus Tobias Snape!”

Over the murmurs in the room, Harry returned to Draco. “Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Malfoy. Your words will be taken into account in the upcoming trials of Lucius Malfoy, where we will be adding the charge of child abuse and casting an Unforgiveable, and Severus Snape which will happen tomorrow. You are free to go.” The chains fell from Draco’s arms, and he happily rushed away to where Pansy was sitting in the back of the room, still pale in fright.

Finally, day three of the trials began. That morning, Harry was also met with a flurry of owls even larger than the day before informing him of the new time and location of the trial. These trials would be of some of the suspected inner circle of Death Eaters. Harry kissed Castor and Fred, hugged Remus and Draco, and steeled himself for the difficult day ahead ahead of him.

Harry faced Lucius Malfoy with fire in his eyes. He disregarded his normal questions as not even worth his time and instead stared with “How many people have you murdered?”

The courtroom gasped. Lucius gritted his teeth. Harry wasn’t sure if he was trying to not answer or what. There were long moments of silence before Lucius opened his mouth and answered. “None.”

Harry raised an eyebrow in shocked surprise, and the courtroom was silent. It only took a few seconds before Lucius Abraxas Malfoy slumped into the chair, dead. He chose death over a return to Azkaban and an assured dementor’s kiss. He was the first, but not the last of Voldemort’s inner circle to make this decision. With each prisoner, as he had with Lucius, Harry explained very clearly the consequences of lying to him. Magic did not show mercy when they made their choice. Harry was sad they weren’t tried for all their crimes, but it was the eventual punishment they faced anyway.

Harry was highly pleased that Peter Pettigrew did not take the easy way out when his trial began. The assembled public were shocked that the man was even alive, more shocked when he admitted to betraying the Potters, and sickened by all his admitted crimes. Pettigrew was not only sentenced to the dementor's kiss, but Harry also posthumously cleared Sirius Black's name at the end of the trial. Harry had to pull himself together to keep going after that and not fall apart in tears. He glanced over to where Remus was sitting in the gallery and saw a teary look of thanks. He gave Remus a quick nod and smile before forcing himself to turn back to the trials.

It wasn't until Severus Snape was led into the courtroom that the Minister of Magic rose from his chair once more. "You cannot try this case. You are biased for your own father," he said pompously.

"Bias does not exist with Furies," Harry explained with an angry glint in his eyes towards the minister. "You will all hear my questions and the answers, you are allowed to suggest more questions just as I have asked you for every prisoner, and you are allowed to contest my judgments, as you have been allowed with every prisoner. So far, all my questions and judgments have been deemed fair and legal. Therefore, there is no bias."

The minister really had nothing he could say to this and slowly sat back down as Madam Bones glared at him and Dumbledore glared at Harry. Harry ignored them and turned to his father. "Severus Tobias Snape, you have already been tried as a Death Eater and exonerated of all charges in the first war as a spy for the light. This court cannot address any of your actions covered by this first judgement by the law of double jeopardy."

Harry's father seemed to let out a sigh of relief. Severus had heard from the guards' discussions that Harry's first question was usually if someone was or had ever been a Death Eater. "Now," Harry continued. "From that trial we know you were once a Death Eater that had turned spy for the Light. You were already pardoned for all your actions in maintaining that role. Since your trial, did you remain a spy for the Light in Voldemort's forces?"

"Yes, I did," Severus said, a calm and serene mask on his face that Harry knew was covering a great deal of stress and anxiety.

“Did your reports on Voldemort’s forces and actions save innocent lives since he returned to power?”

Snape paused and stared at his son, not knowing where his questioning was going. “Yes, my reports did save lives, how many though, I do not know.”

“Did you put yourself into life threatening situations in order to obtain these reports?” Harry smiled at him.

“I did,” Snape agreed simply.

“Were you tortured as part of Voldemort’s forces?”

“I was.”

“Professor Snape, let me sum this up. You put yourself in life threatening situations where you were dealt significant pain in order to obtain information that saved many people’s lives. Am I correct in this conclusion?”

Snape stared at his son for a second still not seeing where he was going with this. “Yes, you are correct.”

Harry turned towards the Wizengamot. “Do you have any questions for the hero chained in front of us?”

There were grumbles as people tried to come up with a question that would negate what the potions master had said and which wasn’t covered from his first trial. “Hearing no questions,” Harry said after a couple seconds. “I hereby release Severus Tobias Snape from custody and recommend him for the Order of Merlin First Class. It is not in my power to bestow it, but my recommendation should have some weight. Thank you for your service to our nation, Professor Snape.”

As with Remus Lupin, Severus Snape was the last on trial for that day. Just as with that trial, Harry was not finished though. "I have one more person to call for trial today," he called out to stop everyone from packing their things. "I hereby arrest and call to trial one Albus Percival Wolfric Brian Dumbledore for the charges of child endangerment and accessory to kidnapping."

With a lot of the people Harry had questioned, he knew most of the answers he was going to get to his questions already, with Dumbledore, he really wasn't sure what he was about to get. This announcement also produced the most outrage of anything that had occurred so far in the courtroom (and Greyback had been tried just a couple days before). Harry just waited it out though as an auror led the head of the Wizengamot to the defendant's chair and the chains wrapped around the old headmaster's hands.

Finally, Harry looked Dumbledore in the eyes and was met with a glare of intense hatred. Well, that wasn't exactly what he had expected, defiance, pride, confusion, even that grandfatherly twinkle, but not hatred. Harry pulled on every ounce of Gryffindor courage and Slytherin cunning as he crossed his arms and stood firm in front of the most powerful wizard in the room.

"Headmaster Dumbledore, I must start with a question that I really hope the answer to is 'no,' but it must be asked since you were the one responsible."

Now, Dumbledore was looking at him with some confusion. Good, that was better than hatred, Harry thought. "As it seems you were the one who placed Harry Potter with his relatives, were you aware that he was being abused under their roof?"

The courtroom seemed to hold its breath. "Yes," Dumbledore glared in sheer blazing hatred at the Fury in front of him.

Harry let out a sigh of disappointment and let go of the last ounces of trust he had in the man. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Remus pulling Severus back down into his seat where he had sat to see the last trial. "Why then? Why did you leave him there?" Harry asked, more for his own knowledge than the trial.

Dumbledore gritted his teeth, trying not to answer. “To toughen him up,” he finally said. “He needed to lead a hard life and be dependent on me and the school if I was going to mold him into a weapon to defeat Voldemort.”

That opened a whole new line of questioning for Harry as pieces started to click together from his past. “Professor, did you devise any tests for Mr. Potter while he was in school? Maybe ones to test his courage or to place him in dangerous situations to see how he would handle them?”

Dumbledore glared a death glare at the young man. “Yes, I did. I left Quirrell in the school when I knew Voldemort was possessing him and led the boy to save the philosopher’s stone from him. I kept the school open when the chamber was opened by Voldemort to see how long it would take him to put the pieces together. I didn’t protest when he was entered into the Triwizard Tournament, and I purposefully kept him in the dark in his fifth year to see how he would deal with his visions from Voldemort.”

Harry was now glaring at the old man who had controlled almost his entire life. At a glance, he could tell that it was all Remus could do to keep his dad restrained in the gallery. “So, you admit to keeping the school open intentionally when there was a basilisk roaming the halls which had already petrified several students?”

“Yes.”

“Between the knowledge of child abuse that you by law should have reported, willingly keeping your students in danger by not addressing the issues of Voldemort possessing a teacher...and a basilisk, I believe we can say that child endangerment is an easy case. Correct?” Harry asked rhetorically but did look up to the rest of the Wizengamot to see heads slowly nodding all around in shock. Many of them had children at the school and had no idea what had happened.

“Now, kidnapping. Did you knowingly, set up Severus Tobias Snape, Draco Lucius Malfoy, and my son, Castor Markus Harrison Snape to be kidnapped by Voldemort and his followers?”

There were murmurs around the courtroom as no one else had made the connection of the kidnapping to Dumbledore. The headmaster looked at the Fury, and this time answered in

resignation. “Yes, I did. And, it led to the death of Voldemort, so you’re welcome.”

“Ah,” Harry nodded. “Yes, luckily Harry Potter did show up and defeat Voldemort after they were kidnapped. You didn’t know that was going to happen though. Effectively, you sacrificed them on the chance that I, a Fury sworn to protect, would show up and save them. You didn’t know that I would or that I could save them. You sent my family, my son, to their deaths in hopes that it would work out. Did you not, Mr. Dumbledore,” Harry asked, intentionally dropping all the man’s titles.

“Yes, I did.”

“I find you guilty of the crimes of child endangerment and accessory to kidnapping as well as attempted murder. Any further questions from the Wizengamot before I sentence this man?” Harry turned to the gathered body who all looked sufficiently cowed as they saw one of their heroes fall.

“I have a question, Mr. Snape,” Madam Bones raised her hand.

“Yes, Madam Bones?” Harry acknowledged her.

“Would you please ask the *former* headmaster if he purposefully tried to get Professor Snape arrested on false charges?” She said, glaring back at Dumbledore who had turned his gaze to her. “Also, could you ask if he intentionally kept Sirius Black from having a trial?”

“With pleasure, Madam Bones,” Harry smiled at her. “Mr. Dumbledore, did you knowing tell the aurors that Severus Snape was not a spy hoping that information would get an innocent man arrested?”

“Yes!” He spat at them both.

“And, lastly, did you knowingly send Sirius Black to Azkaban without a trial?”

“Yes,” Dumbledore almost groaned out.

“Why?” Harry asked, again, for his own knowledge more than the trial.

“Harry had to go to his relatives. Black would have pampered the boy and raised him to stand up for himself. I couldn’t have that happen. Harry had to be prepared for when Voldemort returned,” Dumbledore explained tiredly.

It took Harry several seconds warring with himself internally to not show any emotion at this on his face. It was all he could do to remain the disconnected and professional Fury. He held it together though and stood commandingly in front of the courtroom. “Very well, I sentence you for child endangerment, accessory to kidnapping, attempted murder, giving a false report to the aurors, and human rights violations for denying a trial to an innocent citizen resulting in his incarceration of 12 years. For this, you are sentenced to life in prison in the maximum-security level of Azkaban. I strip you of all your titles, and the contents of your vault at Gringotts will be confiscated to fund programs combatting child abuse in the wixen world. If no program exists, then the funds will be used to start one. Madam Bones, I believe you can work out those details?” She nodded.

“Court is adjourned for the day then,” Harry proclaimed as the aurors came to take Dumbledore away.

The old man leaned closer to the Fury as he passed, his eyes sparkling in knowledge and anger. “*You* are Harry Potter,” he hissed as he stared searchingly at the teen’s face.

Harry smirked at the man. “I am Arcturus Severus Snape. Anyone in this courtroom can tell you that.”

The auror holding Dumbledore snorted and pushed him forward. “Yeah, he doesn’t even have a lightning bolt scar,” the man added as he pushed the protesting prisoner out the door.

At that, Harry collapsed into his father's arms and grabbed onto Remus, tessering the entire group back to Hogwarts before breaking down.

Everyone was waiting in Harry's rooms: Draco, Pansy, Fred, George, Dobby, Aurelia, Julius, Blaise, Hermione, Ron, and Castor. They hadn't gone to court because no one felt they could sit through the trials of the Death Eater inner circle, even if they wanted to support Severus. They had all waited together though to hear the news. As Harry cried on his father's shoulder everyone looked to Remus questioningly.

He took a deep breath. "He had to question Dumbledore today. It was rough. Even we didn't know the extent of all the man had done. Sirius Black was exonerated after Pettigrew's trial, and apparently, Dumbledore sent him to prison without a trial knowingly. Also, the inner circle...it was bad. Many of them chose death by breaking the vow of truth instead of going to prison. Those that did go to trial, we had to hear all of their crimes, some in explicit detail."

"My father?" Draco asked in a tone that was a mix of fear and relief.

Remus nodded. "He was the first to choose death over prison or the kiss." Draco looked more relieved than anything else at this statement.

When Harry started to calm down, Aurelia passed her grandson to him. The baby cuddled into his chest as Harry finally took in everyone who was in the room. "Is it finally over now?" He asked the room.

"Yes, son. It's over," Severus assured him, still with his arms around Harry.

"What now then? What do I do?" He asked, not really knowing what was supposed to happen now that Voldemort was gone. That had always been such a huge part of his life.

"You live your life and raise your son," Julius told him with a knowing look.

“You live,” Fred added as he kissed the top of Harry’s head.

Epilogue

Chapter Notes

Thank you all for sticking with me through this fic!! I love that an early story of mine is getting some new life! You all are amazing readers and commenters!

The morning after the trials finally ended, Harry woke up extra early and disentangled himself from Fred's limbs. No matter how they originally went to sleep, somehow it always ended up with Fred wrapped around him like an octopus in the morning. He sleepily made his way over to Castor's room to check on him. His son had really only been sleeping in his own bed for a few weeks, and Harry missed him at night, even though he had Fred as a constant presence now.

Harry opened the door to the nursery and clutched his chest, almost having a heart attack before he remembered that everything was fine and there was no cause for alarm. A glowing phoenix stared at him as if he was calling the Fury an over-dramatic idiot. "You know that's pretty creepy, Fawkes, you just sitting there and staring at Castor, even if you call yourself his nightlight."

Fawkes gave him a glare and then looked pointedly into the crib. A tiny, chubby hand had hold of one of his tail feathers tightly. Harry snorted. "Like you couldn't get out of that if you wanted. He's only one."

Harry and Pansy had found a handy spell to break Dumbledore's familiar bond on Fawkes even before the trials began. They had called the phoenix into their rooms and taken care of it without Dumbledore even knowing. Interestingly, as soon as Fawkes's bond was broken, he immediately bound himself to Castor. Harry had just shrugged, laughed, and welcomed another magical creature into their family.

Harry left his sleeping son under the watchful gaze of his phoenix nightlight and wandered into the kitchen to cook breakfast. There was no way he was going to brave the Great Hall after the trials, and he thought Dobby deserved a little time off for all his help the past couple weeks. Plus, with Fred secretly staying in the castle most nights, he liked having extra time with his boyfriend in the mornings before he had to floo to Diagon and open the shop.

The pancakes were almost done when a sleepy Fred walked in holding a giggling baby who kept poking him in the nose. “That bloody bird flew into bed with me and woke me up as soon as Castor stirred,” Fred grumbled. “It wasn’t even like he needed to be picked up right then!”

Harry chuckled and gave him a good morning kiss. “Did you change him?”

“Of course,” Fred rolled his eyes with a chuckle. “I don’t leave any wet babies on my watch.”

Harry was just serving the pancakes when Draco pushed open the portrait hole without even knocking. “Well, I always have the best timing. You have enough for me?” He asked as he leaned over Fred’s shoulder and planted a kiss on Castor’s blond curls.

“Sure,” Harry pulled down another plate. “You’re up early for someone who hates mornings more than anything on this planet.”

Draco leaned casually against the counter as he accepted his plate of pancakes. “Well, I figured there’s no way in hell you are attending classes today, and it’s officially past the quidditch season...So, I challenge you to a broomless seeker’s game. Right now...well, after pancakes,” Draco smirked at him before taking a bite.

“So, you’re going to put your little fluffy wings up against my epically awesome bat wings?” Harry teased and turned back to flip the bacon.

“First of all, Potter, you’ve never seen my wings. And second, I could beat you in a seeker’s game with my eyes closed. You’re just scared,” Malfoy taunted.

“Oh please, Malfoy, I’ll beat you any time, any day, in any weather,” Harry laughed, enjoying the banter. It took him a minute to see the reactions of the others in the room when he finally sat down with his own pancakes.

Fred was looking at him with both fear and amusement in his eyes while Draco had a self-satisfied smirk on his face that desperately needed someone to wipe it off. “Right, what is it this time? What’d I do?” Harry asked, a bite of pancake hovering between his plate and his mouth on the fork.

“Erm, love...” Fred began but didn’t finish since he was gallantly trying to hold in his laughter.

Draco didn’t have the gallantry Fred did though and just laughed outright. “You just confirmed what I already knew,” he responded. “You just answered to Potter.”

“Oh...” Harry said blankly and shrugged. “Erm, I don’t know if I should tell you sorry or that I’m mad at you for tricking me.”

Draco smirked at him and ate another bite of pancake before he responded. “Well...I guess I should tell you that I’m glad you’re alive. You made it pretty obvious, to me anyway, since I was there when you killed the Dark Lord and then swore on your magic that Harry Potter did it. I mean...I’m not an idiot.”

“Please don’t tell anyone else,” Harry said vehemently, really not wanting to deal with it all.

“Again, Potter...or Snape...I’m not an idiot. Of *course*, I’m not going to tell anyone,” Draco rolled his eyes. “By the way, *is* Uncle Sev really your dad? That’s fucking weird if he is!”

Fred punched Draco in the arm for Harry since he wasn’t close enough. “Swear jar, Malfoy!”

“Ow! You don’t even have one in here!”

Fred just held a hand out until Draco reluctantly and with many grumbles finally put a knut in it. “Thank you for doing business with us,” Fred chuckled, getting an eyeroll in return.

“Yes, Draco, Severus is actually my dad. He and my mum had a thing...I really don’t want to think about it. But, yeah, I’m his kid,” Harry sort-of explained with a grimace.

“Well...that’s cool I guess,” Draco said, still rubbing his shoulder. “So, you in? Seeker’s game?”

Harry and Draco did play a seeker’s game that day. They actually played several. It only took two before a crowd from the school gathered to watch. Turns out Draco’s wings weren’t little and fluffy but huge with jet-black feathers. They were pretty evenly matched without their brooms and they each won three games. Draco did get reprimanded, half-heartedly and mostly sarcastically, by Professor Snape for illegally being on the quidditch team and having wings, but it was mainly just because McGonagall was glaring at the man for allowing it. Slytherin hadn’t won the cup anyway, so no one really complained.

The school year finished out strong with less drama than many others. There were some administration issues since Professor McGonagall refused to take the role of headmistress. She claimed that she didn’t deserve the role since she hadn’t caught what Dumbledore was doing all these years. The other professors tried to persuade her, but she stood strong in her convictions. Next, they tried to get Severus to take the role. He and Remus had already decided to open an apothecary together though. Severus would do all the brewing, and Remus would handle the business and the customers. Finally, Professor Flitwick took up the mantle of headmaster, and was already becoming universally loved.

Graduation was a festive occasion with the war over. Aurelia and Julius came to sit in the seats reserved for Harry’s family since Severus and Remus had to sit with the professors. They were also kind enough to babysit Castor so Harry could attend the all-night blow-out party hosted by Gryffindor house with everyone from their year invited.

After graduation, Draco and Pansy went all of three weeks before getting married. Blaise was best man, but Harry stood as a groomsman as well. Both of them marveled at the fact that they went from bitter rivals to Harry being in Draco’s wedding party.

Blaise and Hermione did eventually end up getting married, but it was several years after Hogwarts ended. Hermione did also eventually meet Madam Zabini, and they scarily became

best of friends almost immediately. No one really asked Hermione how she got past the whole killing husbands thing. Considering Madam Zabini and Winky frequently invited Harry, Castor, and Dobby to Disney with them or to beach vacations with the whole family, Harry just kind of didn't ask questions on his part and really liked the woman. Castor *adored* her and called her Zabby, which she surprisingly loved and insisted on ever since.

Draco and Pansy both took over Lucius's import/export business and worked to make it legitimate and completely legal from the very shady business it was before. It took quite a long while. Blaise eventually also joined them as head of security after doing his apprenticeship in defense. The three of them turned the business into even more profitable than Lucius had made it.

Hermione and Harry both decided to study law. They were both apprenticed to lawyers in Diagon Alley and met up for lunch most days. Sometimes, Ron would even join them if he had time off from the auror academy. Hermione was studying criminal law and Harry went with his original plan of child advocacy. It only took them three years to finish their apprenticeships and they ended up opening a firm together in Knockturn Alley surprisingly.

Fred and George's business continued to boom, and they were some of the best customers for Severus and Remus's new apothecary. Fred never did let Severus convince him to do his mastery in potions, but he did stop by the apothecary and brew with the man about once a week when he was able to get away. Severus turned out to be much more relaxed brewing when there weren't 11-year-olds trying to blow up a cauldron and prank each other.

Castor thrived with his family as he grew. He definitely hit his terrible two and three and fours...but he was always the sweetest little boy. Aurelia and Julius took him on occasional trips to the Selkie island and taught him to swim in his seal skin. Harry loved to watch him play in the water though it terrified him as well. Unfortunately, they found out very early that Castor would never be accepted into Hogwarts since he was not a wizard and did not have the same kind of magic. While his dad and grandads were upset at this, they discovered that Beauxbatons actually had excellent programs and was vastly more accepting of magical creatures anyway. Headmaster Flitwick swore he was working on it though, he insisted that by the time Castor was 11, Hogwarts would welcome him if it was the very last thing he did. So, Harry and Fred promised to give Castor the choice of which school he would rather attend and be accepting of whatever choice that might be when the time came.

Right after Harry's first year as a legal apprentice, he and Fred decided it was time to finally make their relationship official. Technically, Fred turned Harry's hair multiple colors, spelled all of Harry's quills to include hearts in whatever he was writing, and taught Castor to say, "Marry Uncle Fred, please." Castor's part ended up being more like "Mawy, Unca Fwed, pwease."

The wedding day finally rolled around, and Remus and Severus were helping get Harry ready, which really meant that they were all sitting in Arthur Weasley's study and drinking glasses of scotch. Fred and Harry both wanted the wedding held in the Weasley's back garden like Bill's had been, which had Molly Weasley over the moon. She complained incessantly about the guest-list though.

There had been a bit of a problem with the guest-list. Mainly, Harry had never legally changed his name with the ministry only for business purposes with the goblins. It wasn't a major issue since his Fury powers would bind them regardless, but Fred insisted that he wanted to marry Harry as well as Artie. This meant that their 100-person wedding ended up being cut down to only 25 people who they were sure they could trust with Artie's original identity.

The scotch being liberally poured in the study was because Harry's nerves were frayed, not because of marrying Fred, which he was extremely excited about, but for his friends and family finally learning he had been lying to them essentially for over two years. He was mostly concerned about Hermione. He knew he should have told her before now, but he originally wasn't sure she would keep his secret, and then it had gone so long that it felt awkward and never came up.

"You know they all love you, cub, and they all miss Harry," Remus assured him with a pat to his hand. "They'll understand. Every single person out there has mentioned at some point or another that Harry made the right decision to disappear. That he deserved to live a normal life."

"If they don't understand, I'll gladly hex them for you," Severus offered.

Harry raised an eyebrow, wondering how much scotch his father had drunk and if they should cut him off since he was officiating the ceremony. "I know, it'll be fine..." Harry sighed and took another sip. "Are you two going to tell them about your wedding? It'd be the perfect time."

Severus and Remus had gotten married just a few weeks before in a private ceremony with only Harry, Castor, Fred, George, and of course Dobby and Fawkes. Harry officiated as a Fury, and they learned quickly while planning that wedding that vows were really tricky when a Fury was involved. Severus was officiating Harry and Fred's wedding, not because he was needed, but because he didn't trust his son and future son-in-law to not get poetic or overly romantic with their vows and screw up their marriage by promising unreasonable things to each other.

"We'd never dream of telling anyone on your day. Today is all about you and Fred," Remus scoffed. Harry snorted in amusement. He had once said they would be married for 5 years before telling anyone, and well, they were definitely on that track.

Arthur eventually came to collect them, and they all made their way to the tent in the backyard where Harry happily joined Fred in front of their family and friends. Fred straightened Harry's tie and leaned in close to his ear. "You smell like you fell in a barrel of alcohol, should I be concerned," he joked with a grin.

"Never," Harry grinned, his black eyes flashing in the dimming light as the sun slowly went down. "Just nerves about how much chaos we're about to cause."

Fred just shrugged unrepentantly. "Oh, Harrikins... that's the whole fun of a public wedding, all the chaos we get to rain down on everyone. *I* is our day after all..."

Harry smiled out at all the Weasleys, Hermione and Blaise, Draco and Pansy, Neville and Luna, Julius and Aurelia sitting with Castor, Madam Zabini and Winky, and Professor McGonagall. As much as Harry wanted Hagrid there, his dad and Remus had finally convinced him that it was a really bad idea since the man couldn't keep a secret even when his life depended on it.

"Welcome all," Snape said very sternly and more funeral-like than wedding-like from where he stood by the grooms. Harry and Fred smirked at each other. Snape glared at them but continued. "We don't need an officiator at this wedding because Arcturus is a Fury; however, I'm here to make sure no one promises anything unrealistic in their vows. This is no time for romance."

At this Fred and Harry broke down laughing as well as most of the guests. “No, no, you’re right. Just let’s do this,” Harry laughed as everyone tried to collect themselves.

“Such a romantic,” Fred tried to stop himself laughing.

“*Anyway*,” Snape continued with a roll of his eyes. “We’re using the official Fury vows. So, Frederick Fabian Weasley, do you take my son, Arcturus Severus Snape also known as Harry James Potter as your lawful...”

He had to stop here as there was a deafening uproar from the gathered guests. Snape rolled his eyes and just waited. “What?!” Mrs. Weasley exclaimed standing from her seat. “Repeat that. What did you say?!”

“Harry?” Hermione gasped, grabbing onto Blaise’s arm to steady herself.

“I *knew* it!” Pansy exclaimed with a grin while Draco just rolled his eyes at her.

Harry smiled at them all sheepishly and gave them a tiny wave. “Hi all, er... sorry about that. It’s me...surprise. Just you know, looking a lot different than before.”

“We had to keep Castor safe,” Fred said as an attempt at an explanation. “Please don’t blame Harry. You know how everyone was after him, and he’d never get a normal life if he stayed the Boy-Who-Lived. Castor deserves a normal life if no one else.”

“Good job blaming everything on the kid,” Snape murmured loudly from behind them, almost making the grooms laugh again.

“Thanks, Grandpa!” Castor giggled loudly from beside his other grandparents.

“Wait... who is Castor’s mum? Harry James Potter!” Hermione started in on him, Blaise full-on laughing beside her now.

Ron groaned dramatically on the other side of his friend. “Mione... could you just let them get married first, then start in on the questions?” He finished with an amused smirk at that grooms. He hadn’t been given a heads up that they were going to do this, but he fully approved.

“Wait! So, who all knew and didn’t tell me?” Mrs. Weasley put her hands on her hips and glared at the assembled guests. Remus, George, Ron, Aurelia, Julius, Castor (both hands up and waving them around laughing), and Draco all raised their hands nervously.

“Ron!” Mrs. Weasley and Hermione both accused him indignantly.

“Mum, he asked me not to tell,” Ron complained, turning bright red. “It wasn’t my secret to tell.”

“Fine,” Mrs. Weasley huffed and sat back down where Mr. Weasley patted her hand soothingly.

“I don’t blame *you* dear,” Mrs. Weasley assured Harry even as she still looked perturbed. “I would do the same to keep one of my kids safe.”

Harry was so confused if everyone was angry or happy or what, and it looked like most everyone else was too. Eventually, Professor McGonagall cleared her throat. “So...vows?”

“Oh, and Dad and Remus got married three weeks ago!” Harry exclaimed suddenly, with a huge smile. “There, I’m out of secrets now. Sorry.”

Both Severus and Remus glared at him. “What? They were making me nervous. Now they can corner you two during the reception too and take some of the heat off me and Fred,” Harry shrugged with a smirk.

“George and Angelina are planning to elope in a few weeks and not tell any of you,” Fred added in to help with a loud laugh. While George and Angelina both shot him murderous looks.

“Fleur’s pregnant!” Bill laughingly called from the back.

“Stop keeping secrets from me!!” Mrs. Weasley exploded.

“This reception’s going to be epic!” Harry whispered to Fred happily.

“Best prank ever,” he whispered back with a wink.

“So, Frederick Fabian Weasley do you take...!” Severus yelled over everyone else talking and accusing each other.

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