

Chapter 13

The following morning, Harry walked down to the living room, where the Evanses were getting ready to leave. They were going to visit Lily's grandparents for Christmas Eve. When he met Lily's eyes, they shared a smile while Harry made himself busy helping Cynthia in the kitchen.

"Where did you learn to cook?" she asked curiously as they bustled about the kitchen.

"My relatives," Harry said.

"Oh," Cynthia gasped, covering her mouth with her hand. "I'm so sorry. I should've remembered."

"It's fine," Harry reassured her with a smile. "I actually like cooking."

Placing the casserole in the oven, he stood and found himself being pulled in for a gentle, motherly hug. Smiling, he hugged Cynthia back before they parted and went back to cooking.

Two hours later, They had packed all the food and presents in the car and were on their way to Crawley. Harry sat between Lily and Petunia in the backseat, the smell of pumpkin pie filling the air. Predictably, Petunia gave him a disgusted look and scooted as far away from him as possible in the cramped quarters.

As the scenery flew by outside the window, Harry let his mind wander. Up to this point, he hadn't really accomplished much in the way of dealing with Voldemort. He'd yet to destroy a single Horcrux, and other than turning a handful of Death eaters, including one of his inner circle, he hadn't done much to weaken his forces. Realistically, he couldn't just go around killing and capturing the Death Eaters he knew of without the Ministry coming down on him. At this point, Voldemort had a solid enough grip of the Ministry that they would label him as a vigilante and toss him in Azkaban - if he made it that far - before he could do much.

Harry was coming to realize more and more that, as much as he hated it, he needed to get involved in politics. If he managed to defeat Voldemort again, the last thing he wanted was for his Death Eaters to walk away without anything truly changing like last time.

He needed to find a way to get hold of an ancient house and get a seat on the Wizengamot. Unfortunately, in this time, he couldn't fall back on being head of Houses Potter and Black. There was one house he might be able to claim, however. The house of Peverell had been dormant for over six hundred years since the last daughter of the house had married into the Potter family. Despite that, the house was still one of the Sacred Twenty-Eight and held a hereditary seat on the Wizengamot. If he went to Gringotts and took an inheritance test, it was possible he could claim the house for himself.

With plans to visit Gringotts after Boxing Day, Harry turned his mind to another problem. The Horcruxes. Up to this point, he hadn't gone after them for fear of alerting Voldemort. Right now, he only knew where two of them were for certain. The ring should already be in the Gaunt shack, and the Diadem was at Hogwarts. Lucius was still in school, so Harry doubted Voldemort had given him the Diary yet. The same with Bellatrix, though he doubted that would happen at all now. Likewise, the Locket wouldn't be placed in the cave until Regulus graduated in another two and a half years. The only good news was that Nagini wasn't a Horcrux yet, leaving one less for him to deal with.

Harry was confident he could destroy the Locket without arousing suspicion, but he wasn't sure of the ring. If Voldemort checked on it before Harry could collect the others, he could hide them away in a place he might never be able to find them.

He needed more information, but he just didn't know how to get it. He still had the plan to place a Listening Charm on a Death Eater or two, but that would only alert him to upcoming attacks. If it worked. On the one hand, Listening Charms were easily detected and dispelled. On the other, Voldemort and his Death Eaters were the sort arrogant enough not to bother checking. Harry figured it was a toss-up whether they discovered them or not.

For now, Harry decided to destroy the Diadem and leave the others until he could figure out where they were. The ring, unfortunately, would have to stay where it was. His only option was to try and fight Voldemort off until he could find the rest. Dumbledore might be content to sit in his castle and play the long game, but Harry wasn't willing to do that.

It's time someone starts fighting back, he thought.

A bold plan began to form in Harry's mind. It wasn't enough to fight off their attacks. He needed to find a way to rally the people and get the government to do its bloody job for once.

No matter what he did, however, the fight was still coming.

"You okay?" Lily asked, pulling Harry from his thoughts.

"Yeah, I'm fine," Harry smiled. "Just thinking."

"About what?" she asked curiously.

"I was thinking about starting a business, actually," Harry said, admitting part of his plan.

"Really?" Cynthia asked from the front seat. "What kind of business?"

"Well, I want to start making the Wolfsbane Potion and be able to give it away for free," Harry said. "What I'd like to do is build or buy a greenhouse to grow the ingredients myself to save on cost. I could even hire Werewolves to work there, giving them some work. That's one of the reasons they have a bad reputation. No one wants to hire them, so they end up stealing just to survive.

"I also have quite a few ideas for enchanted products to sell, like the Memory Projector I made for Lily. A ton of people, especially Muggleborns, have been asking me for one at school. I also have ideas for things like cloaks enchanted with protective charms, doormats that stun uninvited guests, and rings that can produce powerful shields."

Harry felt a bit guilty stealing ideas from the twins, but if it would help save lives, he was sure they would understand.

“One of my biggest ideas is to enchant mirrors to act like a telephone,” Harry continued.

“That’s brilliant!” Lily exclaimed excitedly.

Petunia scoffed for his right, but he ignored her.

“If I can get it to work,” Harry said, smiling at her. “Linking two mirrors is easy, and you can buy them in Diagon Alley. Getting thousands of mirrors to work together is going to be extremely difficult. Not to mention I have to come up with a new way of identifying each mirror. It’s not like you can dial a number like a phone.”

“How do the mirrors you can buy now work?” Gerald asked.

“You just say the person’s name,” Harry told him.

“Can’t you just do that?” Cynthia asked.

“I could,” Harry admitted. “The problem is, anyone with your name could call you anytime they want. That’d work for most people, but it would get annoying fast if you’re famous, like a Quidditch player or a singer.”

“Maybe you could add password protection for people that need it,” Lily suggested.

“That would work,” Harry said, turning to Lily with a grin. “It would keep costs down for people that didn’t need it and make it easier for friends and family to call them. Brilliant. You’re hired!”

Lily and her parents laughed while Petunia huffed and crossed her arms over her chest. Glancing over at her, Harry suddenly had a much better idea for her Christmas present.

After a two-hour car ride, they finally arrived in Crawley and pulled up to Cynthia's parent's house. Her mother, Rose, was a kindly old woman with white hair who walked with a cane. Her father, Mark, looked to be in his seventies with a slightly hunched back, bald head, and an irrepressible grin. Both of them greeted Harry warmly with the rest of the family as they walked inside. For the first time, Petunia let go of her attitude as she hugged her grandparents.

Harry suspected it had to do with the fact they knew nothing about magic, so they couldn't talk about it. Still, he greatly enjoyed talking with the elderly couple. Surprisingly, Mark was a bit of a prankster, moving a sprig of mistletoe all over the house when no one was looking.

Twice, Harry got caught under it, once with Lily and once with Cynthia. He gave Cynthia a peck on the cheek but, feeling mischievous, he dipped Lily and kissed her briefly on the lips to the laughter of the others. Even Rose making some not-so-subtle hints to Lily that they should date couldn't keep the smile off Harry's face.

They stayed for several hours and had a wonderful meal before getting back in the car for the trip back to London.

"Thanks for inviting me," Harry said as they left Crawley. "This is the first Christmas I've been able to really enjoy for years."

"You're welcome, Harry," Cynthia smiled.

"What couldn't you enjoy Christmas?" Lily asked softly.

"Well, last year, I was on the run. Hermione and I spent Christmas hiding in a tent in the Forest of Dean," Harry explained. "The year before that, the house I was staying at was attacked by Death Eaters and burned to the ground. Before that, My friend's dad was attacked, and we

were all worried because Voldemort was back, and the Ministry wouldn't admit it. And before that, I had to go to the Yule Ball, which was a bit of a mess.

"To be fair, that one was my fault," he admitted. "I was kind of immature about the whole thing. I probably would've enjoyed it if I hadn't been feeling sorry for myself."

"That was the year you were forced into the Triwizard Tournament, wasn't it?" Lily asked.

"Yeah," Harry replied.

"What the Tri-"

Gerald's question cut off as he slammed on the brakes, causing the tires to lock up and squeal on the snowy road. Harry caught sight of a large creature with menacing yellow eyes a moment before they slammed into it. Everyone was jolted forward by the sudden deceleration, and the car spun to a stop facing the ditch. Ignoring the pain in his stomach, Harry scrambled to release his seatbelt.

"Is everyone alright?" Gerald asked.

"What did we hit?" Cynthia asked.

"I think it was a deer," Gerald said.

"It wasn't a deer," Harry told him.

"What are you doing!?" Petunia shrieked as Harry crawled over her and opened the door.

"Harry?" Lily asked.

“Stay in the car,” Harry yelled.

Climbing out of the car, he closed the door and cast Locking and Imperturbable Charms.

“What are you doing!?” Lily screamed, frantically pulling the door handle and pushing on the door to no avail.

Harry ignored her and scanned his surroundings. There was no sign of the creature they’d hit, but he recognized those eyes. The hair on the back of his neck stood up as he continued to look around with the headlights from the car the only source of light thanks to the clouds overhead. His instincts screaming, Harry spun around just as a voice sounded out.

“Well, well, well. What do we have here?” Greyback said, his yellow eyes gleaming as he bared his pointed teeth. “A little wizard wants to play?”

Harry readied his wand, only for his eyes to widen in shock as the man changed into a Werewolf in less than a second before pouncing at him with a snarl. The speed of the change, as well as the fact it was almost a week since the last full moon, was shocking. Tossing out a reflexive Banishing Charm, Greyback still managed to reach out and slash his shoulder with his claws as he was knocked aside.

Hissing, Harry grit his teeth and sent a barrage of spells at the Werewolf as it landed. With terrifying speed and agility, Greyback leapt out of the way of every single spell as he charged at Harry once more. This time, his Banishing Charm missed, and Harry dove out of the way, only to be smacked in the chest. He was flung backwards into the car, where he impacted with enough force to knock the wind out of him.

Petunia screamed hysterically while Lily and Cynthia screamed his name. Lily was frantically trying to open the door but couldn’t dispel his Locking Charm.

Scrambling to his feet, Harry turned to face Greyback as he stalked him from the shadows of the hedge. In the darkness, only his malevolent yellow eyes were visible. Taking three long strides, the Werewolf charged at him. Growling angrily, Harry sprinted forward before dropping down and sliding on the wet, snowy road just as Greyback leapt.

Harry swiped his wand, and a fiery whip lashed out from the tip. The thin rope of fire slashed through the Werewolf's left arm above the elbow, his left leg just below the hip, and his right leg below the knee. The limbs dropped to the ground as Greyback let out a howl of rage and pain. Where the Flame Whip had cut, the wounds were cauterized, the hair burning and filling the air with an acrid stench.

Crumpling to the ground and clawing at the road with his only remaining hand, Greyback slowly reverted back to his human form, his eyes glaring up at Harry balefully.

"I'll kill you for this!" Greyback snarled. "I'll gut your intestines and feast on your bones! I'll -"

The rant cut off as a bright red Stunning Hex from Harry's wand slammed into his face. As Harry sighed in relief, he began to feel a sharp pain in his ribs, his back ached, and his shoulder stung horribly.

Lifting his wand, Harry sent off a Patronus to Moody, telling him what had happened. Lily was still screaming his name as he climbed to his feet, his clothes wet and freezing from the slush clinging to them. A quick flick of his wand had the door unlocked and Lily racing towards him. He hissed from the pain in his chest when she wrapped him in a tight hug, causing her to let go quickly.

"Sorry," Lily said sheepishly. "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine," Harry said. "I think it's just a couple of broken ribs."

As Lily's parents approached, Cynthia pulled him in for a soft hug.

“Thank you so much,” she said emotionally. “I don’t know what would have happened to us if you hadn’t been here.”

Smiling, Gerald reached out and squeezed his uninjured shoulder gently.

“W-what – what is that thing?” Petunia whimpered.

“Fenrir Greyback,” Harry said. “He’s a dark wizard and Werewolf known for intentionally turning children. He’s another reason Werewolves have such a bad reputation.”

“Bastard got what he deserved then,” Gerald muttered.

A series of loud pops sounded close by, startling Harry despite the fact he knew they were coming. His wand jerked up reflexively, causing a sharp pain in his chest as he aimed it at the new arrivals. Moody grunted and nodded, his own wand leveled at Harry. Relaxing, Harry looked at the three others with him, Kingsley and Elizabeth Shaklebolt, and a wizard with short black hair and a big bushy beard he didn’t recognize.

“Holy shit!” the bearded wizard exclaimed as he stared down at Greyback.

“Told you it wasn’t a prank,” Moody grunted, kicking the unconscious Werewolf hard before he looked up at Harry. “Alright there, Potter?”

“A little banged up, nothing major,” Harry said with a shrug.

“Anyone else hurt or bitten?” Moody asked, eyeing the rest of the group closely.

“No,” Harry said, shaking his head.

“Liz, check him out while we take care of Greyback,” Moody grumbled. “Or what’s left of him.”

“How do we even cuff him?” the bearded wizard asked while Elizabeth walked up to him with a kind smile.

“Hi, I’m Elizabeth Shaklebolt,” she introduced herself. “I’m going to cast a few spells to see how injured you are, okay?”

Harry nodded, and she waved her wand over him while muttering under her breath. A blue light shone from her wand like a flashlight, showing the bones underneath. Harry felt a bit queasy looking down to see his own skeleton.

“Looks like a cracked sternum and two cracked ribs,” Elizabeth said, canceling the spell.

“Fortunately, the cuts on your arm don’t look too bad, and Werewolves can’t infect through their claws. I can give you a couple of potions to treat you, or you can go to St. Mungo’s. It’s up to you.”

“I’ll take the potions,” Harry sighed.

Elizabeth smiled and pulled two vials out of her pocket.

“You’re as bad as Kingsley. He hates hospitals, too,” she said. “The blue one is a bone-knitting potion you need to drink, and the clear one is Dittany that you need to drip onto your arm.”

Harry nodded and looked over the potions closely before downing the blue one with a grimace.

Certainly tastes like a bone-knitting potion, he thought.

Uncorking the Dittany, Harry tried to apply it himself but had trouble holding his shirt out of the way. Lily stepped forward, took the vial from him, and started applying it to the four gashes

along his shoulder and upper arm. Cynthia watched in astonishment as the Dittany fizzled and the skin knitted itself back together.

“That’s incredible,” she marveled. “Can we get some of that to keep around the house?”

“Probably a good idea,” Harry said. “I’ll pick some basic healing potions up for you when I go to Diagon Alley after Christmas.”

“Thank you,” Cynthia said, “Are you feeling better?”

A bit,” Harry said while smiling at Lily as she finished treating his arm. “My arm’s better, but the bone-knitting potion takes a few hours to work.”

“Still better than the four to six weeks it would take to heal naturally,” Gerald pointed out.

Harry nodded in agreement just as the bearded wizard placed a stone on Greyback’s back, and both of them vanished with the distinctive swirl of a Portkey. Moody and Kingsley shared a quiet word before the two of them approached.

“We need to get statements from everyone,” Moody said. “Potter, you’re with me. Are either of the girls underage?”

“Lily is,” Cynthia answered, motioning to her daughter.

Moody nodded, “We need a parent or guardian present to question her.”

“I’m her mother,” Cynthia said.

“I’ll talk with you first and then your daughter, if that’s alright with you,” Elizabeth said.

“Sir, if you’ll come with me,” Kingsley said to Gerald in his baritone voice.

Nodding, the group broke up with Harry following Moody a short distance away.

“I don’t suppose there’s anyways I could keep my name out of this?” Harry asked.

“Sorry, lad,” Moody said, shaking his head. “The good news is, there’s a ten thousand Galleon reward for capturing that bastard alive. So, what happened?”

Harry spent the next several minutes telling him everything.

“For what it’s worth, you did a hell of a job, lad,” Moody told him. “That son of a bitch mauled a four-year-old last week.”

“Well, he won’t be doing that again,” Harry said with satisfaction.

Grinning, Moody clapped him on the shoulder and walked back over to the other Aurors, who were done with their interviews. They spent a couple of more minutes bagging up the severed limbs as evidence before saying goodbye and Disapparating.

“Wait, how are we going to get home!?” Petunia gasped.

“I’ll take care of it,” Harry said.

Walking to the front of the car, he ran his wand along the front. The panels popped back into place while the engine was mended, and the leaking fluids were sucked back into their proper places.

“Well, I know who I’m calling next time it needs repairs,” Gerald said.

Harry grinned as everyone piled back into the car. Lily took his hand in hers as the car started up, and they resumed the drive back to London.

“Why did you lock me in the car?” Lily asked softly.

“To protect you,” Harry said, then held up his hand to stop her when she glared at him. “You’re good with a wand, Lily. One of the best at Hogwarts, but you’re not ready for someone like Greyback yet.”

“Well then, when we get back to Hogwarts, you’ll just have to train me, so I am ready,” Lily said firmly. “I’m not some helpless princess that’s going to sit by while everyone else is fighting.”

“I know,” Harry smiled.

Lily stared at him for a moment longer before nodding and resting her head on his shoulder. Smiling, Harry kissed the top of her head.

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Christmas morning, they all woke up early to open their presents. Harry had gotten Lily a Two-Way mirror like the one Sirius had given him, while the other he gave to her parents. Cynthia and Lily both hugged him tightly for that. For Petunia, he gave her the Honeyduke’s chocolates he’d originally planned to give her, along with a basic rune carving set that he no longer used.

Looking at the box and realizing what he’d given her, Petunia scowled and glared at him.

“Is this some sort of sick joke?” she spat.

“Petunia!” Cynthia scolded her.

“It’s alright,” Harry said. “I can see why she’d think that. The thing is, Runes draw their power from nature, not the witch or wizard that drew them.”

“So?” Petunia scowled.

“So, it means with the proper knowledge and tools, you can do magic, just not with a wand,” Harry said.

Eyes wide, Petunia looked back down at the box with a look of fear and excitement.

“I’ll be able to do magic?” she asked softly.

“Yep,” Harry grinned. “You can brew potions, too, since the magic is in the ingredients. I’m sure between Lily and me, I’m sure we can get together some books and ingredients for you to use.”

“Won’t she get in trouble for that?” Lily asked hesitantly with a sad look at her sister. “The Statute of Secrecy says that you can’t do magic outside of school unless you have your OWLS.”

“True, but that’s only for wanded magic,” Harry said. “A lot of squibs make a living working with runes and potions. The Ministry doesn’t want Muggles using magic, though, so they make it sound like it’s illegal, even though it technically isn’t.”

“Could – could you show me?” Petunia asked hopefully.

Harry looked over at Lily, who smiled and nodded.

“Sure,” she said. “Come on, I’ll show you my old books.”

Together, the two girls walked upstairs.

“That was very nice of you, Harry,” Cynthia said. “Hopefully, Petunia can get over her dislike of magic now that she can use it herself.”

“I hope so, too,” Harry said.

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Lily and Petunia spent a couple of hours going over the basics of Runes before Cynthia called them down to help with dinner. For the first time since he'd known them, they actually behaved like sisters. Petunia even showed off an old doll she was able to make hover with a simple set of runes.

While Gerald and Cynthia congratulated her, Lily pulled Harry aside and kissed him heatedly.

“Thank you,” Lily whispered with a beaming smile.

“You're welcome,” Harry said.

“Lily, can you check the food in the oven?” Cynthia called from the kitchen.

“Coming,” Lily said.

Turning to Harry, she pulled him in for another passionate kiss before turning around and heading for the kitchen. Grinning, Harry followed behind at a leisurely pace.

After another amazing dinner, they all sat and talked for a while until they were interrupted by an owl flying in the window. The owl, carrying a copy of the Daily Prophet, flew over to Lily. Slipping five Knuts into the pouch on its leg, she took the paper and opened it up. Harry tensed, knowing that evening editions, especially on Christmas, wouldn't be sent without a big headline. He relaxed slightly when she smiled.

"What is it?" Harry asked.

With a big grin and a twinkle in her eyes, Lily turned the paper around so he could see it.

Hero of Hogsmeade Claims Greyback Bounty

Groaning, Harry fell back in his seat and buried his face in his hands.

"Oh, that's wonderful," Cynthia said while Lily giggled. "You keep a copy of that and have it framed. It's not every day you're on the front page of the newspaper."

If you only knew, Harry thought as he exchanged a look with an amused Lily. Before Harry could say anything else, more owls began to arrive. The first was a letter from the Ministry, telling him that his reward for capturing Greyback had been deposited in his vault. The other letters, of which there were more than a dozen, were thank you letters from people who had been affected by the despicable Werewolf.

The two that meant the most to him were the one from Remus and the one from the parents of the four-year-old that had been attacked just a week earlier. That last one even contained a handmade card from the girl, Amanda.

"Oh, that's so sweet," Cynthia gushed while Gerald and their daughters helped him go through all the mail.

“I much prefer this,” Harry said, holding up the card, then pointed at the newspaper, “than that.”

Seeing those letters made him all the more determined to do something to help Werewolves in Britain. Running upstairs, he made a dozen copies of the instructions for the Wolfsbane Potion. When he came back downstairs, Lily and, surprisingly, Petunia helped him write replies, all of which contained a copy of the instructions. The potion was expensive, and most would be able to afford to brew it constantly, but at least this would give them the option.

“Gerald,” Harry called when they were done. “Would it be alright with you if I put some wards around your house tomorrow?”

“Do you really think that’s necessary?” Cynthia asked worriedly.

“Probably not,” Harry admitted. “But I’d rather be safe than sorry. It doesn’t take long to put them up, and you won’t even notice they’re there.”

“It’s probably a good idea,” Lily added.

Gerald and Cynthia shared a look before they nodded.

“Alright,” Gerald said.



Later that night, as Harry lay in bed thinking about ways to discover the location of the Horcruxes when Lily snuck in the door.

“Hey,” she said.

“Hey,” Harry smiled.

Climbing onto the bed, Lily crawled over the top of him and straddled his waist. With a coy smile, she bent down and kissed him passionately. As their tongues danced, Harry let his hands slide down her sides to cup her full, heart-shaped bum. Lily moaned into his mouth and kissed him harder. With one hand caressing her rear, Harry’s other hand slid up and slipped under the hem of her shirt.

At first, Harry just ran his fingertips lightly over the smooth, bare skin of her sides and stomach. As they continued to kiss, he trailed his hand further up under her oversized shirt until he brushed the swell of her breast. When Lily showed no signs of stopping or protesting, he gently cupped her warm, soft mound, his thumb caressing her hardened nipple. With another moan, Lily nibbled at his bottom lip.

Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. Lily gave a start and turned towards the door as it opened while Harry jerked his hands clear of anyplace inappropriate. Both of them blushed heavily as Cynthia smirked in the doorway. Looking anywhere but at her mother, Lily climbed off of him and sat on the edge of the bed.

“When I said it was time for bed, I meant the one in your room,” Cynthia said.

“Mum,” Lily whined embarrassedly while Harry felt heat radiating from his face.

“I’ll give you a minute to say goodnight, but don’t stay too long,” Cynthia warned.

Pushing off the doorway, she walked down the hall but left the door to Harry’s room wide open.

“We’ll finish this later,” Lily whispered.

With one last demanding kiss, she hurried out of the room and closed the door behind her. Harry rubbed his face as he lay back on the bed, a prominent, throbbing bulge in the front of his pajama pants.

“Bloody hell,” he grumbled.