

As Harry walked down the corridor to the Minister's office, people just moved out of the way to let him pass. Not that they needed to, he didn't have a particularly unpleasant disposition, at least no worse than his time at Hogwarts, and if any of them tried to strike up a conversation, with few exceptions, he'd be happy to speak with them. The difference was that these days his reputation preceded him.

After bringing a final end to Tom, he was hailed as the Man-Who-Conquered. *A lovely little epithet that brought me nothing but trouble. Even more than the Boy-Who-Lived.* It meant that every displaced Death Eater, power hungry maniac, and would-be Dark Lord viewed him as a target or threat. And at first, he found himself painfully unprepared for the threats that they posed.

By the end of the first year, that changed. After nearly dying in an attack led by Rookwood the Halloween following Voldemort's defeat, Harry spent nearly every waking minute perfecting his magic and his body. He didn't take what most would deem a sensible approach to his improvement, and it put a good deal of strain on most of his closest relationships, but that was a price he decided was worth paying.

It didn't mean he didn't find himself feeling lonely and missing the camaraderie he once had with Ron and Hermione, and his relationship with Ginny, but better that than them being under constant threat. It wasn't that he never spoke with them, but circumstances had left a distance between them that hadn't been there before. Going on seven years later, his willingness to sacrifice meant he was finally Tom's equal, if not better, and the rest of wizarding Britain was fully aware of that fact. *And these days it's not just because of some fluke of magic.*

When Kingsley's secretary saw him approaching, she hurried out of her seat and opened the door for him, looking in she said to the tall man behind the desk, "Harry Potter to see you, sir."

"Yes, I can see that Emily, thank you." There was a hint of amusement as he dismissed the young woman. She waited at the door and watched him as he passed. He resisted the urge to snicker as he sat across from the minister. He coughed to get the young witch's attention, "That'll be all, Emily."

"Of course, Minister, I'm here if you need anything." She said it all in an embarrassed rush, before she shut the door a bit too quickly.

Kingsley chuckled softly, shaking his head, "Do you always have that effect on people, Harry?"

"Only the ones that don't know me." Harry smiled. He always enjoyed his meetings with the minister because he was one of the few people who still treated him almost exactly as he always had. *Could probably count them on two hands with fingers to spare.* Tilting his head back to the door, he asked, "So, when did you get the new secretary?"

"Two weeks ago. Edward was accepted into St. Mungo's program and turned in his resignation."

"And the one before that was Eustace..." He tapped his chin in thought, "I'm starting to wonder if you have some sort of odd fixation on people whose names begin with 'E'."

Kingsley only rolled his eyes, "I'm not the one who hires them, so it's certainly not my fixation."

"A likely cover." They both looked at each other for a few seconds before they chuckled. But, he didn't come there to have a bit of banter with an old friend, he'd been summoned for a reason, "So, why did you need to see me?"

“Who’s to say I didn’t just want to catch up?” Harry just arched eyebrow at that question. Because while it wasn’t the most ludicrous thing he’d ever heard, he was well aware that Kingsley was far too busy to make social calls in the middle of the day, “Fine... fine, you’re right, of course.”

“Who needs help this time?” The only time Kingsley summoned him was when someone else requested his help. The last time it had been the ICW looking for help with a witch in Russia who was making blood sacrifices to appease an eldritch horror. *Though the time before that was the Veela Conclave in France which was far more pleasant... well, at least in the end.* The reason they needed him was no less gruesome considering there had been a rash of disappearances amongst their number, but the company had been wonderful.

“The Magical Congress of the United States.”

Harry furrowed his brow at that, “Well... that’s certainly a new one.” It was rare that anyone outside of Europe requested his assistance. It only happened twice. Once he was needed in Japan and another time in Australia, “Any idea what they need my help with?”

“All they’ve told me is that something was stolen from their Department of Unidentifiable Objects on Saturday... obviously, I can’t tell you what was stolen, and I’d be surprised if they could either, what with the name and all.” *Fair, who could expect them to give much information with a name like that?*

“Then why are they worried about it?”

“Because only a single object was taken.”

“Which means that whoever took it didn’t find the object quite so unidentifiable.” Harry ran a hand through his hair, “Doesn’t sound like much to go on.”

“Which is why they requested you, Harry. Your reputation is well earned, so who else would they ask for?”

With a sigh, Harry knew the answer before he even asked it, “This isn’t really a request, is it?”

Kingsley chuckled at that, “Not that I could make if you refused, but no. Our relationship with the American wizarding government is important and you really are the best man for the job. And besides, it’s not as though a booming Metropolis of the states is going to be worse than the frozen north of Russia, right?”

Harry resisted the urge to groan, “You know, just asking that question means that it’s going to be worse, right Shack? I mean why in Merlin’s name would you tempt fate like that?” The minister simple chuckled louder at that as, resigned, Harry got to the point, “So when do I leave?”

“As soon as you leave the office, there’s a portkey waiting for you.”

“Brilliant...” With that he stood up, “No point delaying then.” He gave a cheeky solute toward Kingsley, “you can count on me, minster!”

The big man didn’t rise to his antics, “I know, Harry. Off with you and I’ll see you soon.”

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As it turned out, no, Kingsley wouldn’t see him soon because the case he found himself embroiled in was far from simple. All that the American Aurors could tell him was that a cube had been stolen, some old

thing that had been tucked away in the Department of Unidentifiable Objects for longer than the Congress made its home in New York. In other words, they had absolutely nothing to go on and it showed. Days turned into weeks, and weeks had already turned into months. All his impressive skills weren't much use if he had absolutely nothing to aim them at, but then in the last week things had taken a turn. People were disappearing.

Granted, that wasn't anything completely out of the ordinary for such a massive city, but the disappearances didn't seem to be happening at random. Each time there was one in the magical world, there was another one seemingly at the exact same time, in the mundane world. And regardless of where it happened, they disappeared without a trace. In his experience, it was rare that such a thing could be considered a coincidence. *And it usually means that someone is either looking for people to experiment on or sacrifice... sometimes both.*

While it was far from pleasant, it did mean that Harry finally had something because magic always left a trace. And while not every disappearance was tied to magic, which confused him on some level, those in their world certainly were.

That led Harry here, and it certainly wasn't what he was expecting. He was on the outskirts of the city, in what was quite clearly an affluent area. The home he was approaching was neatly geometric, a modern amalgamation of as many new things as could be fit into one place. Certainly not the first place he would go looking for a missing magical artifact. There wasn't a single ward to stall his approach, not that it would've mattered much anyway. A part of him wondered if he was wrong, if somehow, he'd found the wrong place. But the trail was undeniable, while there might not be any wards of note, the place had seen magic.

Making his way up to the door, undetectable by even the most discerning eye or magic, it clicked open with a wave of his hand. He kept a wand for show, when in public, but it had long been unnecessary. The electrical lock seemed to fry from the magic rather than opening because of it, but he wasn't complaining either way as it didn't set off any alarms.

Silently he pushed it open and made his way inside. The floor was black marble, while the walls were painted white. The entire house was decorated in greyscale, there didn't seem to be a hint of color anywhere. Dim lights illuminated the pathways as he made his way through the house. He passed the kitchen, the living room and a pair of bedrooms before he came to a set of stairs that led down.

Making his way down, the basement looked as unremarkable as the rest of the residence with one exception. There was an extravagant set of double doors that seemed out of place in the otherwise monochromatic residence. And it was exactly what he was looking for. Because for the first time since entering he found warding. They were etched into the surface, invisible until he ran his hand along them. They stopped anyone who wasn't branded with a specific magical signature from gaining entry. *Clever.*

Breaking them without any notice took only a minute. He was just about to open the door when there was an almighty crash from the other side as though a meteor had just broken through from above. Calmly but very alert, he made his way into the next room. He found himself on a landing, a set of stairs on either side led down to a library filled from wall to wall with books, many of them tomes of the sort that he would expect to see in the Hogwarts library.

The only thing out of place in the room was the gaping hole near the middle of it. There was a rather impressive black walnut table that had splintered into hundreds of tiny pieces in the process. *Shame... whoever did that could've just used the trapdoor.*

It was easy enough to miss, particularly without magic, and nearly as hard to open, so he could understand bypassing it. In fact, considering the hard bit of work was done for him, he just used the newly made entrance instead. Featherlight, he dropped a considerable distance down into a stone corridor. They were polished like glass, and reflected the flickering lights of a dozen torches that ran along their length toward a door.

The door was ornate, engraved with an eagle in flight or at least it had been before it was caved in and pulled from its hinges by an impressive force. *Suppose it could be someone throwing around some rather impressive magic.* But Harry had his doubts. *Because I'm pretty sure that those were left by... fists.* It seemed a rather preposterous thing, but then he could transfigure a person into a newt and back, so who was he to judge?

"Ahrgh!" Over the years, Harry found that pained screams were always a good thing to follow in situations of this sort and this was no different. Beyond the door was another stretch of corridor and at the end a room with a faint green light coming from within. As he approached the room, silent as the dead, there were no more screams, but he was able to make out someone speaking.

"Foolish interloper, your interference will mean nothing! Nothing! My master's plans shall not be thwarted! Watch and marvel as we take another step on the path to ascendance!" Harry resisted the urge to groan. *Why?! Why do they always have to make an overdramatic monologue? I swear it becomes more common every year, too. It's like they all take a class together.*

It only gave him that much more motivation to put an end to whatever nonsense was happening. The room was made of the same reflective stone. The ceiling was vaulted and it almost looked like a temple. *So... cultists of some sort then? Maybe?* The monologuing buffoon had blonde, slicked back hair that vaguely reminded him of Malfoy. H4 had sallow skin, was gaunt, and had a weak chin. He wore black robes trimmed in red to mark him out as the leader amongst the group. *Of course, they're black! You'd think at some point I'd stumble on something a bit more original... at least once!*

He was stood in the center of a dais in front of an altar, his eyes glowing a deep pink as magic swirled about the room. It seemed that he finished his monologuing as Harry entered the room, as he pointed, "You shall be first."

There were ten other conscious people in the room, six of whom appeared to be in a state of trance. They were also marked out by the distinct lack of cultish robes, and the fact they appeared to be in a trance. There were three other cultists, there would've been a fourth if not for being unconscious against the wall. The last person in the room, and he would wager that she was the one responsible for the destruction that he followed in, was beating against an invisible magical wall. *With a shocking amount of strength since she's actually making headway.*

"Yes, come... come the time is here at last." The leader gestured to a teenage girl, probably no more than thirteen who listlessly made her way up the dais. Harry had no intention of anyone being sacrificed though. Jumping into action, the entire process was disappointingly short.

Just to make it at least mildly entertaining for himself, he dropped the veil of death that hid him, and introduced himself, "You know, I love a good sacrifice. But people always seem to forget my invitations. Probably because I tend to ruin them."

Everyone in the room turned to look at him at once, save the entranced sacrifice standing on the dais beside the leader. Even the other uninvited guest stopped trying to batter down what held her at his appearance. The leader, at least of this sect of whatever cult he'd stumbled upon, snarled, "Potter!"

"Seems my reputation proceeds me." Considering he'd never actually been to the states before, he was rather surprised by that. *Should probably investigate. Could very well be some bad actors over at the Congress because they're the only ones who know that I'm here, or at least they're supposed to be.*

"Get him!" The three other cult members raised wands as one. Their spells were fast and bright, and he was sure they would've cause him a great deal of pain if they actually hit him, but he side stepped the first two and batted the third aside with his hand as though it were nothing. To their credit, they didn't cower in fear but kept up their assault. Unfortunately for them, their bravery wasn't going to do them any good.

Harry dipped beneath a spell, and blinked in and out of the world so he was behind the gangly looking cultist on the right. He only touched him, and the man went down like a sack of potatoes. Without even looking he extended out with his hand to the right, the only woman amongst the cultist screamed in agony as her wand exploded in her hand, leaving it bloody and burnt. She tried to run then, but it was a futile effort. There was no spell as she fell to the ground.

The third henchman was big and thuggish in appearance. *Wouldn't surprise me if he was related to Crabbe or Goyle, honestly.* When spells failed, he resorted to attacking Harry head on. He threw a haymaker right at Harry's head. All it took was a deft dodge to avoid it, and brought his fist right up into the man's sternum. There a audible crack followed by a pained groan. The henchman's eyes widened in shock before he sagged. If you looked closely, you could just make out the faint glow of ruins glowing on beneath the skin of his hand as he pulled away.

"Well, that was disappointing. I was expecting more of a fight." That wasn't really true, but it was fun to rile up the leader.

"All of you! Get him!" The thrall that he created, even the one he intended to sacrifice first, approached together.

"Really, you think that's going to work?" He found the tendrils of magic that connected the man to each would-be sacrifice, and he wrested control from him with ease. He didn't even know he'd lost when Harry gave two quick commands, "Stop. Rest." They all went to the cold stone floor, shut their eyes, and did exactly as he said.

"Impossible!" The man retreated away from him, the swirling magic that was there when he entered the room had dissipated and his eyes were now a dull grey and filled with fear, "You will regret this!"

"I really won't..." he watched as the wizard tried and failed to make his escape. Unfortunately for him, apparition wasn't an option, "You didn't think I'd just let you get away did you?"

"But you cast no spell!" As Harry stalked toward the man, he cowered against the altar.

“Not that you saw, no.” He towered over him as the man glared up at him, “Now, would you like to tell me who your master is or are you going to make me do this the painful way?” It would be a lie to call it the hard way, if anything it was easier.

He spat up at Harry before snarling out his response, “I would sooner die! He will destroy you for this interference... this insolence!”

“The painful way, then. Brilliant.” His fingertips touched against the side of the man’s head. His mouth opened in a soundless scream as his face contorted in agony. It only lasted a few seconds before Harry pulled away and the cult member fell back unconscious, “Well thank you for that information, Miles, it was very helpful.”

There was only one other conscious person left in the room, and it only seemed right that he freed her. With the fighting done, if you could really call it that, he got a good look at the captive. She was a young woman, probably in her late teens or early twenties. She had lustrous blonde hair cut just below her shoulders. Her oval face was cute, with full-lips and a button nose. Her eyes were a piercing blue that were looking at him with obvious curiosity.

Then there was her outfit, and despite his experience, it was hard not to blush. Her figure was fantastic, and her outfit did nothing to hide it. If anything, it highlighted it. Between the blue spandex top, with a distinctive red ‘S’ on it, that did nothing to hide her impressive bust and a short skirt that left a tantalizing amount of her long, lightly tanned legs on full display, it was enough to make any red-blooded man’s heart beat a little faster. Though since they were in a cult dungeon, it was probably best not to ogle her. *But Merlin, she wouldn’t be out of place with the veela.*

Approaching her, he reached out a hand and touched what held her back. It shattered like glass, and she made to step away, but he stopped her, “Wait one second, that wasn’t the only thing.” Kneeling, he placed his hand on a runic array at her feet, a rather nasty thing that would’ve sent pain not unlike the Torture Curse through every nerve or her body. They glowed bright as he fed magic into them before they cracked and shattered, “Alright, all good now.”

“Thanks,” there was a distinct note of confusion in her voice, “I’m not used to being held back like that.”

Harry couldn’t help but chuckle, “I can imagine. I saw your handiwork on the way down here... very impressive, by the way.”

“You dealt with these goons like it was nothing and that impressed you?” She snorted out a cute little laugh.

“Well, that door was reinforced with magic... and you tore it straight off the hinges with your bare hands so, yeah, color me impressed.”

“Right, magic, that explains a lot. Kinda figured, but nice to know for sure.” Her eyes bore into his, appraising him, “So, what’d you call yourself then?”

This woman wasn’t magical, but she clearly wasn’t a muggle either, so he saw no harm in telling her, “Harry Potter... nice to meet you.”

She quirked an eyebrow at that, “Just... giving out your real name, just like that?”

“Sorry?”

She rolled her eyes, “Well... I’m Supergirl! It let’s me hide my day-to-day life from people who would use it against me.”

“Right...” Harry had no idea what she was talking about, “That wouldn’t do me much good. I’ve been famous in the magical world since I was a baby, and my reputation has only grown since. There aren’t many wizards or witches alive who haven’t at least heard my name.”

His unexpected ally gave an appreciative whistle, “Wow... didn’t realize I was meeting someone so famous.”

Harry smirked slightly, “Since you need a secret identity, I imagine you’re the more famous of the two of us, Supergirl.”

“Kara,” she corrected him, “My friends call me Kara... and since you just helped me out of this situation, I think that counts.” She paused and considered what to say next but just couldn’t help herself, “So...you’ve really never heard of me before?”

“Not to be rude, but no.” he really wasn’t trying to insult her, but the magical world had a tendency to be isolated and he was an extreme case between his job and his distaste for the media.

“Fantastic...” she huffed and he found it rather adorable, “I stopped an attack in London last week, and a local doesn’t even know about it.”

“In all fairness, I’ve been in the states for two months, and if you weren’t dealing with a magical problem I doubt I would’ve heard about it anyway.” That was enough to make her smile.

“Really keep to yourselves then, don’t you?”

“You don’t know the half of it... particularly in Britain.” They were only just starting to move away from the Victorian Era in some ways, and even that was meeting some resistance, “But since you’re clearly not magical, you wouldn’t know that.” He knew she might take it the wrong way, but he was just too curious, “So what are you then?”

For a long moment, she just looked at him and then she bit her lower lip between her teeth and shook her head as she came to a decision, “Well, you’ve been honest with me, so I might as well return the favor.” She took a deep breath before she explained, “I’m an alien, from the planet Krypton. Our world died, and my parents saved me.”

It took Harry a second to comprehend what she’d just said. *Right, aliens are a thing. Why wouldn’t they be? Think about all the things that happen on this planet that most people don’t even know about. Makes perfect sense.*

“Right... class, uhmm... not exactly what I expected to have as far as an encounter goes.”

“Encounter?”

“You know... close encounters of the whatever kind.” He only knew about that sort of thing from his childhood growing up with the Dursley’s. If he mentioned them to Ron, he could only imagine the confusion, “This is a lot less abduction based than I was expecting.”

Kara giggled, "Well... don't rule it out, we're only just getting to know each other." She gave him a look that nearly made him blush, "You're taking this surprisingly well, you know?"

He just shrugged his shoulders, "I didn't find out I was a wizard until I was eleven, and I managed to take that in stride. You being an alien seems no more outlandish."

Humming her understanding, she looked toward the fallen leader, "So... I take it he's the reason you're here from England in the first place?"

"Not exactly, it's actually because of his master, Clinton Walpole." At her curious look he explained, "He stole something from the Magical Congress..."

"There's a Magical Congress?" It was funny that she found that to be the most troublesome thing she'd learned so far.

"Yes," he confirmed without breaking his thought, "And they want what he took back... even if they don't know exactly what it does?"

"Do you?"

"No... because Miles over there isn't sure himself." He gestured toward the unconscious cultist by the altar, "He's just following orders."

"And this ritual?"

"Is meant to help power the artifact that was stolen." There was an orb built into the center of the altar meant to contain the life essence of each of the abductees.

"And it's not here?" She was understandably disappointed.

"No." And what was worse, he didn't know where to look for it. *Yet. It'll only be a matter of time.* Walpole was understandably secretive, even with his own underlings.

"Which means... there will almost definitely be more abductions." It was clear that this wasn't Kara's first foray into one of these situations. He was working under the assumption that it was the mundane disappearances that drew her attention, and it appeared that he was right. *Just got herself caught up in magic by accident.*

"Probably, yes."

"Great..." The sarcasm was dripping from that one word as she looked him up and down before she nodded her head, "Guess that means we'll be working together for a while."

That caught Harry off guard, "What?" He wasn't used to having a partner. He tried that years ago and he found that they only ever slowed him down.

"You didn't think I was just going to let this go now that I've gotten involved, did you?" That's exactly what he thought. There was a stray thought that he could simply remove the memory from her, but he never cared for that sort of magic. It just felt wrong. *Besides, I can think of worse company to keep while I'm here. And honestly, I have no idea how that would work on an alien anyway.*



Taking his silence as a bad thing, she hurried on, "I mean really, it could be quite helpful for the both of us. You can teach a bit me about magic and how to protect myself from it and..."

"No, it's fine." He cut her off and she stopped with a blush, "I'd be happy for the help."

"Great!" She looked around the room at all the unconscious bodies, "So, should we get them back?"

"Probably, yes, they have quite a few people that are missing them." But the criminals would be going back to the DMLE, the American one of course. That was easy enough as he merely crafted a set of portkeys and stuck them in their hands with a charm.

Within thirty seconds they all disappeared back to the city, and a holding cell. Kara looked at it rather impressed, "And their back to the city? Just like that?"

"Yep."

"Damn... even quicker than flying?"

"But much more unpleasant." He would pick flying every time if it weren't for the convenience.

"What do you mean?"

Offering his arm, he told her, "Hold on tight." That wasn't a problem for Supergirl, her grip was like iron and she seemed surprised that it didn't seem to hurt him. With a quiet pop, he moved to the other side of the room.

Predictably, Kara looked nauseous, and she shook her head, "Right... I get it. Never do that again."

"Only in emergencies, I promise." He managed not to laugh at her reaction because he could remember his own the first time, "Ready?"

Hefting one of the men over her shoulder as though he weighed nothing, she nodded, "Yep." Harry watched as she did it again and he could only shake his head. *This is going to be interesting.*