

Harry found it strange and perhaps a bit disrespectful to stand before the graves of Lily and James Potter. Here he was standing before two parents stealing their son's body whom they gave their lives to protect. But no amount of sacrifice and love has protected their son from the harsh world that he was born into. He hoped the real Harry was somewhere safe or maybe the kid was dead. He didn't know but he cared enough to ask for forgiveness from the kid's parents.

"Though it's not my fault I apologize for what happened to your son. I pray that he is safe and in peace." Harry whispered a prayer, closing his eyes while kneeling before the graves of the two Potters.

He was not exactly a religious person by any stretch and he doubted the dead truly cares for what happens in the present. But he prayed for his peace of mind. When he opened his eyes he felt some relief from the guilt churning in his mind.

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Harry traced his eyes over the finely engraved script on the headstone.

The script could be seen even this late in the evening.

"Unfortunately, the game is rigged in favour of death so we always lose." Harry shook his head climbing to his feet.

He laid a bouquet of fresh white lilies on the grave.

"Rest well." Harry bowed his head as a show of respect to the brave couple who gave their lives to protect their son before taking his leave.

Harry walked out of the cemetery of Godric's Hollow with a lighter heart. Truly, there was nothing he could do for the dead couple other than pray for their son and their souls. The only thing that could come close as a favour to the Potters was keeping their family name and legacy strong. He supposed keeping Sirius out of trouble might also be considered a favour to the Potters. He has been doing all that he possibly could to keep the Potter name in high esteem and nudging Sirius to a more stable life. Even this recent trip to France was a part of that and it seems to have worked wonders on the last Black.

Harry was quite relieved Sirius seem to love spending time with Brigitte. At first, he thought the two were just playing around and limiting their activities to just shagging. So, he was quite surprised when Brigitte returned to London the legal way using an international portkey from the French Ministry. Between the new joke shop and a full-time girlfriend, Sirius was a busy man these days, and most importantly the guy was now more emotionally stable. Harry was confident that in a few more years, Sirius might just recover from the baggage he was suffering because of Azkaban.

Harry gave one last look at the cemetery where many Potters were laid to rest before moving along.

He moved towards the village square where the Memorial statue stands proudly. It was a statue depicting the Potter family. For a moment he wondered why the memorial was out in the open where even a muggle could come across it. Not that he thought the memorial statue would somehow reveal the wizarding world but you can never be cautious enough.

'Maybe the muggles don't think much of a statue in the square.' he thought, keeping his monkey cap firmly on his head covering the scar.

Snuggling into his coat as a cold gale passed him by, Harry made his way toward the former home of the Potters. He passed by many small cottages where a lot of vegetation could be seen. He was not

sure whether these families were magical or muggle but most of the lot looks like small-scale farmers. He earned some curious stares as he walked the streets towards the place where Voldemort fell and the story of the Boy Who Lived truly began. This time, he could feel a sliver of magic as he neared the former hiding place of Potters.

“Hmm... A muggle repelling ward.” Harry hummed as he divined the intention of the magic woven around the broken home.

The former home of the Potters was a mess. It was half burnt with most of the windows remaining shattered. The front door was blown off its hinges and the nearby walls were littered with holes. The gate was the only thing that looked relatively untouched by the tragedy that unfolded in this small cottage. He could even see most parts of the roof were also blown away leaving the cottage open to the elements.

‘They have not even used magic to preserve the structure.’ He thought, noting the wooden parts of the small cottage were rotting away. He suspected the Ministry has left it untouched since the night the Fidelius charm was broken. The hedges around the cottage had grown wild and he could see some creepers taking refuge inside the cottage.

“This place is a total wreck.” Harry muttered, feeling a pinch of gripe seeing the sorry state of the former home of the Potters.

‘Just one more thing that can be laid at the feet of Dumbledore. The man could have at least had the decency of taking the original Harry to his parents’ grave before Hogwarts.’

Walking forward he reached out and touched the gate to the cottage. A wooden board suddenly sprang up with bright golden letters written on it in an elegant script.

‘On the night of 31<sup>st</sup> October 1988, James and Lily Potter lost their lives. Their son, Harry Potter, remains the sole survivor of the tragedy that took place miraculously surviving the Killing Curse. This house remains a monument to the Potters and a reminder of the violence that rendered their family asunder.’

More and more letters of well wishes and graffiti were left behind by many witches and wizards beneath the board. There were even quite a few short messages and poems wishing Harry well, and by the looks of it, many of them were pretty recent. For a moment, he was assaulted by the images of a burning house and the screams of a woman combined with cruel laughter. He was pulled back from that vision when someone came to a stop behind him.

“You came at last, eh.”

Harry frowned at the voice of an old woman greeting him. Palming his wand discreetly, he turned around to greet the woman. His assumption was not wrong as he took in the old wrinkly face and grey eyes of an old woman.

“I saw you at their graves. No one has visited them in all these years. So, when a young man just suddenly visits their resting place and leaves some lilies for them, I knew it must be you, Harry.” said the old woman reaching out with her wrinkly palm and touching his cheek fondly.

“Who’re you?” Harry asked, taking the old woman’s hand gently in his.

“Me? My name is Bathilda. I suppose you may not remember, but you visited me with sweet Lily when you were a babe. How kind she was, your mother. Always cheered this old woman up and she brought you along which always lightened my heart. The poor dear.”

A stray tear fell from her grey eyes which Bathilda wiped away with the back of her sleeve.

Harry's eyes widened and gasped as he connected the dots. "You're Bathilda Bagshot, the author of A History of Magic."

"You look so much like your father but I see you've inherited more of your mother. Yes, I'm that Bathilda Bagshot." she nodded, a fond grin on her lips. "Come. Have a cup of tea with this old lady. I'd love to host Lily's son in my home once more."

Harry was not supposed to stay this late but he accepted the invitation nonetheless. This was Bathilda Bagshot for crying out loud. If there was someone who could bring down Dumbledore's castle of cards then it was this woman. He had all but forgotten about this treasure trove of scandal while planning out Dumbledore's fall from grace. While he was not stupid enough to use this old woman's knowledge about Dumbledore's dark secrets at a time like this, he got the feeling that it'd come in handy in the distant future.

Bathilda's home was a small little cottage just across the street from the old Potter's home. That explains why the old woman was familiar with the Potters. Harry helped the old woman inside by holding out the door.

"Thank you, dear. Come, make yourself at home." Bathilda invited him in.

Harry got a distinct impression that the old woman was all alone. The house was not as well kept as it should be. He could see many of the portraits, furniture, and collectables gathering dust inside the home. He followed the old woman to the kitchen and helped her set the kettle. He did so despite her protest.

"Sit down now." Bathilda pushed him into a couch while she straightened her back against a cushy chair with a hot cup of tea in her hand.

Harry took a sip from his cup and felt the warm liquid flow down through his system. He hummed appreciatively as he could feel a surge of energy within him.

"These tea leaves are good ma'am." Harry raised his cup towards her.

"It is, isn't it? It's a special blend. I have the owl address somewhere around here if you like it so much. You can have them delivered once a week or a month."

"Thanks. I'd appreciate that." Harry nodded.

"Tell me, young man." Bathilda scrunched her eyebrows together as a serious look overcame her placid features. "Why did it take so long for you to pay your respects to Lily and James?"

"I didn't even know they were buried here. Dumbledore had me imprisoned at my aunt's home. They are muggles that hate anything related to magic. I was only able to come here because Sirius is free from Azkaban and I've so far avoided Dumbledore's claws."

"That vile cretin! Even now he sows loss and despair wherever he goes. Do not trust Albus Dumbledore no matter how dire the situation gets. My nephew made that mistake and he suffered greatly the poor boy." said Bathilda, pointing one of her bony fingers at a small photo of a young wizard on her wall.

"Is he all right? Your nephew." Harry latched on to the subject.

“Oh, poor Gellert was a good boy but everyone hates him now. He was a gifted young wizard, you see. But he fell into the wrong crowd and now he is in prison.” said Bathilda, looking up at the photo with a faraway look.

“Oh,” Harry said, tearing his eyes away from the young photo of Geller Grindelwald. “Is he in Azkaban?”

“Oh, good Merlin, no. If he was this old bird could not have survived at the thought of the torture poor Gellert would have endured.” said Bathilda, holding her heart with a shivering hand. “Gellert is in Nurmengard.”

‘Yeah, definitely Gellert Grindelwald.’ Harry thought.

“Are you saying Albus Dumbledore is the reason your nephew is in prison, ma’am?”

“Yes! That vile boy and his delusions of grandeur twisted my sweet Gellert. Now Gellert wastes away in prison while that vile creature remains free. After everything I did for his family, this is how he repays me. Ungrateful hacks.”

“If you don’t mind, can you tell me more about Dumbledore and his crimes?” Harry asked tentatively.

“Ha! Where do I even begin...”

Harry listened pertinently as Bathilda Bagshot regaled him with tale after tale of Dumbledore’s exploits in his youth. There was a goldmine of information that has the potential to ruin Dumbledore’s reputation so long as the timing was perfect. All he had to do was stick Rita Skeeter on Bathilda Bagshot or he could just give Skeeter the memory. For now, he’d be holding on to this particular arrow in his quiver until the right moment to nail Dumbledore’s political influence on a cross.

Towards the end of Bathilda’s long tale about the Dumbledore family, he began hearing screams of terror coming from outside the cottage.

“Is that normal?” Harry asked, jabbing his thumb toward the door.

He only got a confused look from Bathilda. “Do people often drunkenly scream and make a ruckus in the streets?”

“No. Why? Is someone screaming my dear?” Bathilda asked, looking aghast.

Harry blinked a few times before realizing Bathilda might not be having the same range of hearing he was enjoying.

“Wait here, ma’am.” Harry said, moving closer to the window and he peeked outside.

It was quite dark outside but he activated the Horus glasses which gave him a near-perfect vision. He saw a man running down the street as if his life was on the line. Suddenly a nearby tree shook making Harry zero in on the movement. A horrendous creature jumped down from the tree pinning the man down with its hind legs. As the claws of the creature dug in into the flesh of the man a painful scream tore through the night sky.

“Werewolves.” Harry realized.

More screams tore through the streets as he saw more werewolves joining in terrorizing and mowing down people like wheat in a field.

“Ma’am you should call the aurors.” Harry said, and not a moment later he heard sounds coming from the roof.

His wand was already in his hand and stood at the ready at a moment’s notice. He thought about moving out of the cottage and helping the people on the street but he dismissed that thought right away. There was a full moon in the sky. Even if he was extremely confident in his skills he was not going to brazenly walk into the middle of a frenzied pack of werewolves without a plan and backup. So, he kept his wand at the ready and moved closer toward Bathilda as she ignited the fires in her fireplace and tried to connect with the Floo network.

“Something is blocking the Floo network.” Bathilda panicked, trying to connect to the Auror’s office or any other addresses.

“Wards.” Harry hissed.

At that moment, the roof of the cottage caved in and a full-grown werewolf came crashing down. Harry reacted fast with a knockback jinx to create some room between them and the werewolf.

“Depulso.”

Thankfully, his aim was true and the jinx properly bind against the brown skin of the creature knocking it away. That seems to have enraged the creature as it let out a howl before breaking into a sprint toward Harry and Bathilda. Harry was a little surprised by the speed and he was quite limited in reacting properly against the creature as he had Bathilda to protect as well.

“Indomitus.”

A sphere of magical energy surrounded him and Bathilda just as the werewolf jumped on them only to get blown back by the shield.

“Aterro.”

A metal spike shot out of the tip of Harry’s wand punching into what he hoped were the lungs of the Werewolf. The creature howled in pain as blood pooled on the floor. It began to heave and growl as it desperately tried to escape but the creature was getting tired and weak. The stunning spell was just at the tip of his wand when he heard more cries of pain and desperate calls for help coming from the street.

‘Stunners are for peacetime.’ Harry thought, dismissing the stunning spell.

“Sectumsempra.”

He slashed his wand as if it was a sword. Fresh red blood spurted in gallons out of the deep gash that cut across the werewolf’s neck. The creature let out a howl of pain before falling silent as its head was barely hanging by a thread on its shoulders.

“Oh, my. Oh, Merlin.” Bathilda gasped, holding on to her heart.

Harry rushed to her side and helped her into a nearby couch.

“Lay down ma’am. You are just a little bit shocked.”

“My head. It’s spinning.” She whimpered.

"It's just blood pressure. Keep your back straight and close your eyes as you lie down. Everything will be all right." Harry consoled her even as he could hear the desperate cries for help from the streets.

Looking out of the window he could even see a house burning a few blocks away.

Harry shook his head and instead called for Dobby.

'Public safety was the duty of Aurors. I'm only responsible for my safety.'

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"It seems congratulations are in order. I'm told from a very reliable source that you might just get an Order of Merlin first class." said Damien, smiling toward Harry's way which he reciprocated.

"It's well deserving. You kept your wits amidst the rampage of those filthy creatures and even managed to put down one of those rabid dogs. Most full-grown wizards could not make such a claim. You should be proud." said Evelyn Greengrass, an impressed look on her face.

"I don't think it is a good idea to inflate Harry's ego anymore mother. He might just go back to behaving like an airheaded Gryffindor." said Daphne.

"You won't waste a moment to score a goal at Gryffindor's expense, do you? How positively Slytherin of you." Harry grouched.

"Thank you. I'll take that as a compliment." Daphne grinned.

"Well, a toast is in order. To Harry Potter, the youngest Triwizard Champion, slayer of Werewolves." said Damien, raising his glass which was reciprocated by the small number of gathered guests in the Greengrass manor.

Harry waved and smiled appreciatively. He was also careful to mingle with the guests on an individual basis. Many of the gathered guests were Wizengamot members and their votes were valuable in securing Sirius' freedom. There was Bertie Higgs and his son Terence Higgs whom Harry was quite familiar. The Higgs were no noble house but they might as well be considered one because they were filthy rich and they even owned Puddlemere United. He was quite surprised to come across the former Seeker of the Slytherin house.

"I lament at the fact that Slytherin has lost out on quality players because of Malfoy. You were a tougher opponent Terence and you played the game fair and square."

"Thanks." Terence Higgs smiled at the praise. "I hear you are doing quite well as a Seeker. Any plans to go professional?"

Not that the guy needed one. Higgs was now a Seeker in the reserve squad of Puddlemere United. Harry gave it three to five years tops before Higgs get a spot in the playing squad of the club.

"Ah, no. I play fine at Hogwarts but I don't have the temperament for going professional."

Harry spent some time with his old rival seeker and Bertie Higgs who was a Quidditch enthusiast before extracting himself. Next, he met with Tiberius McLaggen who was a Wizengamot member and an influential one at that. The man has a gaggle of supporters inside the governing body of the ministry and in many departments, if Damien Greengrass was to be believed. He saw out of the

corner of his eyes Sirius was in his element entertaining a group of ladies even with Brigitte hanging loosely by his side.

After a round of engaging in small talk with the guests ranging from topics of the rising prices of quills to the need for more stringent legislation against the werewolf population in the country, Harry was mentally exhausted.

"You look like you are about to faint." Daphne said, taking his arm in her own.

"It's that obvious huh?" Harry mumbled.

"No, not at all. You are doing a fine job at masking it but I can see you are at the breaking point in your eyes." said Daphne.

"Mm-hm. I'll have to work on that I suppose." Harry said, smirking at Daphne but they were interrupted by Damien.

"Harry, I'd like to introduce you to someone. She's someone very influential and she helped us a lot with Sirius." Said Damien, leading away Harry from Daphne to one of the balconies.

He saw a woman with a flowing red mane standing alone on the balcony showing him her back.

"Go, she's waiting for you." Damien whispered before pulling back.

"Come Mr Potter. I've been waiting for this meeting since the day Lily told me of her pregnancy." said the woman, her voice flowing like a gentle stream with almost a soothing effect.

But Harry was quick to sense an undercurrent of magic that was in the works.

'Some kind of mind magic similar to the allure of a Veela.' Harry thought in surprise, immediately reinforcing his Occlumency shields.

"Whomever you are you can stop doing that magic trick."

"Hmm. So, you do have some mental fortitude. That's very impressive for your age. But then again you are your mother's son." The woman turned around facing Harry with glowing green eyes that were very familiar. "Which makes me wonder why you used those muggle weapons on those useless inbred cretins."

Harry was shocked at the implications.

"Oh, yes. I know what you did to those Death Eaters. A word of advice, always ensure you killed your enemy and the next time don't depend on such crude weapons."

"Who...who're you?" Harry looked upon the woman warily.

"Me? I'm the reason you survived the killing curse. I'm the reason that you exist. My name is Perenelle Flamel. Some call me Lilith. But you Harry, you can call me, grandmother."